



Staff Report to Council - for Information

Title: Archives Q4 2023 Information Report

From: Cathy McGirr, Director of Museum and Cultural Services

Date: January 11, 2024

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

This report contains Q4 2023 information about the Archives.

Background:

Hidden History: Searching for Diversity in the Archives

May Ip's presentation "Utilizing BCM&CC Archives: Chinese Heritage in Grey Bruce Research" was recorded and uploaded to [BCM&CC's virtual programming](#) in December 2023. This was part two of 2023's Archives Awareness event "Hidden History: Diversity in the Archives." May Ip discusses her use of the Bruce County Archives while researching Chinese Heritage in Grey and Bruce counties, as well as some of her findings concerning the first Chinese businesses in Owen Sound, Ontario.



Title screen of May Ip's virtual presentation

Online Collections, Historic Newspapers, and Bruce Remembers

Over the past year, over 28,000 users have spent time on BCM&CC's Online Collections site, with over 172,000 page views. [Online Collections](#) now features 20,960 descriptions of archival items in the Library, Photos and Archives areas, along with 28,455 images of

photographs, postcards, letters, diaries, ledgers and more, all reflecting life in Bruce County! 1,327 descriptions and 565 images were added in Q4.

[Bruce Remembers](#) has been a particular focus of volunteers, co-op students and staff this quarter, and throughout the year, culminating in the addition of 170 soldiers, 500 newspaper clippings and over 500 profile photos in 2023. Hundreds of soldier profiles have also received updates thanks to the work of our volunteers. Bruce Remembers now recognizes over 8,000 soldiers for their military service. Over 9,200 users have spent time on the Bruce Remembers website, viewing over 155,000 pages in 2023.

BCM&CC continues to build awareness of the [Bruce County Historic Newspapers](#) website, with 2,000 people visiting the site over the past year, viewing 38,000 web pages. Receiving the Dorothy Duncan Public History award has helped to expand awareness of this online resource, and visits to the site increased in December 2023.

Researcher Visits, Inquiries, and Paid Services

In Q4 2023, Archives staff directly served 323 individuals:

- 75 attended for in-person research (with 273 visits for year)
- 248 received answers from staff to general inquiries by email, phone, or in-person (1,430 for the year)
- 7 individuals paid for research and copy services or photographs (50 for the year)

Archival Donations

In 2023, the Archives received donations of archival records, books, and photographs from 117 individuals, organizations, and businesses, 37 of which were received in Q4. 2023 donations continue to be processed by staff and volunteers.

Volunteer Contributions to the Archives

Over the past year, 13 volunteers, contributed over 1,015 hours of work related to digitizing items, Online Collections, newspaper inventories, and writing biographies. In Q4, this work included describing:

- a variety of recently donated items, including:
 - [Johnston Sherman Ferris \(1919-1943\) of Kincardine Township military photos and letters](#)
 - [Ferris & Vance family farm photos](#) and [other family records](#) (Bruce Township, Greenock Township, Kincardine Township)
 - [Kinloss-Kairshea Women's Institute minute books and Tweedsmuir Community Histories](#)

- [Bluewater Tea Room, Port Elgin, photographs](#)



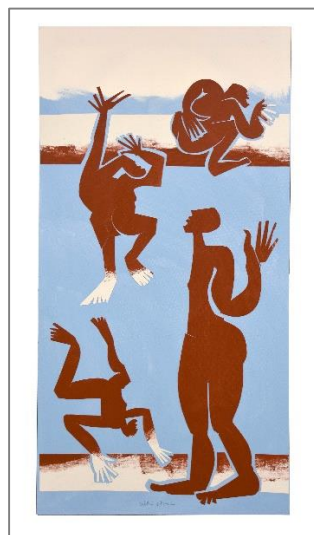
Bluewater Tea Room, Port Elgin, 1947, A2023.069.019

- [Historic Bruce County court records](#)
- [Bruce County Council photographs](#) and [Bruce Township Central and Kincardine's Elgin Market Public School photographs](#)
- [Books related to geology, geography, flora and fauna of Bruce County and area](#)

Over the past year, three volunteers and two high school co-op students have also contributed almost 1,500 hours to BruceRemembers.org, including a significant amount of time spent searching for information about hundreds of soldiers.

Weinstein Art Collection

In 2021, BCM&CC accepted 525 pieces of art from Alan Weinstein of Teeswater. 100 items were photographed and catalogued in 2023, resulting in [193 Weinstein art pieces](#) now available for viewing in Online Collections.



Allegory, Alan Weinstein, 2008, A2021.022.492

Collections Management

Archives collections management work in 2023 has included:

- the migration of digital files on CDs and DVDs to the network for long-term preservation, as well as the digitization of VHS tapes, audio tapes and film reels.
- the re-shelving and/or re-housing of the contents of 115 boxes (12 x 16 x10”) to ensure optimal use of space.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

There was no interdepartmental consultation associated with this report.

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

Strategic Pillar #2 - Building affinity across the County.

Objective 2.2c - Activate the Archive to drive audiences from across the County.

Objective 2.3 - Enhance digital outreach and engagement.

Report Author:

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Departmental Approval:

Cathy McGirr, Director, Museum & Cultural Services

Approved for Submission:

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