

# ArchivesNews

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Part of the Archives' stacks, showing rolling shelving used for storage of textual and graphic records.



Ted Youngberg, Chair of the Richmond '79 Centennial Society, and Leslie Ross, author of the book "Richmond: Child of the Fraser", look over some archival images, [ca. 1975].  
City of Richmond Archives, photograph #1987 30 92.

## From the Richmond Archives Blog—The City of Richmond Archives: Inside the Box

*This is republished from the original blog post from May 9, 2019. To see the original version, visit the Friends of the Richmond Archives blog "Outside the Box" at <https://richmondarchives.ca/2019/05/09/the-city-of-richmond-archives-inside-the-box/>*

### What is the Archives?

The Archives and what goes on there is a mystery to most people so in this article we will try to explain what the City of Richmond Archives is, where it is, and what it does.

The City of Richmond Archives is the official repository for records of enduring and historic value to the City of Richmond and the community as a whole. The main work undertaken at the Archives follows two paths, namely, preservation (to preserve and protect records) and access (to make them accessible to City officials and to the public). The Archives is a section of the City Clerk's Office which, among its other duties and responsibilities, is responsible for records management for the City.

### History

The idea of creating an archives facility for Richmond was originally discussed in 1970. With the approach of Richmond's Centennial year, a proposal had been put forward to publish a book to mark the event. The committees formed to organize the Centennial celebration and the book were made up of Richmond residents with an interest in archives and in establishing one for the Municipality.

Before 1982, archival materials were collected and stored by the Richmond Museum and Historical Society which had been formed in 1961. In 1982, Richmond's first City Archivist was hired, working with the City's Leisure Services Department. In 1987, in recognition of the Archives' growing role as a part of the City's records management system, the Archives became part of the City Clerk's Department.

In 1992, when the Richmond Cultural Centre was built, a dedicated space for the Archives was created.

On July 29, 2002 the Corporate Records Management Program Bylaw 7400 came into effect setting out the terms and scope of activities of the City of Richmond Archives. This link will take you to the text of Bylaw 7400 which provides a picture of the stewardship the City of Richmond exercises over City government and community records during their lifetime: [http://www.richmond.ca/\\_\\_shared/assets/bylaw\\_7400463.pdf](http://www.richmond.ca/__shared/assets/bylaw_7400463.pdf)

## Where is it?

The City of Richmond Archives is located in the Richmond Cultural Centre at 7700 Minoru Gate. The door to the Archives is located between the Library entrance and the Front Desk in the Rotunda of the Centre. A window to the left of the door shows a display relating to some aspect of Richmond's history using material sourced from the Archives. Just through the door is a vestibule, featuring a photographic display.

Past the second door, you enter the Reference Room where most researchers do their work. A photographic timeline on the walls shows images from Richmond's history and digital photo frames present images from specific photograph collections. A research library offers books, research finding aids and telephone/street directories. A microfilm/microfiche reader is provided as well.

Past the service desk and through the door is the Archives office is where Archives staff and volunteers work at several work stations and tables. More research material can be found here as well as equipment for the handling and conservation of records.

Through the doors at the rear of the Archives office is the closed Archives storage area, commonly referred to as the stacks.

Here, in a secured temperature and humidity controlled environment, is where the records held in the City of Richmond Archives are stored for future generations. Each set of shelves or drawers are labelled, as are the boxes and files located there, allowing the Archivist to find a single item among the mass of material stored there.



The front entrance to the Archives is located between the Library entrance and the Cultural Centre front desk.



Archives' Reference Room.

## The Collection

The Archives holds more than one kilometer of textual records, 170,000 photographs, 20,000 maps and plans and over 500 sound and moving image recordings. There are also collections of subject and biography files and a small reference library.

The Archives acquires records in a couple of different ways. Public records are transferred from the City. Private records are received by donation from community members, organizations and businesses. The title of the material passes to the Archives with the understanding that ownership is held in trust for future generations. If you have material you think might be suitable for the Archives, please contact the Archivist! The Archives receives donations of original archival material on a year-round basis.

## What goes on?

When records are acquired by the Archives, whether from the City or as a donation, they undergo a fairly complex and time consuming process to ensure their preservation and accessibility. If a member of the public decides to donate a group of photographs, the process is:

1. An accession number is given to the donation which consists of a four digit number indicating the year it was received and a second number indicating its order of donation, for example, a donation numbered 2019 5 would indicate the fifth accession of 2019. A Deed of Gift Agreement form is generated by the Archivist which includes a description of the photographs. By signing the Deed of Gift Agreement, the donor states that they are authorized to donate the material, that ownership of the material is transferred to the Archives and disposal instructions for the material are stated should the Archives decide not to keep it.
2. Once the ownership of the photographs is transferred to the Archives, the Archivist will create an entry in the Archives database. The accession can now be stored in the Archives.
3. Each photograph will be given a specific item number and will be placed in an individual acid free envelope. The envelopes are then placed in archival boxes, designed to keep out light and dust, and the boxes are placed on the photograph shelves in the Archives.
4. Lastly, as time and staffing allow, the photos will be digitized. Once this is done they may be added to the Archives website allowing researchers to search the photos without actually coming to the Archives.

## The Friends of the Richmond Archives

The Friends of the Richmond Archives was formed in the fall of 1986 as a volunteer and non-profit organization by members of the Richmond '79 Centennial Society Historical sub-committee. The Friends undertake a number of activities to support the City of Richmond Archives and to promote the preservation and understanding of Richmond's history.

Out of its membership of 218 people, a core group of volunteers take part in community outreach activities, support a publishing program for local history, and help fund the purchase of specialized archival equipment and projects at the City of Richmond Archives. The Friends have also endowed a UBC award for students in the Masters of Archival Studies Program and have supported a number of programs for local students in Richmond.

The funds managed by the Friends are raised through donations and membership fees. If you are interested in the preservation of your city's history and want to support the Archives in its work consider becoming a member of the Friends of the Richmond Archives. Contact the Archives if you are interested in becoming a member! As a member, you will receive in the mail the semi-annual Archives News (the newsletter of the City of Richmond Archives), notifications of special events at the Archives, opportunities for volunteer involvement with the Friends, and an invitation to the annual Archives Tea. A receipt for Income Tax purposes will be issued for donations over \$10.



Archives' Volunteers John Campbell and Graham Turnbull, shown working at scanning some of the thousands of photographic images preserved there.



Archives' office and work station set up for conservation work.



An archival box.



Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie speaking at the annual Archives Tea in 2018, a popular event open to members and guests of the Friends of the Richmond Archives.



## Archives Tea 2019

The annual Archives Tea, hosted by the Friends of the Richmond Archives, will take place this year on Friday, October 11 at 2:00 p.m. (doors will open at 1:30 p.m.). Please note the location of this year's tea will once again be at the Ukrainian Community Hall located at 5311 Francis Road. There will be free parking available onsite.

Guests are welcome, so please bring along friends who would enjoy taking part in this pleasant affair. Due to limited space, an RSVP is appreciated.

We look forward to an afternoon of good food, excellent company and captivating conversation.



Coffee break on McKenzie's farm, 1912.  
City of Richmond Archives, photograph #1978 3 7

**CITY OF RICHMOND**  
**Archives**

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 Phone: 604-247-8305  
 Email: [archives@richmond.ca](mailto:archives@richmond.ca)  
[www.richmond.ca/archives](http://www.richmond.ca/archives)  
 Public Reference Room Hours  
 Monday–Thursday, 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
 Appointment recommended

## Volunteer Project—Update

### Lum Poy Collection Transcription Now Complete!

Archives volunteer Zarina Chan has finished transcribing the entirety of the Lum Poy collection, a series of letters (ca. 1930s-1960s) written to a market gardener, Lum Poy, from his family back in China. Lum Poy leased farm property at Terra Nova and he lived in Steveston. In total Zarina spent 125 hours meticulously transcribing these letters by hand. We will now be working on typing her handwritten transcriptions in order to provide the transcribed versions digitally online.



Archives' volunteer Zarina Chan, shown transcribing letters written to Lum Poy.

## Out in the Community—Friends of the Richmond Archives

As usual the Friends of the Richmond Archives have been busy attending community events and putting on displays at the Richmond School District 38 Conference and the Thompson Community Centre.



Thompson family posing for a studio photo, [ca. 1920]. Thompson family fonds.  
City of Richmond Archives, photograph #1985 39 29.