

**ARCHIVIST'S MEMO**

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Diocesan History Committee and Anglican Archives. I thought it would be easier to share information this way, and, in case you have people asking questions, this format is easy to pass on.

First let me say thanks to my volunteers at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Beth-Anne Exham and Janette Flescher have been processing records which have come to the Synod office and been picked up from churches and individuals. This year we processed three accessions amounting to about 4 metres of boxes. Alison Stewart has been doing research on parish histories, so that when we are ready to post the descriptions of our holdings on the PAA website we can have a reasonably complete history of the parish included. The work that these three are doing for the archives is invaluable and frees me up to answer the many requests for research that come in from the public and Anglican individuals and groups.

In the past year (Jan-Dec 2008) I have received 38 requests for information and successfully answered about 95%. These requests include the very general – what should our church be saving for the archives? – to very specific requests for a baptismal or burial certificate.

I have also been working to assist the staff of the PAA with requests from Athabasca diocese – since the volunteers also have been working on those records. A great many of those requests deal with residential school questions since that diocese had three schools.

**New Accessions in the Archives**

In 2008-09 the Anglican Church Ladies (as we are known around the Provincial Archives) have taken in, arranged and started cleaning up, the files of five collections of materials.

The first was the records gathered by the ACW and stored for years in “the trunk” at St. Timothy’s Church. In the trunk were a great many of the Diocesan Women’s Auxiliary papers, financial records, mission materials, photographs and records for St. Catherine’s House, a residence for young women which later housed the Synod Office until 1930.

The second collection were the records of St. John’s, Millet. Since the church is not holding regular services and has a tenant in the basement, one of the wardens and I discussed removing the non-essential records from the church. The service register is still housed in the building – while the sacramental register travels with the itinerant priest who serves it. A photographic inventory of the contents of the building was also made at the time, and photographs of the building’s recent renovation were loaned to the archivist for copying digitally.

The third collection was gathered in the Synod office, over a number of months. It included some material that was cleared out the office during the transition from Bishop Victoria to Bishop Jane, as well as other materials dropped off there by a number of churches including two very full boxes from St. Georges’, Fort Saskatchewan.

All of these records have now been arranged and re-housed (they are now in clean, archival quality file folders), and we have a listing of what records are there to be preserved. The list has been added to the Anglican file list which can be searched when researchers come to the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

The fourth collection was another gathered in the Synod Office over a few months. These are being worked on, although the volunteers dealing first with some material from Athabasca which needs a bit of TLC right now.

The fifth collection also came via the Synod Office. It contains the records removed from St. Stephen's church while repairs to the foundation are being completed. Since the space had to be cleaned out anyway, it seemed like a good time to make a deposit at the archives. This collection will receive the attention of the Archivist and volunteers in the new year.

### **Diocesan Archivists Meet in Montreal**

From October 22-24 fifteen diocesan archivists and General Synod Archivist, Nancy Hurn, met in Montreal to discuss various issues held in common, from access to Residential Schools' records to preservation of parishes' sacramental registers. Several projects to assist with access to the records for Residential School were described by the National Archivist for which the Diocesan Archivists will need more volunteer assistance. Other concerns were raised about the role of the Archives Advisory Committees and Canons to enforce the preservation of the Church's valuable records.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

There are some new initiatives the Archivist would like to pursue in the next few months.

First an application for a budget is being made to the Diocese. Once that is approved the Archivist can apply for Institutional membership in the Archives Society of Alberta. This will open a number of opportunities for the Archives, including a listing in the Archives Directory, which will help researchers and other archives with similar materials find us. The Society also offers a number of professional development opportunities and courses so that members of the Diocesan History Committee and our volunteers could take those courses if they wished to learn more about archival practices. Finally, the ASA has their own website and search engine on which we can post our holdings to help researchers access our valuable historical information.

Next it is hoped that we can begin posting historical material about the Diocese on the website so that we can begin to build a body of materials about the Church in the Diocese of Edmonton. Information about the new postings should be sent to our parishes so that the information becomes more accessible to Anglicans and can generate some excitement about our upcoming Centennial in 2013-2014. The planning for the Diocesan Centennial should be starting in the near future and the Bishop has already indicated that she is hoping that the Diocesan History Committee will be presenting her with some ideas to take to the Executive Committee soon. Get your thinking caps on!