

Archives of the North, by the North, for the North:
The Meaning, Value, and Challenges of Creating, Keeping and Running Archives in the
Canadian Territories

by
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Abstract

Archives in the Canadian territories are meaningful, valuable and needed in the north. Archives' meaning and value derive from their ability to be used to influence power, to defend rights, and to document political movements which necessitates their existence and accessibility. Yet, northern archives have, and continue to face, numerous challenges which include geography, retention and repatriation of archival records, infrastructure, education, professional development opportunities, staff retention, languages, and finances. As one form of social memory, territorial archives emerged in the 1970s to manage the records created in the north and to stem the flow of archival records south. Since then, a growing number of archives and archives councils have been established in the north to manage and care for northern archival records. This thesis examines the literature on place, value and meaning of archives and uses it to argue why archives are needed in the north. I use the Native Press photograph collection at the Northwest Territories Archives as a case study to compare the identified challenges and explore how the digitization and description project underscores the value and meaning of archives and archival records of the north, by the north, and for the north.

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Dedication

For Jordan

May you have found peace from this beautiful and wretched world.

Introduction:



Figure 1: View from Pilots' Monument in April (copyright Jason Carrie)

From April to August 2019, I worked as a contract archivist at the Northwest Territories Archives (NWT Archives) in Yellowknife, NT, describing the Native Press photograph collection. During those four months, part of my daily morning routine consisted of checking CBC News North. Though my habit slowed after I returned home to Winnipeg, I tried to scan the news weekly. As the new year began, in January 2020, one headline in particular caught my eye: “My work is not finished’: Francois Paulette named officer of Order of Canada” written by Emily Blake.¹ The title grabbed my attention because Paulette featured prominently in the Native Press photograph collection. The article’s first image showed Paulette in the foreground wearing a black coat looking off into the distance against a spruce and pine background. Though the collection I worked on covered the years 1971-1977, I quickly recognized him. Paulette, now 70

¹ Emily Blake, “My work is not finished’: François Paulette named officer of Order of Canada,” *C.B.C.* 3 January 2020, last accessed 6 January 2020 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/francois-paulette-order-of-canada-1.5413265>

years old, was only in his 20s during the time period of the photographs selected for the project. As I scrolled further down the article, the next image caused me to pause. There illuminated on my tablet was one of the five thousand Native Press images that I had described. The reference information stared back at me: “NWT Archives/Native Press/ N-2018-010-0590.” The black and white image was one of the earliest from the collection which featured Paulette seated alone with his hair down.² Photographed in Déljine (then Fort Franklin), Paulette was attending the All Chiefs Meeting of the Indian Brotherhood of the NWT in February 1972. Just months earlier in late 1971, he was elected as the “youngest chief in the territory at that time.”³ Paulette emerged as chief when issues over land claims, pollution, and encroaching mega developments in the Northwest Territories dominated the media landscape. These issues catalyzed chiefs from the Indian Brotherhood of the N.W.T. to act.

Over five days in March 1973, 16 chiefs from around the Northwest Territories met in Behchokò (then Fort Rae) to put together a land claim of 1,000,000 square kilometres to register a land caveat with the Northwest Territories. The case came before Justice Morrow, who after flying to communities to interview elders who remembered the 1921 treaty, ruled in favour of the chiefs’ claim.⁴ However, Morrow’s decision was overturned by the Supreme Court of Canada and Paulette’s name became associated with the case as registered in the Supreme Court of Canada judgements: *Paulette et al. v. The Queen*.⁵ The case was instrumental for land claims in the Northwest Territories and as Peter Kulchyski explains, the Morrow decision “in conjunction

² Interestingly, based on the article’s content, C.B.C either missed the image or chose not to use the picture which features Paulette draped in a Canadian flag.

³ Blake, “My work is not finished.”

⁴ Peter Kulchyski, *Like the Sound of a Drum: Aboriginal Cultural Politics in Denedeh and Nunavut*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2005), 82.

⁵ Supreme Court of Canada, “Paulette et al. V. The Queen” 20 December 1976, last accessed 3 February 2020 <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/5866/index.do>

with the Calder case was enough to persuade the government to negotiate a comprehensive land claim with the Dene even though Dene were already signatories to a treaty.”⁶ The images from the Native Press collection document this crucial moment at the very beginning of the comprehensive land claims period. This significant meeting in March and the associated images were never published in the *Native Press*. With the efforts from the digitization project, these important images are now online, accessible and ready to be shared.

Though months have passed now, I distinctly remember the challenge of finding the description for Paulette in N-2018-010-0590. I remember less the exact moment when Paulette was identified and more the journey: scanning through the Native Press newspaper collection, talking with our Tłı̄chǫ consultant and staff at the NWT Archives. Interestingly, I encountered similar problems finding descriptions for other images of prominent, young individuals such as Phoebe Nahanni, James Wah-Shee, George Tuccaro, and others. Why was this so? Aside from the obvious that nearly 50 years have passed, I found that individuals were often remembered by community members for distinct hairstyles, facial hair or clothing that they *later* wore which resulted in some of the earliest photographs in the collection initially eluding description.

The impact of seeing the image in Blake’s article is hard to describe. The challenge I have often found with archival work is the existential worry that your work will never have an impact because you rarely see the impacts of your labour on the user. So, to see the image used only months after being uploaded online was gratifying on a personal level. Archives and the work of archivists are meaningful and valuable to the north. The potential for the Native Press photograph collection is immense for several reasons. One, the collection covers such an

⁶ Kulchyski, *Like the Sound of a Drum*, 82.

important time period during the Northwest Territories' history, which saw the beginnings of the modern land claims process. Two, there are still many people featured in the collection that are alive and able to partner with archivists in knowledge sharing and photo identification. Three, only a fraction of the images was published in the newspaper, leaving hundreds of thousands of photographs relevant to northerners waiting to be accessed. With the first 5000 images now online and accessible to the public, they can be viewed and utilized which, since 1993, has been only possible for a handful of individuals who received permission to access the photographs at the NWT Archives.

In addition to news organizations accessing the Native Press photograph collection, the NWT Archives and the Tłı̨ch̨ Government have been promoting the collection on Facebook. The social media platform increasingly has been used by archives to share collections online to broaden their reach to the public who may be unaware of the breadth of records housed in their local archives. Indeed, as Joshua Hager notes, “[m]embers of the local community who may have the misconception that research is restricted to academics may be pleasantly surprised when they learn that local records are available to them.”⁷ Since the collection went online, The NWT Archives and Tłı̨ch̨ Facebook pages both started to share images and quickly garnered a series of likes, comments, and shares. The Tłı̨ch̨ Facebook page posted one image from the collection on 20 January 2020 and as of 26 March 2020 the post had received 16 likes, 5 shares and 4 comments. While the comments might not necessarily provide new information or be perceived by archives as “intellectual content”, Greg Bak argues that their real value comes from “social,

⁷ Joshua D. Hager, “To Like or Not to Like: Understanding and Maximizing the Utility of Archival Outreach on Facebook,” *American Archivist*, Vol. 78, no.1 (Spring/Summer 2015): 27.

emotional, and identity factors.”⁸ The collection will further be promoted through the creation of a website which will feature the images.

The Native Press photograph collection is but one of many important sets of records from the north. Archival repositories across the territories hold materials that offer important insights into culture, society, politics, and humanity itself. The argument of this thesis is that archives are meaningful, valuable, and needed in the north. Ultimately, their meaning and value are intimately connected to their ability to foster power, to defend rights, and, particularly in the north, to document the rise of Indigenous political movements that shaped and continue to shape rights, self government, and land claims. For the purposes of this paper, the “north” is the three Canadian territories. For reasons of scope I omitted Nunavik and Nunatsiavut. I recognize there are many ways of defining the north such as by topography, latitude, or territories. My decision was largely guided by the existence of territorial archives which are in Whitehorse, YT, Yellowknife, NT, and Igloolik, NU.

This thesis is situated amidst other archival literature on archival meaning, value, and place. Yet it adds to the literature by using a northern archival perspective. Instead of examining just one territory, this thesis looks across the north to identify challenges present in all three territories. A case study is included to underscore the meaning and value of archives when collaborative projects are carried out with communities.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I examine the importance of place for archives. I examine secondary literature which discusses the value and meaning of archives and their importance in society. I draw upon the work of archival scholars such as Jeanette Bastian, Terry

⁸ Greg Bak, “Not Meta Just Data: Redefining Content and Metadata in Archival Theory and Practice,” *Journal of Archival Organization*, Vol. 13 no. 1-2 (April 2, 2016): 9.

Cook, Richard Cox, Elizabeth Yakel, Laura Millar, among others. I examine how digitization has altered the perception of place and how archivists should approach and thoughtfully consider the impacts of digitization on communities and users. I highlight some collections from the north which are meaningful and valuable and underscore why archives in the north are needed and must be adequately funded. Archivists too have a role to play in raising the profile of archives to the public and must look outside the profession and demonstrate the societal benefits associated with archives.

In the second chapter, I examine the archival ecosystem of the north and some of the challenges of archiving in the Canadian territories. I specifically examine archives in a narrow sense of the term both for purposes of scope but also to delineate from other forms of social memory strategies. In this chapter I examine six challenges that archives in the north face which include geography, digital and non-digital infrastructure, retention and removal of records, education, language, and finances. These challenges are typically not mutually exclusive and certain scenarios can include two or more challenges. Northern archives have responded in various ways to address these challenges and I provide a selection of examples.

In the third chapter, I examine the Native Press photograph collection from the NWT Archives. The *Native Press* was an Indigenous, activist newspaper that began under the Indian Brotherhood of the N.W.T. in 1971, was managed largely by the Native Communications Society of the N.W.T until the early 1990s, and eventually ceased operations following a buyout in 1993. Over its 20 years of operations, the *Native Press* built a vast collection of photographs which documented events in the Northwest Territories from a Dene and Métis perspective. Among the significant events covered were the rise of the Indian Brotherhood, land claims, the Morrow Decision, and the Berger Inquiry. Native Press photographers captured local meetings,

life on the land, festivals, the Arctic Winter Games, and portraits of rising leaders, children, and elders. The collection was recently donated to the NWT Archives and work to digitize, describe and make accessible the images began in 2019.

Archives in the north are needed to document evidence of government decisions and to ensure that the records of northern society are preserved for future generations. Archives must be sufficiently funded to carry out their essential functions. Archivists must boldly push forward and create partnerships outside the confines of their small professional circles. The meaning of archives and the value of archival records to society demands that archivists push for greater awareness of the records they keep. Archival records have tangible connections to the present and I frequently encountered these while in Yellowknife. I will include a reflection on a particularly memorable day that stuck with me long after returning home and which reminds me still of the power of archives to thread links from the past into the present.

On the Friday of the August long weekend in Yellowknife, the Old Town Ramble and Ride festival was just ramping up. A last-minute decision sent my friend and me off on our bicycles to head towards the scenic trail that winds its way around the shoreline of Frame Lake. Before long, we snaked our way through downtown and started the descent into Old Town. We arrived at the Down to Earth Gallery, where a make-shift stage had popped up next to the log building. A crowd had gathered with children running around and dogs searching for pats. I had two weeks left in Yellowknife and my mind had been on home. Yet as quickly as I daydreamt, I was brought back to focus as Andrea Bettger took the stage. A classically trained violinist, Bettger had made a name for herself in the north as a phenomenal fiddler. As her set began, hands clapped, and boots tapped in the cool August evening. Coincidentally, I had seen Andrea perform already at a local musical, “Johnny Cole – Meet Me at the Rex” created by NWT

Archive's Coordinator of Tech Services Norm Glowach. "Johnny Cole – Meet Me at the Rex," followed the story of Glowach's family's journey to Yellowknife in the 1940s. During the performance, archival images were displayed on a large screen set behind the musicians. The images were amassed by Glowach and provided visual links to the songs being played. It was a beautiful blend of archival records and music to tell such a personal story.

After Bettger finished her set, there was a brief lull as the gear was swapped for the next performer – George Tuccaro. I was excited to see George Tuccaro play not only for his musical talents but because, like Paulette, he had also featured in the Native Press. Here was yet, another tangible connection to the collection. Tuccaro had an impressive career working as an announcer-operator, a coordinator of Aboriginal languages programming, a coordinator of the cultural industries program, an anchor of Northbeat, a host of Trails End, and a founder of GLT Communications.⁹ In 2010, he became the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. When he took the stage, the young man I had seen in the collection was now a highly respected Elder. Tuccaro brought the crowd back to life from the intermission slumber and between songs his banter with the crowd helped me contextualize the young man sitting in front of the CBC radio microphone.

With the last act of the evening over, we started towards our bicycles and my friend Joanne, a CBC radio producer, introduced me to Paul Andrew. Paul Andrew was a prominent Indigenous leader during the rise of the Indian Brotherhood of the N.W.T. Andrew was a Chief from Tulita (then Fort Norman) in the Sahtu region and can be seen in many of the Native Press photographs taken during the Annual Meetings. Earlier in the summer I recalled reading an

⁹ Office of the Commissioner of the NWT, "George Lester Tuccaro: Commissioner of the Northwest Territories" (July 2010), last accessed 17 March 2020.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20150113174821/https://www.commissioner.gov.nt.ca/biography/>

article by CBC's Paul Tukker who interviewed Andrew about the landslide near Tulita on Bear Rock which has significant connections to the Sahtu people and Dene stories of Yamoria.¹⁰ The article discussed the impact of the landslide, the scarring of the landscape, and Andrew's comparison of Bear Rock to Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in terms of significance to the Sahtu. In the Native Press photos which feature Tulita, Bear Rock is ubiquitously used as a backdrop because of its grandeur and position in relation to town. I thought about landscape change photography and how archival records, such as those from the Native Press, could be compiled in tandem with other archival collections to document the various changes over the years to Bear Rock. Photographs, as Joan Schwartz explains, are results of individuals who made a "decision to preserve the appearance of a person, an object, a document, a building, or an event judged to have abiding value."¹¹ Additionally, as Jill Delaney notes, photographs "carry so much unintentional information... legible to many different "readers""¹² This to me is the beautiful nature of archival photographs. The intention behind the creation of an archival record - such as photographing the town of Tulita - can differ from the intention of the user documenting Bear Rock's landscape alterations over time precisely because of the unintentional information captured in photographs.

At last, Joanne and I finally made our way back. It was 11pm as we approached Frame Lake. The sky was glowing pink as the sun had barely set. Reflecting now I was always so amazed at the myriad of tangible and personal connections that this one collection had on me. I had only been in the north for three months, yet in one night I had several connections with

¹⁰ Alex Brockman, "Landslide damages Bear Rock – Tulita's Notre Dame," *C.B.C.* 18 June 2019, last accessed 4 March 2020 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/landslide-tulita-nwt-sacred-space-notre-dame-1.5179117>

¹¹ Joan M. Schwartz, "'Records of Simple Truth and Precision': Photography, Archives, and the Illusion of Control," *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000): 19.

¹² Jill Delaney, "An Inconvenient Truth? Scientific Photography and Archival Ambivalence," *Archivaria* 65 (Spring 2008): 94.

people who were featured in the Native Press collection. Archives are about connections and relationships. When I think about the Native Press collection, I think about the possibilities and the impact it could have on those who had been in the north during this time period - whether it had been for one day, one year, or their whole lives.

Chapter 1: Place, Meaning and Value in Northern Archives and Archival Records

On 4 August 2016, Nunavut's Department of Culture and Heritage announced that a five-year agreement had been reached between the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMN) and the Government of Nunavut (GN).¹ A significant portion of Nunavut's museum and archival collection, at the time held in Yellowknife, NWT, at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC), was to be transferred the following summer to the CMN's Research and Collections Facility in Gatineau, QC. While the announcement emphasized strengthening the Government of Nunavut's existing partnership with the CMN, the beneficial financial savings, and fulfilling the Government of Northwest Territories' request to remove the GN's collections, it elided the fact this change meant that these records would be transferred away from the people to whom they are most relevant. *Nunatsiaq News*, the Nunavut and Nunavik focused newspaper, covered the agreement, noting the Government of Nunavut's silence on whether there would be adequate facilities to house the collection in Nunavut after the five years.² Citing section 33.2.4 from the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, *Nunatsiaq News* reminded readers that over 25 years ago this section emphasized both conserving and managing the territory's heritage and the "urgent need to establish facilities in the Nunavut Settlement Area."³ Though this section of the Land Claims Agreement was concerned with the archaeological record of Nunavut, it is as applicable to the territory's archival record. Nunavut's archival records must be preserved and made accessible to Nunavummiut which ultimately requires adequate facilities and resources.

¹ Government of Nunavut, "Nunavut Transfers Territorial Museum and Archival Collections", 4 August 2016, last accessed 28 February 2019 <https://gov.nu.ca/culture-and-heritage/news/nunavut-transfers-territorial-museum-and-archival-collections-canadian>

² Nunatsiaq News, "Thousands of Nunavut artifacts head from NWT to Ottawa," *Nunatsiaq News*, 8 August 2016, last accessed 27 Nov. 2018. http://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674thousands_of_nunavut_artifacts_head_from_nwt_to_ottawa/

³ Nunatsiaq News, "Thousands of artifacts head from NWT to Ottawa."

Until Nunavut builds a facility or facilities capable of housing the territory's collection, these records will remain outside the territory.

In this chapter, I argue that archiving in the north matters and that records of the north belong in the north. Archival scholar Jeannette Allis Bastian argues that a “community without its records is a community under siege, defending itself, its identity, and its version of history without a firm foundation on which to stand.”⁴ The role of place remains a central facet of archives. I will examine the importance of place and particularly its relevance for Indigenous and community archives in the north. I will highlight why archives are valuable and meaningful to society by first drawing upon secondary literature from archival scholars and users of archives. Next, I will examine a selection of records from the north that have contributed to a better understanding of the place that is home to Indigenous peoples and northern Canadians. The north is rarely visited by southerners, yet southern heritage institutions hold large collections of northern records that are thereby inaccessible to northerners. Southern institutions have found ways through digitization projects to make accessible their collections for communities in the north.

The Role of Place in Archives

Place is one of the many important layers which infuses archives. Place can be considered in relation to where records are created, as well as where they are deposited and custody is maintained. Place, as Greg Bak and Amanda Hill note, can also be imagined or aspirational, particularly for those whose identity is linked to a place but no longer live there.⁵

⁴ Jeannette Allis Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History* (Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2003) 87.

⁵ Greg Bak and Amanda Hill, "Deseronto Dreams: Archives, Social Networking Services, and Place," *Archivaria* [Online], 79 (29 April 2015): 3, 17.

Place influences the policies carried out by archival institutions. Place and where records are stored is changing in the digital realm. Richard Katz and Paul Gandel argue that place's role is diminishing because the internet is increasing the capacity of repositories to make their collections and data available and to provide remote support for researchers, seamless access controls, libraries, of software tools, and sophisticated data management.⁶ While the digital world will undoubtedly provide greater access for northerners to northern collections stored both inside and outside the territories, there remain concerns and considerations. Digitization projects present exciting possibilities to share previously inaccessible materials, yet these efforts must be approached thoughtfully. Archivists need to consider Indigenous cultural protocols, meaningful connections to the materiality and performance of records, and bandwidth capabilities of the northern network.

What have archival scholars written about the role of place in archives? Jeannette Allis Bastian is one of the leading archival scholars on archives and place and her monograph, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History*, is a must read - in addition to her numerous other works.⁷ *Owning Memory* explores the removal of the US Virgin Island's official archival records to Denmark and the United States in the early 20th century and the effects on the local Caribbean community.⁸ A particularly important concept

⁶ Richard N. Katz and Paul B. Gandel "The Tower, Cloud, and Posterity: Documenting in a Digital World" in *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions: Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels* edited by Terry Cook and Helen Willa Samuels (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011) 227.

⁷ See Jeannette Allis Bastian "In a "House of Memory": Discovering the Provenance of Place", *Archival Issues* Vol. 28, no. 1 (2003-2004): 9-19; "Reading Colonial Records Through an Archival Lens: The Provenance of Place, Space and Creation," *Archival Science* 6 (2006): 267-284; "Records Memory and Space: Locating Archives in the Landscape," *Public History Review*, Vol. 21 (2014): 45-59.

⁸ For the digital repatriation of the Virgin Island records and an interrogation of digitization and access obstacles see Daniela Agostinho, "Archival encounters: rethinking access and care in digital colonial archives," *Archival Science* 19, no. 2 (2019): 141-165.

mentioned in Bastian's monograph is the Akan proverb *Sankofa*.⁹ Bastian explains that the West African concept "teaches that people must go back to their roots to move forward and that whatever they have 'lost, forgotten, forgone or had been stripped of can be reclaimed, revived, preserved and perpetuated.'"¹⁰ At the heart of *Sankofa*, as Bastian elucidates, is an onus on the community to retrieve a past that is waiting to be discovered.¹¹ Retrieving the past requires access to records. As Bastian argues, "because the construction of collective memory, and thereby collective identity, by nations, communities or groups of people depends on their ability to confront and understand their history, access is integral to the custody of historical records."¹² Her arguments resonate in light of the recent transfer of Nunavut's public and private records from Yellowknife to Gatineau.

Though copies of the records can be made, the place of storage creates barriers to knowing exactly what might be in boxes, given that archival description is only ever partial.¹³ It also presupposes that the value of the records is limited to the information inscribed on them and does not take into consideration the materiality of the records or their symbolic value.¹⁴ Ala Rekrut's research on materiality offers insights into what archives need to consider when digitizing or providing copies of original records. Rekrut notes that the "physical properties of records are a tangible site for interpretation of information from the many elements present – text, images, appearance, texture, smell, and historical context."¹⁵ It is important that these features are described in descriptive fields in detail. Without this information, as Rekrut points

⁹ Bastian, *Owning Memory*, 75, The proverb is "so wo were fi na wosan kofa a yenki" translated "it is not taboo to go back and fetch what you forgot,"

¹⁰ Bastian, *Owning Memory*, 75.

¹¹ Bastian, *Owning Memory*, 75.

¹² Bastian, *Owning Memory*, 14.

¹³ Elizabeth Yakel, "Archival Representation," *Archival Science* 3, no. 1 (2003): 2.

¹⁴ For symbolic value of archives see James O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," *American Archivist* Vol. 56 (Spring 1993): 234-255.

¹⁵ Ala Rekrut, "Material Literacy: Reading Records as Material Culture," *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005): 31.

out, “those who have access only to an image of a record have significantly less access to its materially manifested evidence than those who can use the source records.”¹⁶

The same loss of information can be considered when engaging with oral records and the ‘historical contexts’ surrounding their creation. Though Julie Cruikshank was not specifically addressing the implications of digitizing oral records, indirectly her discussion on the treatment of orally recorded accounts encapsulates the challenge for archivists to convey the contexts in which these recordings were created. To fail to do so alters the user’s interaction with the record because, as Cruikshank argues, “an understanding of the contexts in which they were performed, the occasions they embellish, and the contentious issues they address are likely to be erased.”¹⁷ Digitization of analog records requires archivists to adequately convey contextual information in descriptive fields that are accessible to users. Part of this requires the archivist to capture the information during appraisal. Indeed, Caribbean archivist Stanley Griffin, in his discussion on Caribbean community archives and the irreplaceable records they acquire, notes that the “burden however, is the ability to appraise with communal value and to seek to preserve the contexts rather than just the content of the records.”¹⁸ Whether this type of information has been captured by the Nunavut Archives is currently unknown, as the archives remains without a public online searchable database. Though the Nunavut Archives has been in the process of acquiring a searchable database since 2015, hopefully soon users will be able to access online descriptions of the contents, contexts, and materiality of the records stored in Nunavut or Gatineau, QC.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ala Rekrut, “Matters of substance: materiality and meaning in historical records and their digital images,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42, no. 3 (2014): 245.

¹⁷ Julie Cruikshank, “Oral Tradition and Oral History: Reviewing Some Issues,” *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 75, no. 3, (September 1994): 414.

¹⁸ Stanley Griffin, “Putting up ah resistance: Rastafari Records, Struggles and Triumphs” in *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record: An Archives Reader* Jeannette A. Bastian, Stanley H. Griffin, and John A. Aarons (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2018) 495.

¹⁹ Edward Atkinson, emailed document to author, “Searchable database for archives” 17 July 2015.

What are the implications for storing records that are important to those in the north hundreds of kilometres away in the south? Bastian, in her *Archivaria* article “Taking Custody, Giving Access”, argues that “[c]ustody only serves an archival purpose in the long term if it accommodates the people and events to whom the records relate as well as the collective memory that the records foster.”²⁰ Laura Millar, in discussing centralized archives and records flowing in from far away towns and cities, observed that acquisition policies were not always seen favourably by communities who watched their records disappear off to far away city centres.²¹ Edward Laine, a decade earlier, similarly noticed a negative perception associated with transporting archival records from their place of creation.²² Laine quotes Robert F. Harney, who felt that acquisition policies of centralized archives “led to the illogical removal of materials from regions in which they are relevant and would be consulted regularly to... where they are barely accessible to community members.”²³ In the case of the Nunavut records transferred from Yellowknife to Gatineau, since the creation of the new territory, Nunavummiut have been required to either travel to Yellowknife or access the records remotely; they have yet to be given the opportunity to consult the records in Nunavut since the division as they were originally stored and managed at the PWNHC and now at the preservation centre in Gatineau. Ultimately, by removing the records of the territory to the south, archives risk alienating existing users and reducing the ability of community to foster social memory through accessing local records.

Where records are stored also matters to archives users. This is central for community archives. As Greg Bak and Amanda Hill affirm in their article on the Deseronto archives,

²⁰ Bastian, “Taking Custody, Giving Access: A Postcustodial Role for a New Century,” *Archivaria* 53 (Spring 2002): 91.

²¹ Laura Millar, “Discharging out Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada,” *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998): 131.

²² Edward Laine, ““Kallista Perintöä–Precious Legacy!”: Finnish-Canadian Archives, 1882-1985” *Archivaria* [Online], 22 (1 January 1986): 77.

²³ Laine, “Finnish-Canadian Archives,” 77.

“locality has long been recognized as a key factor in social identity and in archival collecting.”²⁴ With the majority of the Nunavut Archives’ private records now housed in Canada’s national capital region, there exists a significant disconnect between the records’ place of creation, the current stored location, and Nunavummiut’s ability to physically access their heritage. There are significant implications for this disconnect. As Bastian notes, “[t]he location or the persons who physically hold the records in a specific place is an essential element in the legitimacy of the records themselves, in the validity of the records as evidence.”²⁵ Since the creation of Nunavut these records have been displaced. The territory’s inability to house its own records must be addressed. The value and meaning of archives to society is too important to let records migrate south.

How could governments, archives, and communities in the north prevent the removal of records from their territory? One method would be through examining and updating existing legislation. Legislation ensures that archives are mandated by law to carry out their functions. Across the territories, archives acts enshrine the values that citizens and governments place in archives to ensure that records of the government and its citizens are preserved and made accessible to the public.²⁶ Archival legislation designates a territorial archivist to safeguard the territory’s heritage and oversee the acquisition, preservation, access, and destruction of records of their territory. These acts mandate that decisions made by government are archived and that social memory is fostered. In addition to these acts, archival policies guide the decisions of

²⁴ Greg Bak and Amanda Hill, "Deseronto Dreams: Archives, Social Networking Services, and Place," *Archivaria* [Online], 79 (29 April 2015): 3.

²⁵ Bastian, “Records Memory and Space: Locating Archives in the Landscape,” *Public History Review* Vol. 21 (2014): 51.

²⁶ Archives Act RSY 2002, c.9, Yukon, (2012) last accessed 13 February 2020 http://www.gov.yk.ca/legislation/acts/archives_c.pdf; Archives Act R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c. A-6, Northwest Territories (2018) last accessed 13 February 2020 <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/archives/archives.a.pdf> ; Archives Act, Consolidation of, S. Nu. 2010, c.3, s.1, Nunavut (2012) last accessed 13 February 2020 <https://www.nunavutlegislation.ca/en/download/file/fid/10771>

archivists. Nunavut's Department of Cultural and Heritage "Archives Policy" states the records of government, private archives, and records which document traditional knowledge or Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit "shall be preserved and made accessible to the public."²⁷ While these acts and policies have played an important role, absent are clauses which identify where the records must be stored and safeguarded. While it would seem implied that records of the territory, safeguarded by the territorial archivist, would be stored within the territory, nowhere in these acts is there explicit indication as to where the records must be stored. Including a clause on the place of storage would mandate the Territorial Archivist to ensure that records of the territory, in all but exceptional circumstances, remain in the territory.

Digital Considerations and Archival Ethics

Digitization can increase access to collections in ways previously impossible. An internet connection can now connect users to collections across the world. Yet digitization must be approached thoughtfully, particularly towards colonial, contested, sensitive and traumatic records. As Daniela Agostinho points out digitization does not necessarily solve all access obstacles, "and may in fact entrench: language barriers, unequal digital infrastructures, insufficient or inadequate metadata, radically incommensurate experiences of colonialism that dictate radically different ways of engaging with archival material."²⁸ What do archivists and users need to consider in the digital realm? Kirsten Thorpe, Kimberly Christen, Ry Moran and Allison Krebs have all commented on the need to consider Indigenous perspectives when digitizing and disseminating Indigenous records online. Christen highlights the positives and

²⁷ Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage, "Archives Policy" (2016) 1. Small variations for each. 1. Government ... "shall be preserved and made available by way of the access procedures for public records; 2. Private Archives ... "shall be preserved permanently and made accessible" 3. Inuit traditional knowledge "from either public or private sources shall be preserved and made accessible to the public.

²⁸ Daniela Agostinho "Archival encounters: rethinking access and care in digital colonial archives," *Archival Science* 19, no. 2 (2019): 162.

negatives arguing that “[w]hile digital technologies allow for materials to be repatriated quickly, circulated widely, and annotated endlessly, these same technologies pose challenges to indigenous communities who wish to maintain traditional cultural protocols for the viewing, circulation, and reproduction of these newly animated and annotated cultural materials.”²⁹

Thorpe encourages the archival community to introspectively look at their own role in the dissemination of Indigenous heritage and to relinquish control and work collaboratively to manage records.³⁰ Thorpe argues that “greater awareness should be built around the needs of communities to create practices that recognise that the protocols of one community may be different to another, and subsequently to that of the dominant western paradigm promoted in traditional archival practice.”³¹ Ry Moran, Director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, discusses both the sensitive nature of records pertaining to Indigenous children who went through the Residential School System and the challenging work of balancing the privacy of survivors and their families with the need to provide access to researchers to expose the truth of the system. Ultimately, Moran argues access and privacy must be guided by Indigenous peoples and that Indigenous records should be used “carefully and cautiously, engaging with the communities affected, consulting relevant stakeholders and challenging the fundamental power structures that lay beneath the questions of who has access to and control over records by and about Indigenous people.”³² Alison Krebs notes that since colonization,

²⁹ Kimberly Christen, “Opening Archives: Respectful Repatriation,” *American Archivist* Vol.74, no.1 (Spring/Summer 2011): 192. The term repatriation in the context of digital surrogates can be contentious as identified by Robin Boast and Jim Enote in their chapter, “Virtual Repatriation: It is neither Virtual nor Repatriation,” in *Heritage in the Context of Globalization: Europe and the Americas*, (Springer: New York 2013) 103-113. Kristen also noted the contentious nature of the term in her article.

³⁰ Kirsten Thorpe, “Indigenous records: Connecting, critiquing and diversifying collections.” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42, no. 2 (2014): 213.

³¹ Thorpe, “Indigenous records,” 213.

³² Ry Moran, “Indigenous people should decide on matters of access to archival information,” *International Journal of Circumpolar Health* 75, Issue 1 (2016) 32593. doi:10.3402/ijch. v75.32593.

information tended to flow away from communities when it was taken by non-Indigenous populations but that process has gradually reversed and that Indigenous peoples must be at the forefront of how this knowledge is accessed and cared for.³³

Indigenous peoples have both rights to as well as responsibilities for Indigenous knowledge in all its manifestations. We have a seven generational perspective. We have seemingly infinite patience and perseverance that trusts in the animation of our knowledge systems for the sustenance of our peoples. We think strategically, taking seriously the responsibility for connecting the hearts and the minds of all our relations. We perceive the fragmented captives contained in collections, in archives, in recordings, and we will their return, countering willful cultural genocide with willful cultural sovereignty. We recognize that we each have gifts to engage. And we trust that collectively we can catalyze changes of form that others cannot even imagine, let alone will into being, for the well-being of all.³⁴

Without a nuanced understanding of access protocols, particularly when settler archives hold Indigenous materials, there can be irresponsible calls for unrestricted access. One example from the Northwest Territories comes from Jamie Jelinski's tense visit to the NWT Archives. Jelinski, a doctoral student, sought unrestricted access to the Dr. Rhys-Jones collection. Jelinski's research centred around depictions of Inuit Tattoos by Qallunaat and he specifically was interested in 11 images of Inuit women with tattoos, nine of which had their breasts exposed.³⁵ On arrival to the archive, Jelinski encountered barriers to accessing the images. Despite the donor placing no restrictions on consulting the materials, Ian Moir, the Territorial Archivist, hesitated on granting full access, although he eventually allowed Jelinski copies after an usage agreement was signed.³⁶ Jelinski argues that Inuit should be the ones deciding whether these photos are accessible, citing the work of Kimberly Christen and her advocacy for online availability of Indigenous cultural belongings in Australia and the United States.³⁷ Yet his

³³ Alison Krebs, "Native America's twenty-first-century right to know," *Archival Science* Vol. 12 (2012): 182.

³⁴ Krebs, "Right to Know", 187.

³⁵ Jamie Jelinski, "Without Restriction? Inuit Tattooing and the Dr. Wyn Rhys-Jones Photograph Collection at the NWT Archives," *Visual Anthropology* 30, no. 4 (2017): 350.

³⁶ Jelinski, "Without Restriction?" 351.

³⁷ Jelinski, "Without Restriction?" 363-364.

insistence on unrestricted access lacks nuance when dealing with access and Indigenous knowledge. Jelinski seemingly ignored or missed one of Christen's key arguments which states that "not every instance of 'not seeing' is an abuse of power, but instead a practical implementation of cultural protocols aimed at maintaining specific types of knowledge in a world characterized by human differences."³⁸ Indeed, Moir and the NWT Archive's attempts to respect the families of these women by restricting digital access and requiring Jelinski to sign a rather standard researcher agreement speaks to proper steps when consultations have not yet occurred - particularly when records infused with Indigenous knowledge are donated by settlers to settler institutions.³⁹

Ethics and protocols guide the work of professional archivists and it is worth briefly examining a selection of those pertinent to Canadian archivists considering the Jelinski article. While Jelinski notes that the NWT Archives Operational Guidelines adhere to the International Council of Archives (ICA) code of ethics, the archive's guidelines also state that "archival functions are performed in accordance with professional codes of ethics and to national and international standards of the archives profession."⁴⁰ What are the other standards and protocols that a professional archivist in Canada would follow?

First, a Canadian trained professional archivist is cognizant of the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. The code of ethics and professional

³⁸ Christen, "Opening Archives" 191. See also Christen's "Does Information Really Want to be Free? Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Question of Openness" *International Journal of Communication* 6 (2012) pp 2870-2893.

³⁹ Erin Suliak, Discussion on Archival Ethics, presentation at the University of Manitoba, 25 January 2019.

⁴⁰ Jelinski cites the International Congress of Archives Code of Ethics but presumably means the International Council of Archives. Jelinski, "Without Restriction?" 351; Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, "NWT Archives Operations Manual", (n.d.) 8, last accessed 17 January 2020 https://web.archive.org/web/20151224114919/https://www.nwtarchives.ca/documents/nwt_archives_Operational_Guidelines.pdf.

conduct document consists of nine sections which guide the spirit and intent of archivists. In the current edition, Section 3.a-b addresses access concerns relevant to settler archives holding records containing Indigenous knowledge:

- a. We respect the privacy of the individuals who created or are the subjects of records, especially persons and communities who had no voice in the creation, transmission, disposition, or preservation of the records.
- b. In providing and managing access to records we are sensitive to the evolving contexts of individuals (living or dead), organizations, or communities that are the subjects of the records, reconsidering access conditions as necessary in light of that sensitivity.⁴¹

Comparing these two points with the actions of Territorial Archivist Ian Moir, it is understandable why he was hesitant to provide copies to Jelinski. Records and their associated provenance factor into the reinterpretation of access. While the donor may not have seen fit to restrict access to certain photographs, considering their sensitive nature and the lack of input or contact with the families of these images, access was rightly restricted.

A second example, though this is more specific for archivists working with records pertinent to Inuit Nunangat, is the recent Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami publication: *National Inuit Strategy on Research*.⁴² The publication has numerous sections relevant to archives, particularly data sovereignty. Section 4.7 states: “Inuit are best positioned to determine how information should be stored, analysed, monitored, used, shared, and preserved in ways that maximize benefits to our communities, while minimizing harm.”⁴³ Ultimately, this translates to archives

⁴¹ Association of Canadian Archivists, “ACA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct”, (18 October 2017) 3, last accessed 2 January 2020
https://archivists.ca/resources/Documents/Governance%20and%20Structure/aca_code_of_ethics_final_october_2017.pdf.

⁴² See also Section 5. of the Association of Canadian Archivists, “ACA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct”

⁴³ Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, “National Inuit Strategy on Research” (2018) 21. Last accessed 26 January 2020,
https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ITK_NISR-Report_English_low_res.pdf.

ensuring that if there are collections which contain Inuit records, that communities be consulted, and care taken before unrestricted access is provided.

Thirdly, archivists working with Indigenous records are increasingly aware of the First Nations Principles of OCAP and their relevance to archives. The four principles consist of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession. As made clear in the First Nations Information Governance Centre document “The Path to First Nations Information Governance”, the principles cannot be cherry picked, rather they must remain one whole.⁴⁴ All four principles have relevance to archival ethics, and particularly control and access in the NWT Archives example. “The principle of control asserts that First Nations people, their communities and representative bodies must control how information about them is collected, used and disclosed.”⁴⁵ For access, FNIGC argues that “First Nations must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities, regardless of where it is held. The principle also refers to the right of First Nations communities and organizations to manage and make decisions regarding who can access their collective information.”⁴⁶ The principles of control and access are highly relevant to calls for unrestricted access from users. Indigenous communities and families, ultimately, should retain the final say in whether these records are made accessible.

Canadian archivists are also familiar with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the many articles pertinent to archives within it.⁴⁷ To

⁴⁴ First Nations Information Governance Centre. Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP™): The Path to First Nations Information Governance. May 2014. (Ottawa: The First Nations Information Governance Centre, May 2014). 5.

⁴⁵ First Nations Information Governance Centre. Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP™), 5.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 5.

⁴⁷ United Nations, “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” last accessed 17 March 2020, https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf.

highlight a few, Article 13.1 states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems, and literatures.”⁴⁸ Article 31.1 states that

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures. ... They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.⁴⁹

Again, ensuring how information is presented and accessed is a recurring principle among these documents.

A fifth example is the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials - developed in 2006 and recently adopted by the Society of American Archivists in 2018.⁵⁰ Under the accessibility and use section, the protocols offer instruction on how archivists and librarians can proceed and adapt their access protocols accordingly based on the contents of the records. Archivists must “[r]ecognize that the conditions under which knowledge can be ethically and legally acquired, archived, preserved, accessed, published, or otherwise used change through time.”⁵¹ The protocols note that access should not be perceived as something static. This is, once again, relevant with regards to the decision made by Moir in the case discussed above.

William T. Hagan coined the term “Archival Captive” in 1978 to describe Indigenous peoples’ place in a mountain of records concerning Indigenous peoples in the United States written largely from a settler perspective which was, as Hagan describes, “unsympathetic to the

⁴⁸ United Nations, “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” 12-13.

⁴⁹ United Nations, “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” 22-23.

⁵⁰ Archivist Circle, “Protocols for Native American Archival Materials”, last accessed 14 February 2019, <http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/protocols.html#Accessibility>.

⁵¹ Archivist Circle, “Protocols for Native American Archival Materials”, last accessed 14 February 2019, <http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/protocols.html#Accessibility>.

Indian viewpoint – if not downright hostile.”⁵² Hagan’s description is applicable to Canadian settler archives which hold large volumes of records and data on Indigenous peoples from a settler perspective. Hagan, at the end of his article, pleads with archivists to remember that they have the ‘real power’ to facilitate or frustrate Indigenous peoples’ “drive for justice.”⁵³ Archivists with awareness of these codes, protocols, and publications are well positioned to facilitate access in a manner which takes into consideration notions of control and ownership.

Value and Meaning in Archives

The Archives is important to Yukoners for many reasons. It keeps the records of government and the evidence of decisions that shape our society. It holds the photographs, films and correspondence of families who lived in Yukon and created its communities. It preserves the voices of First Nation elders, political leaders and local heroes. These historical images, sounds and words form our collective memory and the foundation of who we are today.⁵⁴

Yukon Premier Darrel Pasloski’s opening message in the history of the Yukon Archives *For the Record: Yukon Archives 1972-2012* touches on aspects that highlight the value of archives to society. Archives acquire, appraise, preserve, describe, and make accessible records which provide *evidence* of governments’ decisions and they contain records which facilitate the construction of social memory. Richard Cox argues that

the chief value of records is, in fact, a broad accountability binding individuals with each other and with governments, organisations, and society across space and time. Records created in the normal course of business provide evidence of actions, decision, and intentions, both legal and illegal, proper and improper, and wise and misguided.⁵⁵

Cox’s description captures one side of the dichotomy of the value of archives focused on evidence and accountability. Archival scholars also recognize the value of archives and memory.

⁵² William T. Hagan, “Archival Captive – The American Indian,” *American Archivist* Vol. 41. no. 2 (April 1978): 137.

⁵³ Hagan, “Archival Captive,” 142.

⁵⁴ Darrel Pasloski, “A Message from the Premier” in *For the Record: Yukon Archives 1972-2012* (Library and Archives Canada in Publication Cataloguing: Whitehorse, 2012), v.

⁵⁵ Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace eds., *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society* (Connecticut: Quorum Books, 2002) 4.

Records play an important socio-cultural role in the construction of collective memory and the re-interpretation of established narratives, though the relationships between archival records and memory is complex. In her article “Touchstones: Considering the Relationship between Memory and Archives” Laura Millar argues that “[r]ecords are not memories. Rather, they are triggers or touchstones that lead to the recollection of past events. And there is not a one-to-one relationship between the record kept and the memory it stimulates.”⁵⁶ Indeed, how one user interacts with a record and the effect of the interaction will differ from a new user’s interaction with that same record. How each user constructs their narrative from the same record will be unique to that user.

There is clear evidence that archives are valuable to society but as Terry Cook points out value is different from meaning. In the festschrift for archival theorist Hugh Taylor, Cook distinguishes value from meaning when he argues that, “[m]eaning is more direct, and much deeper, than just indirectly facilitating or reflecting the value that others find in archives. Archives have meaning in part, of course, because they are valuable. But archives also have meaning – as records, institutions, profession, activity – because they are an open window on our common humanity.”⁵⁷ Cook’s metaphor is important for visualizing the significance of archives. It helps frame what lies beyond and awaits the user if they would only peer through. Cook also discusses meaning and the ability of archives to act like a centripetal force inviting society to a common centre to engage, share, and co-exist. Indeed, Cook argues that archives “collectively offer a sense of identity and a tangible connection to community. They let us belong. More yet, archives are (and represent) a foundational desire for justice in human affairs, a potential

⁵⁶ Laura Millar, “Touchstones: Considering the Relationship between Memory and Archives,” *Archivaria* 61 (Spring 2006): 114.

⁵⁷ Terry Cook, “Imagining Archives,” in *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections by Hugh A. Taylor* (Lanham, Md: Society of American Archivists in association with Scarecrow Press, 2003) 19.

safeguard for our vital interdependent relationship with ecological systems, and a hopeful symbol of our spirituality as human beings – a means for transcending this mortal sphere. Archives touch our souls.”⁵⁸

Archivist James O’Toole echoes Cook’s ideas in a chapter which examined his involvement in the trial between the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for the Study of Non-Violent Social Change and Boston University concerning the ownership over the split collection of Martin Luther King Jr. papers. After the trial’s conclusion, O’Toole assessed his involvement and arrived at the understanding that King’s records “were valued not just for information they contained, but also for their power to forge human connections that were not apparent to the participants themselves.”⁵⁹ The ability of archives to “forge human connections” and to “touch our souls” demonstrates the meaning and value associated with them. However, they must also be viewed critically.

Archives have long been an instrument of the state to attempt to manage and establish control over what and who has been, and will be, remembered. Inversely, archives and the decisions made by archivists, have determined who has been forgotten, silenced or erased, and can shape how other people and communities are remembered. Bastian notes that “archivists who are well aware that the materials they appraise, preserve, and manage are critical ingredients in the memory-making process.”⁶⁰ To use Cook’s “open window” metaphor, humanity, which the user gazes out upon, has all been shaped by the archivist. How archives collect, control, and dispose of records has been the subject of theoretical debate for many years.⁶¹ Archival scholars

⁵⁸ Cook, *Imagining Archives*, 19.

⁵⁹ James M. O’Toole, “Archives on Trial: The Strange Case of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers” in *Archives and the Public Good*, 34.

⁶⁰ Jeannette Bastian, “Flowers for Homestead: A Case Study in Archives and Collective Memory,” *American Archivist* 72, no. 1 (2009): 116.

⁶¹ For a brief history of appraisal theory, see both of Terry Cook’s articles “We are what we keep; We Keep What We Are: Archival Appraisal Past, Present, and Future,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32, no. 2 (2011): 173-

such as Joan Schwartz, Helen Samuels, Terry Cook, Verne Harris, Sue McKemmish, Eric Ketelaar, to name a few, have all contributed to discussions of imbalances of power in the archive.

Traditionally, records had long been viewed within archival theory as neutral, impartial and objective.⁶² Yet, as Cook argues, “Nothing is neutral. Nothing is impartial. Nothing is objective. Everything is shaped, presented, represented, re-presented, symbolized, signified, signed, constructed by the speaker, photographer, writer, for a set purpose.”⁶³ Similarly, Eric Ketelaar describes how the record is “‘membranic’, the membrane allowing the infusing and exhaling of values which are embedded in each and every activation.”⁶⁴ Archives and their records must be viewed critically and recognize that the selection, arrangement, management, access and use of their records manifests cultural biases and subjectivities. As a result, archival records have not always been viewed as trustworthy by all communities and all segments of society. In his examination of the trustworthy digital repository concept, Greg Bak found that the 2002 OCLC-RLG report, *Trusted Digital Repositories: Attributes and Responsibilities*, failed to adequately address the definition of “trust” in archives which is not a simple binary of trusted or not trusted.⁶⁵ Bak notes that though archives and their contents might be perceived as valuable and useful, ultimately, the repositories themselves are not uniformly trusted. To cite one example, Bak highlights how distrust of the federal government and the churches on the part of

189; “What’s Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 17-63.

⁶² Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, (London: P. Lund, Humphries & co., ltd, 1937); Terry Eastwood, “What is archival theory and why is it important?” *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994): 122-130; Luciana Duranti, “The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory”, *American Archivist* Vol. 57 no. 3 (Spring 1994): 328-344.

⁶³ Terry Cook, “Archival science and postmodernism: new formulations for old concepts” *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 7.; See also Verne Harris, *Exploring Archives: An Introduction to Archival Ideas and Practice in South Africa* (Pretoria: National Archives of South Africa, 2000) 22.

⁶⁴ Eric Ketelaar, “Tacit Narratives: The Meaning of Archives,” *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 138.

⁶⁵ Greg Bak, “Trusted by whom? TDRs, standards culture and the nature of trust,” *Archival Science* 16 (2016): 377.

the Indigenous negotiators of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement culminated in including a section in the agreement which required both parties to hand over copies of relevant records to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee and to create an Indigenous-focused archives for them (today known as the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation).⁶⁶ The distrust of state and mainstream archives has in many instances, such as the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn or the *Ara Irititja* Indigenous archives in Australia, given rise to the establishment of community, Indigenous, and activist archives.⁶⁷

The literature and focus on community archives continue to grow and there has been much debate over defining community archives and community archiving. Jarrett Drake argues that community and community-based modifiers be dropped and that there is need for a shift which “requires transition beyond static notions of ‘local’ communities where things, people, or ideas are ‘based’ and instead gravitating towards an orientation that envisions the political projects of archives... as connections more than places.”⁶⁸ Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd highlight differences behind the establishment of community archives. Flinn, Stevens, and Shephard note how

[t]he establishment of a community archive is, for many, a form of activism that seeks to redress or rebalance this pattern of privileging and marginalising. In other cases, although there is often an underlying assumption that these are histories not told or preserved elsewhere, the inspiration is not so directly political or cultural. Rather, it is a manifestation of a shared enthusiasm for the history of a place, occupation or interest.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Bak, “Trusted by whom”, 377.

⁶⁷ Lesbian Herstory Archives, “Lesbian Herstory Archives” (2018), last accessed 9 January 2020 <http://www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org/>; Ara Irititja, “Archives” (2019), last accessed 9 January 2020 <https://www.irititja.com/>.

⁶⁸ Jarrett Drake, “Seismic Shifts: On Archival Fact and Fictions,” *Medium* 20 August 2018, last accessed 28 February 2019, <https://medium.com/community-archives/seismic-shifts-on-archival-fact-and-fictions-6db4d5c655ae>

⁶⁹ Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, Elizabeth Shepherd, “Whose memories, whose archives? Independent community archives, autonomy and the mainstream,” *Archival Science* 9 (2009): 74.

In the north, apart from the territorial archives, minimal funding is available for archives and small local heritage institutions which operate largely on volunteer labour. The absence of funding has hampered the ability of some archives councils to promote the benefits of archiving and records management to Indigenous and community organizations with archival and potentially archival records. Yukon has pushed hard since 2012 to hire community archivists to travel around the territory to help analyze the current archival state and needs of these organizations. In their 2012 needs assessment report, the Yukon Council of Archives found that there was overall concern that the records created by Indigenous communities would forever be lost if proper record keeping and archiving is not implemented.⁷⁰ Since 2012, the Yukon Council of Archives hired Laura Millar and Jenny Lu who produced three reports and carried out workshops across the territory.

Archives can play an important role in the work of social justice. In Duff et al.'s "Social Justice Impact of Archives," the authors argue that "one of the most potent aspects of the content held by archives is their utility or potentiality for impacting social justice."⁷¹ However, users must be both made aware and be capable of accessing these records in order to enact social justice change. Where archives are located and where these records are managed matters, because access to them is vital for citizens' identities. When records are perceived to be hidden, as Huiling Feng notes, the "right to access information for identity is in some sense denied, and to that end, it has become a call for modern social justice and citizens' equality to maximize the openness and free sharing of records, to return more information from archives to the public."⁷²

⁷⁰ Claire Daitch, "Yukon Archival Needs Assessment: An analysis of Yukon's holdings and recommendations for redesigned archives advisory services," (Whitehorse: Yukon Council of Archives, April 2012): 4.

⁷¹ Duff, Wendy M., Andrew Flinn, Karen Emily Suurtamm, and David A. Wallace. "Social Justice Impact of Archives: A Preliminary Investigation," *Archival Science* 13, no. 4 (2013): 319.

⁷² Huiling Feng, "Identity and archives: return and expansion of the social value of archives," *Archival Science* 17 (2017): 105.

When Nunavut's records were transferred to Gatineau, they were not hidden from the public per se, as the move was publicly advertised and discussed in Nunavut's legislature; yet the records were physically transferred far from the very people for whom these records are most relevant.

The Value of Records of the North, in the North

William Shakespeare's quote from the *Tempest*, "What's Past is Prologue," has been borrowed by archivists and archival institutions alike. The words are etched into the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. In Winnipeg, Manitoba, pedestrians and cyclists can find the quote illuminated on an inscribed handrail picket as they meander over the west side of Osborne Bridge. Canadian archival scholar, Terry Cook, also borrowed the quote for his article which chronicled 100 years of archival ideas. Poignantly, Cook argues that "[w]ithout continuity with the past, future directions lack legitimacy. Without understanding our predecessors' intellectual struggles, we lose the benefit of their experiences and are condemned to repeat their errors. Before archivists as a profession can write their prologue for the next century, they need to understand better their own past."⁷³ Cook's words should resonate particularly for users of archives in the north. The notion of moving forward without being condemned to repeat the same errors is predicated on an ability to understand their predecessors' actions. Yet for many northerners, the ability to understand and access their history is hindered by the removal or storage of records thousands of kilometres away. Mark David Turner wrote in the *Hill Times* that archives of the north must be made accessible for northerners. Turner lists three main values for records of the north being made accessible in the north: social and cultural value; the potential to develop infrastructure value; and the potential to develop capacity value in making records

⁷³ Terry Cook, "What's Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 19.

accessible to Northern Canada.⁷⁴ He argues that in absence of “federal public policy that provides a clear path for northern Canadians to access, use, and interpret their archival records, there are few opportunities for municipal and regional governments to realize the actual and potential value of these records.”⁷⁵ It is easy to find examples of the benefits associated with situating an archive close to the location of the records creation. Indeed, by examining the establishment of territorial, community and Indigenous archives in the north the benefits become clear.

In 1972, the Yukon Archives became the first territorial archive to open in the north. Its establishment signalled a welcome change in the territory’s management of its archival heritage. Offering a glimpse into the state of Yukon’s archival management, the Friends of the Yukon Archives Society described the dreadful conditions before the opening of the Yukon Archives:

Prior to 1972, a safe place to preserve records did not exist in the territory. Because of this, the Yukon’s documentary heritage was occasionally destroyed by fire, flood and other disasters. Records were sold to dealers from outside the territory and documentary sources were taken from the Yukon to be located in archives, libraries and museums far away which limited opportunities for Yukon residents to study and understand their history.⁷⁶

The denial of opportunity to “study and understand their history” brings Jeannette Bastian’s access arguments to mind. To address problems of preservation, access, and the removal of records, the Yukon Archives was established and officially opened on 10 December 1972.

Promptly after the establishment of the archive, pertinent territorial records stored at the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) were repatriated to the Yukon.⁷⁷ The return of these records was only

⁷⁴ Mark David Turner, “Northern archives, northern development” *The Hill Times*, 25 Oct. 2017, accessed 27 Nov. 2018.

⁷⁵ Turner, “Northern archives”, *The Hill Times*.

⁷⁶ Friends of the Yukon Archives Society, *For the Record: Yukon Archives 1972-2012* (Library and Archives Canada in Publication Cataloguing: Whitehorse, 2012) 2.

⁷⁷ Friends of the Yukon Archives Society, *For the Record*, 2; The Public Archives of Canada was the predecessor to the National Archives of Canada, predecessor to the Library and Archives of Canada <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/national-archives-of-canada>.

possible, and stipulated by the PAC, if the Yukon Archives secured an adequate facility to store and manage the records.⁷⁸

David Leonard's *Archivaria* article, "Establishing the Archives of the Northwest Territories: A Regional Case Study in Legality", includes an examination of the catalysts for the establishment of the NWT Archives. Leonard identifies trepidations over "the disorganization, deterioration and dispersal of documentary materials relating to the North."⁷⁹ In addition to the preceding concerns, Leonard highlights calls from the Northwest Territories for the repatriation of and control over government records held in the nation's capital. Calls can be traced back to 1964 when the Yellowknife Museum Society submitted a brief to the Commissioner and Territorial Council of the Northwest Territories proposing the establishment of an archives in Yellowknife. The Yellowknife Museum Society wrote that "we believe that good case can be made out that there exists an ever-present and rapidly growing need for the location of pertinent archives within the boundaries of the Territories, where they may be accessible to the public at that point where the need is most immediate and from which the greatest number can be conveniently served."⁸⁰ The need for an archive further grew when the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development transferred original records to the Territorial Department of Planning and Program Evaluation. The Territorial Department microfilmed the documents and began to destroy the originals before the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development halted the project and recommended that the Northwest Territories appoint a

⁷⁸ For a Caribbean example see Rita Tjien Fook "The return of the historical archives (1661-1975) from the Netherlands to Suriname" in *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record: An Archives Reader* Jeannette A. Bastian, Stanley H. Griffin, and John A. Aarons (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2018).

⁷⁹ David W. Leonard, "Establishing the Archives of the Northwest Territories: A Regional Case Study in Legality", *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984) 72.

⁸⁰ N-1979-555: 2-3 Yellowknife Museum Society, "A Brief for Submission to the commissioner and Territorial Council of the Northwest Territories on Territorial Archives submitted by Yellowknife Museum Society" October 1964.

territorial archivist in light of this error.⁸¹ However, infrastructure to house and preserve records remained absent in the early 1970's. With the construction of the PWNHC and its official opening in April 1979, the archives at last found a physical location to operate in and begin to collect and preserve government and private records of the Northwest Territories. The archive was not without its challenges. Leonard pointed to several issues such as working as part of a museum in a heritage centre and managing an archive with a mandate similar in size to provincial archives without the necessary staff and resources.⁸² Nevertheless, like the Yukon, the acquisition of physical infrastructure was an important step for managing and retaining the records of the territory, in the territory. These examples are indicative of the potential for Nunavut.

Reclaiming and Repatriating Records of the North

Beginning in 2017, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the national Inuit organization in Canada, handed out their inaugural Inuit Cultural Repatriation Award. According to the ITK's website, the award is "presented to organizations that demonstrate leadership in recognizing and respecting Inuit cultural rights and working to overcome the misappropriation of Inuit cultural heritage."⁸³ On 14 August 2018, ITK presented the award to the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, the Anglican Church General Synod Archives and Dr. Val Marie Johnson of Saint Mary's University for repatriating copies of archival materials held at the Anglican Church General Synod Archives concerning the St. John's Eskimo Residential School at Shingle Point,

⁸¹ This was made explicit in the 1971 "Survey of Territorial Records in the Northwest Territories" report, Leonard, "Establishing the Archives of the Northwest Territories," 72.

⁸² Leonard, "Establishing the Archives of the Northwest Territories," 77.

⁸³ Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, "Inaugural Inuit Cultural Repatriation Award Recognizes Work to Rectify Cultural Appropriation", 20 September 2017, accessed 10 October 2018 <https://www.itk.ca/inaugural-inuit-cultural-repatriation-award-recognizes-work-to-rectify-cultural-appropriation/>.

Yukon which falls in the Inuvialuit Settlement area. Records of the north frequently were transferred to centres far away from their creator's place of origin, leaving a paucity of information for those in the north. Repatriation efforts are an essential method for returning records to the north to ensure records relevant to northerners are accessible.

Other methods of connecting Indigenous peoples and northerners with records relevant to them have occurred in the form of naming projects such Library and Archives Canada's (LAC) Project Naming and the Hudson's Bay Company Archives' Names and Knowledge Initiative.⁸⁴ Carol Payne, who collaborated with the Nunavut Sivuniksavut Training Program (NSTP) on LAC's project, explains that the methodology behind Project Naming is known as "visual repatriation, the recovery and recontextualization of photographs depicting Aboriginal peoples by the same Aboriginal groups or in collaboration with outside researchers."⁸⁵ The idea for Project Naming was conceived by Murray Angus, an instructor with NSTP. Murray, who had brought NSTP students to Library and Archives Canada to find photographs of their communities, proposed the naming project "as a way to give people from Nunavut access to the photographic collections of Inuit held at LAC to foster dialogue between Nunavut youth and Elders, and to reclaim these "lost" names."⁸⁶ Library and Archives Canada digitized photographs and stored them on CDs which were taken by Inuit youth to meet with elders and identify names and places. One benefit of the project was improved descriptive information about the photographs. Yet more significantly, as Payne notes, the project helped connect students with

⁸⁴ Other notable photo identification projects have been the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre's Remember the Children project see Krista McCracken "Community Archival Practice: Indigenous Grassroots Collaboration at the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre," *American Archivist* (Spring/Summer 2015): 181-191.

⁸⁵ Carol Payne, "'You Hear It in Their Voice': Photographs and Cultural Consolidation among Inuit Youths and Elders" in *Image and Memory: Oral History and Photography*. Alexander Freund and Alistair Thomson eds (London: Palgrave Press, 2011) 102.

⁸⁶ Library and Archives Canada, "introduction: The story behind Project Naming", last accessed 15 November 2018 <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/inuit/020018-1010-e.html>

Elders by using the photographs to bridge a generational gap and it built important partnerships and relationships between the NSTP and LAC.⁸⁷ Since Project Naming began, as of November 2018, over 10,000 photographs have been digitized.

In Winnipeg, Manitoba, the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA) holds a wealth of records of the company's operations in the north. The HBC established over 60 posts across Canada's three territories, leaving a sizeable textual and visually diverse set of records. However, the photographs lacked good descriptive information which, in addition to knowledge repatriation, led to the HBCA developing its Names and Knowledge Initiative. In an interview with *Nunatsiaq* news, HBCA archivist Michelle Rydz describes the imbalances of the HBCA's holdings and their hope to ameliorate the photographs' descriptions. Rydz points out that "the non-indigenous, non-Inuit, perspective is quite well documented in the Hudson's Bay Co. holdings, ... We want to be able to have [Inuit] communities feel that these records belong to them as well and we want to be able to make them as accessible as possible."⁸⁸ HBCA brought photographs to Rankin Inlet on 15 September 2015 and community members who attended identified over 40 people.⁸⁹ HBCA also digitized images which featured Inuit in their collection and made them accessible for viewers to search and, if they wished, to identify an individual by contacting the archives by email or on Facebook. Ultimately the project remains concerned with sharing knowledge and improving descriptions and exemplifies one approach for southern archives that hold northern collections to take.

⁸⁷ Payne, "You hear it in their voice" 106.

⁸⁸ Steve Ducharme, "Archivists seeking names of Arctic Inuit in historic photos" *Nunatsiaq News*, 2 October 2015, last accessed 5 January 2020
https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674archivists_seeking_names_of_arctic_inuit_in_historic_photos/.

⁸⁹ Ducharme, "Archivists seeking names of Arctic Inuit in historic photos" *Nunatsiaq News*.

Records in the North

Though large quantities of northern records will remain in the south, there are numerous institutions which hold meaningful records of the north, in the north. In Yellowknife, NWT, the NWT Archives houses an invaluable photographic collection. The James Jerome collection documents the life of Gwich'in on the land from the 1960-1970s. The story of James Jerome exemplifies why archiving in the north matters. James Jerome was the first professional Gwich'in photographer in the Northwest Territories; he died tragically in a fire in his home in 1979 in Inuvik.⁹⁰ Recovered from the home were 9000 of Jerome's photographs which were donated by his partner Elizabeth in trust for their son Thomas to the NWT Archives.⁹¹ With conservation efforts, a wealth of negatives were saved. During his time as a professional photographer, James extensively documented Gwich'in settlements in the late 1970s and left a visual treasure of fish camps and community life. The photographs alone are invaluable records; however, they were without descriptive information. In 2008 and 2009, the NWT Archives worked in partnership with Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute to identify places and names. After several years of work and subsequent workshops held in Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson, over 3500 images were given new descriptions.⁹²

A key function of an archive is to promote outreach. The NWT Archives developed and produced an online exhibit on James Jerome and his photographic projects titled: *James Jerome: Through a Gwich'in Lens*. Viewers can learn about Jerome, the exhibit process, and his

⁹⁰ NWT Archives, "NWT Timeline" accessed, 20 April 2017 <http://www.nwttimeline.ca/1975/1979Jerome.htm>.

⁹¹ Moose FM News, "In Pictures: 1970s NWT Through the Eyes of James Jerome" *My Yellowknife Now*, 7 January 2016, accessed 20 April 2017 <http://www.myyellowknifenow.com/10744/in-pictures-1970s-nwt-through-the-eyes-of-james-jerome/>.

⁹² NWT Archives "About Exhibit" accessed 20 April 2017, http://www.nwtexhibits.ca/jerome/about_exhibit.html

photographic collections which documented fish camps, communities, portraits, and recreation.⁹³ Erin Suliak, now Territorial Archivist at the NWT Archives, explains the importance of the collection and why acquiring collections closer to the place of creation is more meaningful: “It’s not to say that photos taken by visitors aren’t important, but they are an outsider’s perspective. This is an insider’s perspective and it is incredibly precious to us.”⁹⁴ Jerome himself saw this distinction. In an interview with the *Native Press*, nearly 40 years before Suliak’s interview, Jerome argued that “[i]f you’ve lived in the North, in many ways you have a trained eye to see things that would make a good picture, whereas someone else may not pick it up by camera.”⁹⁵ Indeed, as an insider, Jerome was able to document Gwich’in life in ways an outsider simply could not and his story shared through this online exhibit is one example which highlights why archiving records of the north in the north is so meaningful.

In the Yukon, possibilities are numerous for a collection that has sat in the territorial archives’ storage for years. The Council of Yukon First Nations have 1700 boxes stored filled with records which document the modern political history of Yukon’s Indigenous people with the Canadian government. CBC journalist Paul Tukker interviewed Grand Chief Peter Johnston who described the collection as a “treasure waiting to be seen.”⁹⁶ Recently the council applied and were successful in receiving funding from Library and Archives Canada’s Documentary Heritage Communities Program to arrange and describe the collection.⁹⁷

⁹³ NWT Archives. *James Jerome: Through a Gwich’in Lens*, last accessed 20 April 2017

<http://www.nwtexhibits.ca/jerome/>.

⁹⁴ My Yellowknife Now, “In Pictures” <http://www.myyellowknifenow.com/10744/in-pictures-1970s-nwt-through-the-eyes-of-james-jerome/>.

⁹⁵ *Native Press*, “Native Press hires two Natives”, 1 April 1977, 8.

⁹⁶ Paul Tukker “‘A treasure waiting to be seen’: Yukon First Nations crack open massive archive”, *C.B.C.*, 3 November 2018, last accessed 28 February 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cyfn-archives-records-project-1.4890418>.

⁹⁷ Library and Archives Canada, “Funding history 2018-2019” last accessed 17 February 2020 <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/documentary-heritage-communities-program/Pages/funding-history-2018-2019.aspx>.

In the summer of 2018, Helen Fallding returned to the Yukon to donate her records of the first LGBTQ2S organization to the Yukon Archives. Fallding and her former partner Lisa Tremblay formed the first organization in 1990. The records consist largely of newspaper articles, articles written by Fallding, posters, handwritten notes documenting discriminatory phone calls, copies from Hansards, and personal photographs. Though Fallding and Tremblay eventually left the Yukon in 1993 due to concerns over their safety, their activism sowed the seeds for future LGBTQ2S organizations in the Yukon. In one audio file, Fallding discusses the backlash received over her activism in north: “Everything I ever did publicly as a queer person in the Yukon I got hate mail and often threats. And you know at that point being a gay activist in the north was literally choosing to risk your life for a cause.”⁹⁸ Helen’s records are an invaluable source for those interested in the early history of LGBTQ2S activism in the Yukon. In her article in the Yukon News, Fallding intimates her desires for the collection: “I hope others who have helped shape Yukon’s queer path will expand the collection by donating their own records and photos, since I fantasize about students mining those records for future human rights projects.”⁹⁹ Place played a significant role in Fallding’s decision to donate the records in the Yukon. These records easily could have been deposited with Arquives, Canada’s national LGBTQ2+ archives, which is based in Toronto, as Arquives currently holds textual and audio records of Helen Fallding and Lisa Tremblay.¹⁰⁰ Yet, place matters for donors and Fallding’s interview with Yukon News underscored her desire to see the records deposited and used in the north.

⁹⁸ Helen Fallding, Yukon Archives backup shared with author “HelenFallding.mp3” 1:28-1:43 (uploaded 2018).

⁹⁹ Helen Fallding, “Reflecting on 25 years of the struggle for queer rights in the Yukon” *Yukon News* 19 June 2018, last accessed 24 January 2020, <https://www.yukon-news.com/opinion/reflecting-on-25-years-of-the-struggle-for-queer-rights-in-the-yukon/>.

¹⁰⁰ The Arquives, “Helen Fallding, Lisa Tremblay” last accessed 15 February 2020 <https://arquives.andornot.com/en/permalink/descriptions871>.

Advocacy for Archives in the North

Archives in the north must be advocated for. Advocacy must happen at all levels of government. Archival scholar Tom Nesmith argues that the “most serious problem is the overall socio-political weakness of archives. Archivists do not have sufficient authority and resources for their work because citizens are not fully aware of the *specific* uses and societal benefits of archives.”¹⁰¹ Archivists, archives, councils and allies must inform society and its citizens of the value and benefits of archives.¹⁰² There are significant risks if the profession is idle. Gregory Sanford highlights the risk by posing a rhetorical question in the Society of American Archivists’ bimonthly magazine *Archival Outlook*: “If we [archives] are not perceived as being integral to our institution’s functions and activities, then how can we compete for the attention and resources necessary to succeed?”¹⁰³ To succeed, archives in the north must be perceived as being integral. Director Sean Guistini of Nunavut Arctic College Media is taking the steps to create a digital archive of repatriated digital archival materials that will be made “available to teachers, students, community members, researchers and legislators across the territory.”¹⁰⁴ Archivists need to work outwards to reach as many sectors and individuals as possible.

¹⁰¹ Tom Nesmith, “Toward the Archival Stage in the History of Knowledge,” *Archivaria* [Online], Volume 80 (19 November 2015): 120.

¹⁰² Tom Nesmith argued that archivists “will need to mobilize their key allies, the direct users of archives, and with them, the beneficiaries of archival services in the wider public, along with political allies of every stripe, in order to influence institutions of all kinds that society has a much greater stake in the fate of archival records than ever before. Tom Nesmith, “The Ox and the Virgin: Archives Without the Boring Bits” in Christine A. Butterill, ed., *St. Paul’s College, University of Manitoba: Facing the New Millennium* (Altona: MB: Friesens, 2016) 249-250.

¹⁰³ Gregory Sanford, “The Value of Public Archives: How Vermont State Archives Leverages Current Events,” *Archival Outlook* (Sept/Oct 2010): 6.

¹⁰⁴ Sean Guistini, “Nunavut Arctic College Media Joins ACUP – Introducing Too Many People – Digital Archive Repatriation Project – Hunter Education Films” *Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences blog*, 15 May 2017, last accessed 21 November 2018 <http://www.ideas-idees.ca/blog/nunavut-arctic-college-media-joins-acup-introducing-too-many-people-digital-archive>.

For Nunavut, a greater emphasis must be placed on arguing for a territorial facility or facilities to house the territory's heritage. This is not to say there has been an absence of calls or attempts to establish a facility.¹⁰⁵ Nor is it to say there have not been great achievements at the community level. Rather, a change of approach in advocating for archives in the north is required. Educating the public of the value of archives and the multiple uses of archives, as Nesmith points out, is a start. The public also must be made aware of the constraints placed on new acquisitions and preservation challenges because of the lack of physical infrastructure dedicated to house its own cultural heritage. Archivists also need to shift their perception of their role. By actively involving society in the archive, we might find more allies to support the development of infrastructure and increase our resources. Richard Valpy, former Territorial Archivist at the NWT Archives, notes that we should no longer work by ourselves as “missionaries”, nor focus so heavily on internal collaboration, and instead work collaboratively with partners outside the profession.¹⁰⁶ Nunavut faces unique challenges and I believe a territorial facility might alleviate the challenge of records migrating south. It will provide a facility for archivists to work as stewards, to educate communities on proper records management, to house records in danger, and to facilitate knowledge production. A territorial facility would will both archival records and cultural objects home, fulfilling the desires of Nunavummiut to see their heritage in their own territory.

¹⁰⁵ Quite the opposite. See Jane George, “Federal money will fund Nunavut heritage centres, website” *Nunatsiaq News* 19 July 2007 last accessed 28 February 2019 http://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/Federal_money_will_fund_Nunavut_heritage_centres_website/; Nunatsiaq News “MLAs urge action on stalled Nunavut Heritage Centre” 2 Nov. 2012 last accessed http://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674mlas_urge_action_on_nunavut_heritage_centre/; Jane George “Former Nunavut premier ratchets up call for heritage centre” *Nunatsiaq News* 26 Oct. 2017 last accessed 27 Nov. 2018 http://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674former_premier_ratches_up_call_for_nunavut_heritage_centre/;

¹⁰⁶ D. Richard Valpy, “From Missionaries to Managers: Making the Case for a Canadian Documentary Heritage Commission,” *Archivaria* 82 (2016): 139-143.

Chapter 2: The North Archived: Analyzing Archival Challenges in the Canadian Territories

In this chapter, I answer three questions: How has the north been archived and by whom? What are the challenges that have arisen in the attempts to archive the north? How have archives responded to - or mitigated - these challenges? I will provide a brief history and survey of archives and archival organizations in the north. I will then examine archival challenges - past and present - across the territories. I argue that an expansive geography, the removal and retention of records, non-digital and digital infrastructure, education, professional development, staffing, finances and language present some of the many challenges to northern archives. Archives in turn have responded in ways to mitigate these and continue to do so in the digital age.

Archival North

In order to conceptualize the northern archival ecosystem, we must imagine a web. Archives in Canada's territories are one among the myriad of threads which compose this structure. The threads intertwine with Indigenous knowledge, literary work, history, film, scientific studies, records from southern Canadian and International repositories. The web and threads are not static. They continue to grow in the digital realm with the proliferation of digital media. While an analysis of each strand is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will examine one: the northern archival thread and its comparatively recent history in Canadian archives.

The Society of American Archivists' Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology includes 6 definitions of "archives", in addition to two broad terms and eleven narrow terms.¹

¹ Society of American Archivists, "Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology", last accessed 7 August 2019 <https://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/archives>.

From these definitions and terms, archives can be broken down into three categories: archives as records; archives as institutions; and archives as places or buildings.² These multiple definitions indicate a palpable reality: how archives are defined, described and perceived varies among individuals, including archivists. Scholars, as Terry Cook notes, tend not to see the history of an archive, nor the work of the archivists; rather an archive was perceived by scholars “as a metaphoric symbol, as representation of identity, or as the recorded memory production of some person or group or culture.”³ Archives typically acquire, arrange and describe, preserve, and provide levels of access to information for a general public or a particular community. Archives are only one component of social memory strategies that have been employed in the north. Indeed, while knowledge creation and its dissemination have occurred in the north since time immemorial among Indigenous people, only in the past 50-60 years have settler archives in Canada’s territories emerged as one social memory strategy. Their late establishment is tied to the comparatively recent history of settlers’ northward expansion in the territories.

Settler history in the Yukon and Northwest Territories largely centred around the fur trade, missionary activities, and mineral and oil extraction. For the Yukon, the discovery of gold near Forty Mile Creek in the late 19th century brought an influx of settlers and in the Northwest Territories, the discovery of oil near Norman Wells in the 1920s and gold in Yellowknife in the 1930s had largely the same effect. Projects such as the Alaska Highway, Canol pipeline and Diefenbaker’s road to resources necessitated government services and facilitated the advance of settler society into unceded Indigenous territory that would result in land claims and self-

² Society of American Archivists, “Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology” last accessed 17 June 2020 <https://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms>

³ Terry Cook, “The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape,” *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 90, no. 3 (2009): 498.

government agreements that continue into the present. Settler governance in the north, as Ken Coates and Greg Poelzer note, “was largely an afterthought until the 1960s.”⁴ Indeed, in the Northwest Territories, while Fort Smith was the administrative capital until 1967, all legislative decisions were made in Ottawa until Yellowknife was designated the capital in 1967 following the Carrothers Commission. Owing to the federal government’s control over programs and various responsibilities in the territories, the records produced as a result of decisions made in Ottawa were ultimately kept in the nation’s capital. However, as more responsibilities and services were transferred to northern governments and with the push from citizens and heritage organizations to retain records of relevance within their territories, the need for archives grew.

Archives in the north can be traced back to local heritage societies such as the Yellowknife Museum Society (YMS). In 1958, the YMS was incorporated with the express purpose of securing finances to build a museum in Yellowknife. The preservation of private acquisitions such as Henry Busse’s photograph collection were the result of the YMS’s exceptional foresight to retain records in the north. Yet, the YMS was limited both physically and financially in their ability to house and manage the private records of Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories. In the fall of 1964, the society submitted a recommendation to the Commissioner and Territorial Council to establish a Territorial Public Archive in Yellowknife. In early 1965, the Commissioner and Council respectfully rejected the recommendation, citing two factors: (1) there was not yet a permanent seat of government in the Northwest Territories; (2) and the Territorial Government and the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural

⁴ Ken Coates, Greg Poelzer, *An Unfinished Nation: Completing the Devolution Revolution in Canada's North*. Ottawa: Macdonald-Laurier Institute for Public Policy, 2014. Canadian Electronic Library/desLibris. Absolute Page 9. Downloaded 04-08-2019.

Resources files located in Ottawa were enmeshed.⁵ In the council's response to president of the YMS, L.T. Dunks, they wrote that it was "not prudent to construct a Territorial Archives at this time."⁶ However, within two years, Yellowknife was selected as the capital of the Northwest Territories on 18 January 1967 and the first impediment was removed.

Arctic historian Ken Coates surveyed the northern historiography and noted the late emergence of northern-based scholars in the 1970s and 1980s. Additionally, Coates found that the prominence of research on the fur trade was partly owed to the exceptional documentary legacy kept by the Hudson's Bay Company Archives.⁷ Other research areas such as mining were not as fortunate "with archival material much more scattered and limited in scope and volume."⁸ Absent from Coates' chapter is an interrogation into why the archival material was scattered. Prior to 1972, no territorial archives existed in the territories.⁹ The absence of northern archives was not the determining factor which prevented scholarly research of the north by northern scholars; yet it cannot be ignored. Two of Terry Cook's publications during his time with the Federal Archives Division, "Sources for the Study of the Canadian North" and "RG 85 Records of the Northern Affairs Program," highlight the availability of material in the south to scholars interested in the north.¹⁰ Yet for those northern scholars interested in researching topics relevant

⁵ N-2012-008: 1-8 Commissioner of the Northwest Territories Correspondence 1964-1965, "Letter to L.T. Dunks, Esq. President, The Yellowknife Museum Society,"

⁶ N-2012-008: 1-8 Commissioner of the Northwest Territories Correspondence 1964-1965, "Letter to L.T. Dunks, Esq. President, The Yellowknife Museum Society,"

⁷ Ken Coates, "The history and historiography of natural resource development in the Arctic: the state of the literature", in *Resources and Sustainable Development in the Arctic*, (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019) 30.

⁸ Ken Coates, "The history and historiography of natural resource development in the Arctic", in *Resources and Sustainable Development in the Arctic*, 24.

⁹ David Leonard noted that the first Territorial Archives was established in Ottawa in 1962 which at the time was the "Seat of the Territorial Council." See David Leonard, "Establishing the Archives of the Northwest Territories: A Regional Case Study in Legality," *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984): 72.

¹⁰ Terry Cook, "Sources for the Study of the Canadian North" Federal Archives Division: Special Publication Series Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1980.; Terry Cook, "RG 85 Records of the Northern Affairs Program" Federal Archives Division: General Inventory Series, Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1982.

to the north in the north, this simply was not possible yet. Repositories and legislation which granted archives legally the power to manage government records in the north were only beginning to emerge in the 1970s.¹¹ For Nunavut, the late emergence of their archives program offered a chance to bring the management of records closer to the territory. This has proven challenging with the recent transfer of Nunavut Archival Program's private records from Yellowknife to Gatineau.

In addition to the territorial archives in the north, Indigenous organizations with archival material related to land claims and political developments began to emerge in the 1970s. In the Northwest Territories during the rise of the Indian Brotherhood of the N.W.T (in 1978 the IB-NWT became the Dene Nation), archival records and library materials from the 1970s were amassed at the Dene Nation Public Library/Archives. Alice Abel, the Library and Information Officer for the Dene Nation prepared a discussion paper for the Dene Nation Leadership Meeting in November 1985 to discuss the future of these materials. Abel was explicitly concerned with the materials and strongly urged for the creation of a Native Public Library/Archives for the Dene Nation. Her defense, printed in full below, for a library/archive was visually stark, the text bolded and capitalized.

WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO ALL OF THIS INFORMATION DOCUMENTED ON PAPERS AND TAPES ON THE DENE STRUGGLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-GOVERNMENT AFTER LAND CLAIMS ARE SETTLED? THERE IS IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UNIQUE MATERIALS IN THE LIBRARY/ARCHIVES. YOU MIGHT THINK THESE MATERIALS WILL LAST FOREVER BUT IT WILL NOT, UNLESS THEY ARE TAKEN CARE OF PROPERLY. PAPERS COULD TEAR AND YELLOW FROM BEING USED FOR A VERY LONG TIME SO EXTRA COPIES SHOULD BE MADE. ARE THESE MATERIALS GOING TO BE BEHIND CLOSED DOORS AND ARE PEOPLE GOING TO FORGET ABOUT THE STRUGGLE THAT THE DENE HAVE BEEN THROUGH. OR IS THE DENE NATION LEADERSHIP GOING TO

¹¹ For Yukon, see W. Brian Speirs, "Yukon Archives – A Regional Experiment," *The Canadian Archivist* Vol. 2, no. 4 (1973): 23-37; Friends of the Yukon Archives Society, *For the Record: Yukon Archives 1972-2012* (Library and Archives Canada in Publication Cataloguing: Whitehorse, 2012).

SUPPORT THE CONTINUED USE OF THE LIBRARY SO THAT IT CAN EVENTUALLY BECOME A NATIVE PUBLIC LIBRARY/ARCHIVES? IF THIS NATIVE PUBLIC LIBRARY/ARCHIVES WERE ESTABLISHED THEN ALL OF THESE MATERIALS WOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO THE NATIVE CHILDREN/STUDENTS WHICH WOULD HELP THEM TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THEIR HERITAGE AND BE PROUD OF THEIR PEOPLE AND WHO THEY ARE. IF THESE PAPERS AND TAPES ARE NOT TAKEN CARE OF PROPERLY, THEN HOW ARE THE CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OF DENEDEH EVER GOING TO READ AND LEARN ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THEIR PEOPLE?¹²

Approaching the present, archives in the north have grown significantly since the 1970s. After surveying the various archives councils' membership lists, it is possible to get a sense of the organizations holding archival material of the north in the north. What follows is not an exhaustive list but a sampling of the current archival thread in the three territories.

The Yukon Archives Council has done an excellent job soliciting feedback from its membership. Over the last seven years, the YCA has produced six reports surveying the needs of both member and non-member institutions holding archival and potentially archival material. These reports are valuable sources of information for piecing together the state of archives in the Yukon. In 2012, when the YCA first compiled its membership list, the council categorized its members by institutional structure: Territorial; College; Museum or Society; First Nations Government, Organization or Board.¹³ The 2020 membership list has grown significantly from 2012's twelve members to thirty-two members. If the membership was grouped according to the 2012 report it would look like this: Territorial (1), College (1), Museum or Society (7), First Nations Government, Organization or Board (23).¹⁴

¹² N-1990-029:5-1 WFC Member Organizations – Dene Nation General, "Aboriginal Library and Archives: Discussion Paper Re: Dene Nation Library/Archives for the Dene Nation Leadership Meeting Nov 25-29 1985 Inuvik, N.W.T. By Alice Abel. Library and Information Officer", October 1985.

¹³ Claire Daitch, "Yukon Archival Needs Assessment," 12.

¹⁴ Yukon Council of Archives "Our Members" last accessed 24 March 2020, <https://www.yukoncouncilofarchives.ca/communitymembers>.

Like the Yukon Archives Council, the Northwest Territories Archives Council published its membership lists on its website and in its online documents. From the 2010-2015 Annual General Meeting minutes and its last membership list last updated online in 2017, it is possible to put together a picture of the type of membership that holds archival records. From 2010-2017, the Northwest Territories Archives Council membership, as categorized in the preceding paragraph: Territorial (1), College (0), Museum or Society (2), First Nations Government, Organization or Board (7).¹⁵ Like Yukon, the only professionally staffed archives in the territory is the territorial archive. Unlike the Yukon Archives Council, however, the Northwest Territories Archives Council has not surveyed to the same degree its members and non-members who may potentially hold archival records. Hiring a contract community archivist in the territory would be an excellent way to conduct an overdue needs assessment survey and to raise awareness throughout the territory the benefits of an archives and records management program.

The state of archives in Nunavut currently consists of the Nunavut Archives Program based in Igloolik which manages Nunavut's government and private records. A sizeable portion of Nunavut's private records are currently located in Gatineau, QC, following their transfer from the PWNHC in Yellowknife, NT. The Archives Council of Nunavut was established on 8 May 2002. Unfortunately, there is little up to date information from the Archives Council of Nunavut online. However, from the 2007 AGM meeting minutes it is possible to categorize some of the membership: Museum or Society (2), Board (2), and Heritage Centre (3). In 2016 the Archives Council of Nunavut was recognized by the Honourable George Kuksuk, Minister of Culture and Heritage for 15 years of good work on 28 October 2016. In the Nunavut Hansard, Kuksuk notes

¹⁵ NWT Archives Council, "Documents", last accessed 24 March 2020 <https://www.nwtarchives.ca/nwtac/documents.asp>; NWT Archives Council, "Members" last accessed 24 March 2020 <https://www.nwtarchives.ca/nwtac/members.asp>

that “with the help of the archives council program, Nunavut communities and organizations have become aware that archives and archival methods are the best way to preserve local historical records and with them a priceless legacy of rights and values.”¹⁶ Additionally there has been more good news in the territory. Nunavut Arctic College’s Dr. Sean Guistini received a Fulbright Scholarship in 2018 for his project that will “focus on digital archives to support cultural preservation, teaching, research, resource and policy development, governance and repatriation.”¹⁷ Additionally, the Inuit Film and Video Archives housed in the new Nunavut Media Arts Centre building in 2015 began digitizing and cataloguing their extensive video collection which consists of roughly 9000 hours of footage.¹⁸

Archives in the north have grown in number since the 1970s. The emergence of territorial archives in the Yukon in 1972, the NWT Archives in Yellowknife in 1979, the Nunavut Archives Program in the wake of the creation of Nunavut in 1999, and archives councils in the 1980s and early 2000s signalled an invigoration in archives and archive organizations that recognizes the importance of records in relation to documenting governments’ decisions and preserving private records relevant to society. Indigenous archives emerged in the north in the wake of modern land claims resulting from the deluge of paper records and gathering of oral and visual testimony relating to land use. Throughout this growth, however, challenges have persisted. Yet archives in turn responded and continue to meet the following challenges.

¹⁶ Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, “Nunavut Hansard,” 28 October 2016, 3.

¹⁷ Nunatsiaq News, “Two Iqaluit residents awarded Fulbright Arctic Initiative grants”, 5 April 2018, last accessed 5 August 2019.

https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674two_iqaluit_residents_awarded_fulbright_arctic_initiative_grants/.

¹⁸ Inuit Art Quarterly, “Updated on the Inuit Film and Video Archive”, 18 March 2017, last accessed 9 August 2019 <https://www.inuitartfoundation.org/iaq-online/inuit-film-video-archive>.

Archival Challenges in the North:

Geography

Together the three Canadian territories comprise nearly four million square kilometres of area. From the 2016 census, Statistics Canada lists the populations of Yukon at 35,874 people, Northwest Territories at 41,786 people, and Nunavut at 35,944 people.¹⁹ The population density per square kilometre is 0.03. This thinly spread population over a large geography affects how archivists and archive councils operate in the north. For archives councils, connecting members in person spread thousands of kilometres apart is simply economically infeasible. Council members from small community archives lack the financial resources to warrant annual trips throughout the north. For archivists conducting workshops outside of territorial capitals, their mode of transportation to different communities fluctuates depending on the season as transportation networks change. In Nunavut, none of the 25 communities are connected by a permanent road. While ice roads in the Canadian territories alleviate some of this disconnect, during break up and freeze up, travel by air is often the only option to access remote communities.

Archives Council of Nunavut (ACN) President Philippa Ootoowak, at the 2006 Annual General Meeting, intimated the limitations exacerbated by Nunavut's large geography on the council: "The future dream for the ACN is to be able to afford face-to-face annual meetings and training workshops for our members. We are all aware of the high cost of air travel and freight charges, even within Nunavut, so we currently have to be content with teleconferences and e-

¹⁹ Statistics Canada, "Population and dwelling counts, for Canada, provinces and territories, 2016 and 2011 censuses -100% data", last accessed 1 June 2019, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/Table.cfm?Lang=Eng&T=101&S=50&O=A>.

mails for much of our communication.”²⁰ The geographic conditions of the north shape how archives and archive councils operate. With digital infrastructure slowly improving in the territories, the possibilities for archives to share digital resources, offer video workshops, and build networks will increase.

In the Northwest Territories, the southern and northern regions are accessible year round by road, however, Indigenous settlements such as Fort Good Hope, Tulita (Fort Norman), Délı̄ne (Fort Franklin), Colville Lake, Whatı̄ (Lac La Martre), Gamè̀tı̄ (Rae Lakes), Wekwètı̄ (Snare Lake), Tsiigehtchic, Aklavik, Samba K’e, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok are only accessible by air, or by water systems in the summer. For the Northwest Territories Archives Council, Annual General Meetings have typically been conducted remotely using teleconference and videoconference calls. This is understandable considering the distance travelled by employees of the NWT Archives back in 1987. Matching an \$11,000 grant provided by the Canadian Council of Archives, the NWT Archives undertook an Archival Needs Assessment Study in lieu of an NWT Archives Council. Recognizing that within the Northwest Territories (which at the time included Nunavut) there were few archival repositories; that English was not the first language in many of the communities; and that archival concepts and terminology were unfamiliar to most northerners, Territorial Archivist David W. Rudkin and Assistant Archivist D. Richard Valpy chose to physically visit communities rather than mail questionnaires.²¹ The time and distance travelled for the study offers a glimpse into the immense size of the Northwest Territories in 1986: “In all 20 days were spent in visiting 12 communities and some 12,505 km

²⁰ Philippa Ootoowak, “President’s Report, Annual General Meeting – 6 October 2006 Archives Council Nunavummi”, 2. Last accessed 2 November 2016 http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/PresReport_Eng.pdf.

²¹ NWT Archives, “1986 NWT Archival Needs Assessment Study” (1986) 3, last accessed 22 July 2019 <https://www.nwtarchives.ca/nwtac/documents/1986-NWT-ArchivalNeedsAssessment.pdf>.

were travelled in the process of gathering data.”²² Though the creation of Nunavut resulted in 60% loss of the Northwest Territories’ total area, both territories remain large and physically pose challenges for archive councils and networks to flourish. In Catharine C. Cole and Erica Chemko’s “Nunavut Heritage Skills Gap Study,” on behalf of the Inuit Heritage Trust, the authors cited geography as one of the challenges for heritage organizations due to the distance it puts between organizations and the distance required to receive post-secondary training in different heritage fields (ex. archives, museums, etc.).²³ Though not necessarily an indicator of the capacity of an archival network or their council, the Association of Canadian Archivists conference has never been held in Nunavut or the Northwest Territories. Yukon’s long archival history may have played a role in hosting the ACA conference twice since the conferences began in the 1970s. Yet certainly geography has played a small role in dissuading flying members from across the country to host the conference.

Connecting members and sharing archival knowledge typically concentrated in large cities can be a challenge for the north. In 2012, Yukon Council of Archives sought to address a dearth of archivists outside of Whitehorse. After 25 years without a needs assessment survey of its membership, the Yukon Council of Archives sent out questionnaires to its membership. The 2012 Needs Assessment Survey identified the successful site visit programs happening in British Columbia and Alberta and recommended exploring this option for the territory. However, the cuts to the National Archives Development Program in April 2012 delayed the recommendation’s implementation.²⁴ Four years passed without movement until an update

²² NWT Archives, “1986 NWT Archival Needs Assessment Study” 1986, 3.

²³ Inuit Heritage Trust, “Nunavut Heritage Skills Gap Study”, (December 2010) 5, last accessed 14 August 2019 www.ihti.ca/eng/NunavutHeritageSkillsGap-Study-English.pdf.

²⁴ Yukon Council of Archives, “Annual General Meeting Minutes”, (24 May 2012), last accessed 5 August 2019 https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a1c710fbce17620f861bf47/t/5a3b2eba8165f5e2c864f6d1/1513828027955/YCA_2012_agm_minutes.pdf.

survey was conducted in 2016. Survey results from YCA members ranked hiring a travelling archivist as the second highest priority to assist in backlog reduction, digitization and preservation, policy development, and making collections accessible.²⁵ In 2016, Laura Millar was hired by the YCA as a Community Archivist. Her phase 1 and phase 2 reports produced numerous recommendations – 9 and 11 respectively. Additionally, Millar attached “ONGOING” to certain recommendations indicating that these would need to be continually monitored and managed. Hiring a travelling archives consultant offers archives councils ways to assist small institutions without the same expertise as those located either in large cities or in southern Canada.

The thinly spread population also affects the membership of archives councils. A quick glance at the Archives Association of British Columbia institutional membership list reveals a stark difference to archive councils in the north. Of the listed 61 institutions, 36 of them include the word archive in their name. This differs from the NWT Archives Council which Erin Suliak notes in the 2014 NWT Archives Council AGM minutes, “Many of our member organizations are cultural institutes with different mandates and practices from “traditional” archives.”²⁶

Removal and Retention of Records

A second challenge faced in the north is the removal of archival records out of the territories. This has been a challenge that northern archives have addressed for decades – primarily through transfer or repatriation from southern institutions. However, as the example of the Nunavut archives highlights, the transfer of archival records from the north to the south

²⁵ Fay Tangermann, “UPDATE Yukon Needs Assessment” (Whitehorse: Yukon Council of Archives, March 2016) 22.

²⁶ NWT Archives Council, “Annual General Meeting Minutes” (19 June 2014) 4, last accessed 19 April 2020 <https://www.nwtarchives.ca/nwtac/documents/NWTAC-AGM2014-minutes.pdf>.

continues. Owing to the federal government's role in the administration of the territories, an absence of physical infrastructure, staff, and legislative power, a substantial portion of the territorial records went south to the Public Archives of Canada, southern Canadian universities or private collectors. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that growing pressure from northerners began to halt the flow of records south and retain those still in the north. In the 1980s and beyond, there were consistently inclusion of articles related to the return of heritage resources in modern Indigenous land claims.

In his opening paragraph in his article in the *Canadian Archivist*, Yukon's first Territorial Archivist, W. Brian Speirs, describes the removal of records from the territory as one of the catalysts which spurred frustrated and concerned Yukoners to push for a regional archives in the 1970's.

Before any proposal to establish a Yukon Archives was sanctioned by the government, even at the conceptual level, historically minded Yukoners, confronted with the disappearance and fragmentation of Yukon source material and the subsequent difficulties entailed in conducting research, realized something had to be done to arrest the continuing outward flow of documentation.²⁷

With Yukon Commissioner Jim Smith also advocating for the return of Yukon's territorial records from the Public Archives of Canada a transfer seemed near. However, the Public Archives of Canada stipulated that records could only be returned once a facility and staff were in place to maintain the records.²⁸ On 10 December 1972, the Yukon Archives officially opened and through negotiations with the National Archivist, the territorial records concerning General Correspondence Files, Territorial Court records, and Mining Recorder files were returned.²⁹

²⁷ W. Brian Speirs, "Yukon Archives – A Regional Experiment," *The Canadian Archivist* Vol. 2, no. 4 (1973): 1.

²⁸ Friends of the Yukon Archives Society, *For the Records*, 22.

²⁹ Friends of the Yukon Archives Society, *For the Records*, 22-23.

In the Northwest Territories, the Yellowknife Museum Society in 1964 argued that the “northern heritage of Canada should not be exiled from its northern setting any longer than is absolutely necessary, if it is to continue as a vital force contributing to our national identity, as we submit it should. Our archives, we say, should therefore be brought home, not simply ‘to rest’ by any means, but in order to fulfil their proper function.”³⁰ Indeed, this sentiment was echoed by northerners during the 1986 NWT Archival Needs Assessment Study. As NWT archivists visited Fort McPherson, they heard from an individual who “[a]t the end of the meeting ... observed that perhaps one of the first duties of the proposed Council would be the repatriation of northern related archival material now in the care of southern institutions.”³¹ Ultimately, repatriation requires the knowledge of what was created and where it was deposited. Information gathering to search for records outside of the territories took the format of reports conducted by various organizations in the north.

In 1997, the PWNHC contracted the Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute to draft a report with the express purposes of locating both objects and archival records pertinent to the Northern Athapaskan and Metis of the Northwest Territories.³² The task was monumental due to the immense distance between the place of creation and the current stored location of northern heritage. Ingrid Kritsch and Bart Kreps, in the report’s introduction, referenced the invaluable advice they received from Edward Krahn and Sally Robinson who had conducted similar studies in the Yukon nearly 10 years earlier. Their advice, buttressed with a study conducted in the

³⁰ Yellowknife Museum Society, “brief submission” 4.

³¹ NWT Archives, “Archival Needs Assessment Study,” 3.

³² Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute, “A Guide to Northern Athapaskan and Métis Collections Residing in Museums and Archives Outside of the Northwest Territories”, prepared for Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, 24 March 1997, last accessed 18 March 2020 https://www.gwichin.ca/sites/default/files/gsci_kritsch_1997_a_guide_to_northern_athapaskan_and_metis_collections_outside_nwt.pdf. Report presents extensive research into collections found in Canada, USA, UK, Denmark, Scotland, and in the Vatican.

Yukon and the subsequent publication *Searching for our Heritage: A Review of Artifact Collections Outside of the Yukon (1989)*, was instrumental to the project's start.³³ Ultimately, these reports all stressed the desire of northerners and their heritage institutions to see the return of heritage material to their respective territories and communities. However, returning the materials in part depended, and continues to depend, on infrastructure in the north to store and manage them.

Infrastructure

A third challenge in the north is non-digital and digital infrastructure. An inhibiting factor which prevented the Yukon territory from maintaining their own archive was the lack of a facility or staff to manage it. However, smaller archives which generally operate on piecemeal budgets propped up by annual grants are often without the means to build state of the art facilities to house their records. Instead, these institutions are forced to resort to any method that provides shelter for the records. In the Yukon, Laura Millar recorded that she was “highly concerned about the use of inadequate storage containers, such as Sea Can containers, for the care of institutional or govt records and archives.”³⁴ After Millar found worrisome evidence of inadequate storage facilities across the territory, she recommended the YCA to “monitor the state of physical and digital records and initiatives, and to encourage collaboration and cost-sharing whenever appropriate, to help the archival community in the Yukon Territory move forward with the critical task of protecting both physical and digital archives for the future.”³⁵

Although the Northwest Territories set up offices in 1967 to manage government records in Yellowknife, it was not until the completion of the PWNHC in 1979 that the Northwest

³³ Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute, “A Guide to North Athapaskan and Métis Collections,” 2.

³⁴ Laura Millar, “Yukon Council of Archives Community Development Fund Community Archivist Project: Project Report”, 28 July 2016, vii.

³⁵ Laura Millar, “Community Archivist Project” viii.

Territories had a storage facility to house and preserve their records. Yet, upon opening, there were immediately challenges faced by the territorial archivist. David W. Leonard can be visualized shaking his head as he explained how

no professional archivist had been consulted with regard to the physical development beforehand.... Indeed, the basic allocation of space did not account for a reference room, an archival processing area, or library, even though the Archives was assigned responsibility for maintaining a rare book collection and a heritage reference library.³⁶

The blunder set back Leonard three months reconfiguring the space.

The Government of Nunavut Archives offers another example of how physical infrastructure can pose challenges for archives in the north. Unlike the other territories, Nunavut's government and private records are spread both inside and outside of the territory. When I first began my research in 2016, 88 linear metres of Nunavut's private records were stored at the PWNHC in Yellowknife. Prior to 1999, these private records were originally part of the NWT Archives' records but after Nunavut's creation from the eastern portion of the Northwest Territories, 101 linear metres of records were identified as pertinent to Nunavut and were transferred in title. In 2015, 13 linear metres of records were transferred from Yellowknife to the Nunavut Public Library Services Distribution Centre in Baker Lake as a temporary measure until appropriate facilities in Iqaluit could be acquired.³⁷ This process required the materials to be transferred by air for an estimated \$5,200.00.³⁸ The remaining 88 linear metres remained in Yellowknife. For nearly two decades these records remained at the PWNHC under multiple storage agreements.

³⁶ Leonard, "Establishing the Archives of the Northwest Territories" 75.

³⁷ Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage, "Briefing Note: Nunavut Archives Collections Management" 11 February 2016.

³⁸ Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage, "Briefing Note: Nunavut Archives Collections Management" 11 February 2016.

In 2016, it was announced that the records would be transferred from the PWNHC to Gatineau, QC, at the CMN's Natural Heritage Campus, which hosts their research and collection facility. The absence of an adequate facility to house them resulted in the records remaining outside the territory and required the leasing of space from PWNHC.³⁹ Jeannette Allis Bastian, in her invaluable case study of the removal of archival records from the Virgin Islands, has argued that records belong as much to the societies where they were created, as to the creators.⁴⁰ Bastian stresses that "the community needs the records of its past to construct a reliable memory for use in the present."⁴¹ With her arguments in mind, the move to transfer Nunavut's archival material to Gatineau, QC, should be critically examined, and raise questions. Archives of the north, should remain in the north so that its citizens are able to understand the events that have occurred, to hold its government to account for past decisions made, and to help construct memory as Bastian argues.

As Ken Coates notes, little has been written by historians on the lethargic and costly development of communications infrastructure in the north.⁴² Digital infrastructure is paramount for archives, both for the preservation, arrangement and description of records, but also for access for users. Through the curation of online collections and exhibitions, archivists can facilitate access and educate users regarding the functions of archives. For communities spread across the territories, opportunities for citizens to access an archive's physical location are limited. With an improved digital infrastructure, communities can digitally access collections across their territory and even contribute their own records. However, there remains a great

³⁹ Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage, "Briefing Note: Archives Program", 2 September 2016.

⁴⁰ Jeannette Allis Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History*, (Westport CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003) 83.

⁴¹ Bastian, *Owning Memory*, 86.

⁴² Coates, "The history and historiography of natural resource development in the Arctic: The state of the literature" in *Resources and Sustainable Development in the Arctic*, 30.

“Digital Divide” between the north and the south.⁴³ Canada’s Public Policy Forum addressed this gap in their report *Northern Connections: Broadband and Canada’s Digital Divide*. With input from multiple northern partners, the report found that the north “experiences significantly higher internet costs and slower connectivity speeds than the rest of Canada. The situation is exacerbated by infrastructure challenges that make many systems outdated, unreliable, and vulnerable.”⁴⁴ Indeed in Sheena Kennedy Dalseg and Frances Abele’s analysis of this disparity, the authors highlight examples from the report: “By way of example, in 2012, nearly 80% of Canadians had access to bandwidth speeds up to 99.9 megabytes per second. In Nunavut by contrast, bandwidth speeds were just 1.5-4.9 megabytes per second.”⁴⁵ Since Dalseg and Abele’s article, there have been small improvements in broadband across the north. In CRTC’s *Communications Monitoring Report 2019*, the findings showed that the Yukon and Northwest Territories had 100 Mbps + broadband service availability for 60.8% (Yukon) and 53.7% (N.W.T.) of households.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, Nunavut still lagged in broadband service availability. As indicated in the report, “only 49.7% of households in Nunavut had access to speeds of at least 5 Mbps, and none had access to speeds of 16 Mbps or faster.”⁴⁷ Addressing this divide must be mandatory as it will directly improve the capacity to access archive collections by users physically unable to visit archival facilities.

⁴³ Public Policy Forum, *Northern Connections: Broadband and Canada’s Digital Divide*, (Ottawa: Public Policy Forum, June 2014) last accessed 18 March 2020 https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/BroadBand_Final_PPF_en.pdf. Another resource detailing the disparity between northern and southern digital infrastructure is by Imaituk Inc “A Matter of Survival: Arctic Communications Infrastructure in the 21st Century” Arctic Communication Infrastructure Assessment Report, prepared for the Northern Communications & Information Systems Working Group, 30 April 2011, last accessed 18 March 2020 http://www.aciareport.ca/resources/acia_full-v1.pdf.

⁴⁴ Public Policy Forum, “Northern Connections,” 4.

⁴⁵ Sheena Kennedy Dalseg, Frances Abele “Language, Distance, Democracy: Development Decision Making and Northern Communications,” *The Northern Review* 41 (2015): 213.

⁴⁶ Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, *Communications Monitoring Report 2019*, (Ottawa: CRTC, 2020): 278. Last accessed 18 March 2020 <https://crtc.gc.ca/pubs/cm2019-en.pdf>

⁴⁷ CRTC, *Communications Monitoring Report 2019*, 278.

Cynthia J. Alexander, Agar Adamson, Graham Daborn, John Houston, and Victor Tootoo highlight Zacharias Kunak's assertion that "Language and culture rights are *communication rights*: the right to Inuit expression; the right to be consulted; the right to find out information and share it. Inuit need state-of-the art technology tools to communicate equally"⁴⁸ In the context of the transfer of Nunavut materials to Gatineau, QC, it is extremely important that northerners have the capabilities to digitally discover, access, and share information from these collections. Alexander et al. pointed to the federal government's 2008 digitization program cuts to the Canadian Memory Fund, arguing that these cuts would have immense impacts on the ability to share knowledge digitally.⁴⁹

Language:

While English and French act as the official languages in all three territories, there are numerous Indigenous languages. This breadth poses challenges for monolingual or bilingual archivists fluent in French, English or both. However, there are obvious opportunities to address this challenge. In the Yukon, there are 10 Indigenous languages: Inuktitut, Tlingit, Gwich'in, Han, Upper Tanana, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone, Kaska, Tagish, and Tahltan.⁵⁰ Legislation in section 1 (3) of the *Yukon Languages Act* "recognizes the significance of aboriginal languages in the Yukon and wishes to take appropriate measures to preserve, develop and enhance those languages in the Yukon."⁵¹ Archives can play a key role in the preservation of languages. CBC North in Yellowknife is currently digitizing and preparing their extensive

⁴⁸ Cynthia J. Alexander, Agar Adamson, Graham Daborn, John Houston, and Victor Tootoo, "Inuit Cyberspace: The Struggle for Access for Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 43 Number 2, (Spring 2009): 225.

⁴⁹ Alexander et al., "Inuit Cyberspace," 225.

⁵⁰ Yukon Native Language Centre "Native Languages in the Yukon", accessed 26 May 2019 <http://www.ynlc.ca/languages/index.html>.

⁵¹ Revised statutes of the Yukon, Yukon Languages Act, 2002, 1. Last accessed 1 June 2019 <http://www.gov.yk.ca/legislation/acts/languages.pdf>.

collection of Indigenous language broadcast content, to be made accessible to communities. The CBC cites the goal of the project as “to preserve and protect a unique record of the languages and cultures of many Northern communities for generations to come.”⁵²

Since 1988, Indigenous languages in the Northwest Territories have been legislated as official in the territory. Under the *Official Languages Act*, Chipewyan, Cree, Gwich’in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey, and Tłı̨chǫ are official languages.⁵³ With English and French included in the official languages, the Northwest Territories has the most official languages recognized in the north. This presents a daunting task for archivists in the territory acquiring and describing records in different languages. In an article examining the PWNHC’s acquisition process, Atamanenko, Cameron, and Moir describe it as a “Herculean feat” because of the number of languages.⁵⁴ However, there exists the opportunity to hire Indigenous archivists, hire consultants to assist in translation, and work closer with communities to ensure that collections are better representative of the communities they document.

In Nunavut, two significant pieces of legislation pertain to language. The *Official Language Act* establishes Inuit (Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun), English and French as the three official languages of the territory. Secondly, the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, as Jack Hicks and Graham White explained, “establishes an elaborate legal framework for protecting and

⁵² Inuvialuit Regional Corporation “CBC Prepares For Indigenous Language Digital Archive Project”, 25 August 2017, last accessed 7 July 2019 <http://www.irc.inuvialuit.com/news/cbc-prepares-indigenous-language-digital-archive-project>.

⁵³ Revised Statutes of the Northwest Territories, “Official Languages Act” 4. Last accessed 18 March 2020 <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/official-languages/official-languages.a.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Boris Atamanenko, Barb Cameron, Ian Moir “The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre: more than a museum,” *Museum International* (UNESCO, Paris), no. 182 Vol. 46, no. 2, (1994): 24.

promoting Inuktitut as a working language of the GN.”⁵⁵ Yet, as Hicks and White note, the act was ‘far-reaching’.

the GN’s goal of making Inuktitut a working language of government by 2020 remains implausible. Services to the public are delivered in Inuktitut and some GN units operate primarily in Inuktitut. However, with nearly two-thirds of Iqaluit-based positions held by non-Inuit, few of whom can carry on more than an elementary conversation in Inuktitut, English is very much the language of senior management in the GN – and promises to be for some time.⁵⁶

The breadth of languages across the territories poses immense challenges for archivists. The 1986 NWT Archival Needs Assessment Study pointed to the challenge of the multiplicity of languages and argued that archivists would require specific language skills. “In order to understand the provenance and information content of the documents housed in such an archives, keepers will have to be conversant with the written and spoken forms of the language of record.”⁵⁷ With the diversity of languages prevalent in the three territories, a different approach will undoubtedly be required for archivists to address acquisition, appraisal, and description challenges.

In terms of acquisition and appraisal, a participatory model is needed. Language barriers will undoubtedly restrict an archivist’s ability to adequately determine what records should be kept. The Head of Archives at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, Raymond Frogner, argues that “[i]f public archives are ever to produce a meaningful and representative depiction of contemporary social values, there must be a participatory appraisal, selection, and acquisition process.”⁵⁸ Hiring Indigenous archivists and consultants with knowledge of the

⁵⁵ Jack Hicks and Graham White. *Made in Nunavut: An Experiment in Decentralized Government*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015) 243.

⁵⁶ Jack Hicks and Graham White *Made in Nunavut*, 247.

⁵⁷ NWT Archives, “1986 NWT Archival Needs Assessment Study” 9.

⁵⁸ Raymond O. Frogner, ““Lord, Save Us from the *Et Cetera* of the Notary”: Archival Appraisal, Local Custom, and Colonial Law,” *Archivaria* 79 (Spring 2015): 155.

languages will help not only eliminate challenges but will result in more meaningful collections. Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan extoll the perceived benefits of including communities in the appraisal process and argue that “to actively incorporate participation from traditionally marginalized communities will not only allow these communities to preserve empowered narratives, it will allow archivists to move towards the long-debated, and still unrealized, goal of representative collections.”⁵⁹ Moving towards this goal will also require the training of future Indigenous and northern archivists who can adequately address these challenging collections.

Education, Professional Development and Staff Retention

For northerners wishing to pursue an archival education, they undoubtedly will travel to the south. In Canada, the prominent archival programs consist of the University of Manitoba’s Archival Studies program, University of British Columbia’s Master of Archival Studies, University of Toronto’s Master of Information in Archives and Records Management, and McGill’s Master of Information Studies which offers Archival studies as an area of interest. Additionally, a growing number of southern Canadian universities offer Master of Library & Information Studies programs whose graduates go on to fill archival positions. During my time at the NWT Archives, all five archivists received their education in the south: McGill (2), Western University (2), and UBC (1). For prospective northern archivists, a graduate education in the north is simply not available yet. Travelling for education comes with its own challenges as identified by the Inuit Heritage Trust which include: “cost, distance, lack of support from employers, community, family members, need practical assistance with moving to a new place

⁵⁹ Katie Shilton, Ramesh Srinivasan, “Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections,” *Archivaria* 63 (Spring 2007): 90-91.

and getting settled, ... difficulty in translating material into Northern/Inuit reality.”⁶⁰ The lone post-secondary institution in the north to offer a course in archives is Yukon College’s Heritage and Culture Certificate program. Archives and Collections Management (ARCV 140), introduces students to archival concepts of appraisal, description, and preservation, and includes one archives assignment.⁶¹ The assignment requires the student to appraise a donation and describe the collection using the Canadian descriptive standard Rules for Archival Description. The course covers the practical and technical components of archival functions necessary for an archives technician but ultimately absent is a key component of archival education necessary for an archivist: theory.

Since the mid 20th century, heated debates between archivists in North America burned in the pages of archival journals over how new members to the profession should receive their instruction. Robert Schaeffer in 1994 documented the evolution of archival education by surveying articles primarily written in *American Archivist* and *Archivaria*. Schaeffer’s research tracked archivists’ changing perceptions towards the appropriate path required to enter the profession. Their beliefs shifted over time from a position that initially favoured a history or political science background coupled with vocational training to one that favoured graduate education programs, in universities, specifically dedicated to archival studies.⁶² Schaeffer argues not for the abandonment of vocational training but for a greater emphasis on the teaching of

⁶⁰ Inuit Heritage Trust, “Nunavut Heritage Skills Gap Study”, December 2010, 5. Last accessed 14 August 2019 www.ihti.ca/NunavutHeritageSkillsGap-Study-English.pdf.

⁶¹ Yukon College, “Course Outline: ARCV 140 Archives and Collections Management” 18 December 2018, last accessed 18 March 2020 <https://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/sites/default/files/course-outlines/ARCV%20140%202018-02-%20C.Daitch.pdf>.

⁶² Robert Schaeffer, “From Craft to Profession: The Evolution of Archival Education and Theory,” *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994): 21-34.

archival theory to ground archivists in the rich heritage and culture of the profession and to cultivate new ideas that will better serve our users.⁶³

Archivists require a deep grasp of the theoretical underpinnings of the profession and this will require, for the time being, northern students to travel south. Internships and co-ops are typically optional if not required by most archival programs and provide excellent hands-on opportunities.⁶⁴ However, a solid foundation of theory is necessary to help guide the decisions taken in day-to-day work. As archival educator Thomas Nesmith notes:

Graduate education offers a very precious opportunity to exercise the ability to do so [foster an archival frame of mind] without the great pressures of day-to-day work. By exploring and addressing archives as a problem, graduate education in archival studies can teach students to question and clarify concepts and techniques, develop approaches to problems, examine the issues affecting these choices, and equally important, learn how to find further information.⁶⁵

The challenge for archives in the north then is to find suitable candidates in the north willing to receive an education in the south who will return. Otherwise, northern archives will need to attract educated archivists from the south and retain them.

Staff retention in the north is challenging for archives. In the 2016 Yukon Archival Needs Assessment update, Fay Tangermann notes from the surveyed membership of the Yukon Council of Archives “of the 22 individuals responsible for archives in 2012, only seven were still in their positions when contacted in 2016. (68% of the people had moved on).”⁶⁶ Accessing staff data from the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine, I was able to create a chronology from the staff directory of the NWT Archives. From 2012-2019, of the 12 archivists who worked during this

⁶³ Schaeffer, “From Craft to Profession: The Evolution of Archival Education and Theory,” 31.

⁶⁴ At the University of Manitoba Archival Studies Program, internships are fully integrated into the course of study and count as a three credit-0hour course. See: “Curriculum: First Year Requirements”, last accessed 14 August 2019 <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/history/archives/archcurriculum.html>.

⁶⁵ Thomas Nesmith, ““Professional Education in the Most Expansive Sense”: What Will the Archivist Need to Know in the Twenty-First Century?” *Archivaria* 42 (Fall 1996): 92.

⁶⁶ Tangermann, “UPDATE: Yukon Archival Needs Assessment,” 6.

time, 7 or 58% were no longer employed at the archives in 2019. Territorial archives are typically better funded than smaller institutions and it would be worth the NWT Archives Council conducting a similar study to that of the Yukon Council of Archives to determine whether there exists a high rate of staff turnover in the NWT Archive Council's membership, whether this turnover is problematic, and how it might be addressed.

Professional development among northern archives councils' membership can be a challenge because of the centrality of archival expertise in centres such as Whitehorse, Yellowknife, and Igloolik and the distances which restrict in-person knowledge sharing. Archives councils in the north have sought to address these challenges by hosting workshops, summits, and establishing a travelling community archivist program in the Yukon.

Finances

The financial challenge for archives in the north stems from available funding sources. For Indigenous and community archives in the north, there are a few funding sources to which organizations can apply. Library and Archives Canada (LAC) currently offers the Listen, Hear Our Voices initiative which aims to fund the digitization and preservation of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis culture and language recordings. This is a great funding opportunity for organizations to partner with archives in the north to digitize oral and visual records. Of the 31 projects funded for 2019-2020, six recipients were from the northern territories: Yukon - Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Native Language Centre; Northwest Territories - Gwich'in Tribal Council, Department of Cultural Heritage; Nunavut - Pitquhirmikkut Ilihautiniq / Kitikmeot Heritage Society, Nunavut Independent Television Network (NITV), Inuit

Broadcasting Corporation. The Gwich'in Tribal Council is partnering with the NWT Archives to do "preliminary triage, arrangement and description of the GTC-GSCI fonds."⁶⁷

Indigenous and community archives also have the opportunity to apply to the Documentary Heritage Communities Program, which is also run and funded by LAC. There are specific eligibility requirements associated with the program, what the money can be used towards, and two tiers of funding: small contributions up to \$24,999; and large contributions between \$25,000-\$50,000 or more for remote locations. Since its inception in the funding year of 2015-2016 to 2019-2020, 11 institutions have received a combined \$498,447.00. To highlight the 2015-2016 year, organizations from across the territories received funding for excellent projects. In the Yukon, the Yukon Council of Archives received funds for their Memory Yukon, Implementation Strategy for the 2012 YCA Needs Assessment. In the Northwest Territories, the Northwest Territories Archives Council received funds to host an educational workshop. In Nunavut, the Nunavut Bilingual Education Society received funds for the Iqqaumajuakkuvik Project: Digital Audio Archive of Inuit Oral History.⁶⁸

Archives councils in the north were affected by the elimination of the National Archival Development Program (NADP) by Library and Archives Canada on 30 April 2012, which was partially replaced by the Documentary Heritage Communities Program, eventually. The NADP was "a \$1.7 million program administered by the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) that distributed funding across the country to support a variety of projects in provincial and territorial

⁶⁷ Library and Archives Canada, "Contribution funding recipients 2019-2020" (2020) last accessed 15 February 2020 <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/initiatives/listen/Pages/funding-recipients-2019-2020.aspx>.

⁶⁸ For the projects which received funding see Library and Archives Canada "Funding history 2015-2016" (2015) last accessed 15 February 2020 <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/documentary-heritage-communities-program/Pages/funding-history-2015-2016.aspx>.

archival communities.”⁶⁹ In the Yukon, the NADP provided funding to members of the Archives councils. The Yukon Archival Needs Assessment Report found that an increase from 14% to 34% of respondents had no archival funding from 2012-2016.⁷⁰ As the Yukon Council of Archives stressed in their report “[e]xtremely limited funding is an issue that remains unchanged from 2012 and contributes to the lack of archival development in Yukon communities.”⁷¹ The Northwest Territories Archives Council’s main source of funding came from the NADP. In the past, the NWT Archives Council had used the funds to host workshops on managing archival photographs, emergency preparedness, and introduction to archives.⁷² Minutes from the NWT Archives Council’s AGM indicate that as a result of the funding program’s elimination the council would likely go into a period of hibernation or waive fees of existing members for the following year. In response to the cuts, the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut archives council presidents sent a pan-northern letter to Librarian and Archivist of Canada Daniel Caron, Heritage Minister Moore and northern MPs explaining the harms caused by the program’s elimination.⁷³

The territorial archives funding is dictated in relation to other government departments and programs. While each archive is legislated to document both government decisions and collect records of its private citizens, the effectiveness of fulfilling their mandates is determined by the quantity of funding received. The challenge is assessing their funding from available sources. The Yukon Government is the only territorial government to break down operations and

⁶⁹ Archives Society of Alberta, “Advocacy – NADP” last accessed 11 February 2020

<https://archivesalberta.org/programs-and-services/advocacy-nadp/>.

⁷⁰ Tangermann, “UPDATE Yukon Archival Needs Assessment,” 20.

⁷¹ Tangermann, “UPDATE Yukon Archival Needs Assessment,” 10.

⁷² NWT Archives Council, “Past Events” last accessed 4 March 2020

<https://www.nwtarchives.ca/nwtac/pastevents.asp>.

⁷³ NWT Archives Council, “Annual General Meeting September 13, 2012” last accessed 3 March 2020

<https://www.nwtarchives.ca/nwtac/documents/NWTAC-AGM2012-Minutes.pdf>.

maintenance expenditures from Department (Tourism and Culture) to Program (Cultural Services) to Activity (Archives). The Northwest Territories and Nunavut do not break down expenditures to the “Activity” level. Unfortunately, this makes it both difficult to adequately assess comparatively the percentage of funding territorial archives receive and how archives are funded in relation to museums, arts, or archaeology over time. For this reason, I will examine Yukon’s budget in greater detail than the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.⁷⁴

The Yukon’s Tourism and Culture Department has remained relatively stable over the last 20 years which made it a good candidate to study. Under the Tourism and Culture Department there are three programs: Corporate, Cultural Services, and Tourism. Under Cultural Services there have been six to seven activities: Directorate, Heritage Resources, Historic Sites, Museums, Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre, Arts, and Archives. The Archives activity expenditures have incrementally increased from \$844,000 (2001-02 actual year) to \$1,659,000 (2018-19 actual year). The increase can largely be attributed to inflation and the increase in Cultural Services expenditures as a percentage within the Tourism and Culture Department while both Corporate and Tourism programs’ expenditures percentages decreased (figure 2). Since the 2010-11 budget, Cultural Services stabilized with expenditures of around 45-49% in Tourism and Culture’s budget. While archives’ dollar figure expenditure increase is positive, its percentage of expenditures within Cultural Services dropped from 21% (2001-02 actual year) to 11% (2017-2018 actual year). A small part of this decrease can be attributed to the addition of historic sites and an increase in Museum expenditures within Cultural Services (figure 3). When

⁷⁴ All budget figures were pulled from each territory’s budget documents published online. For Yukon <https://yukon.ca/node/2546> ; For Northwest Territories https://www.fin.gov.nt.ca/en/resources?f%5B0%5D=field_resource_category_legacy%3A349&f%5B1%5D=field_resource_category_legacy%3A358 ; For Nunavut <https://www.gov.nu.ca/finance/information/budget-documents-year>

comparing archives expenditures within the overall budget, archives have decreased from 0.19% to 0.13%.

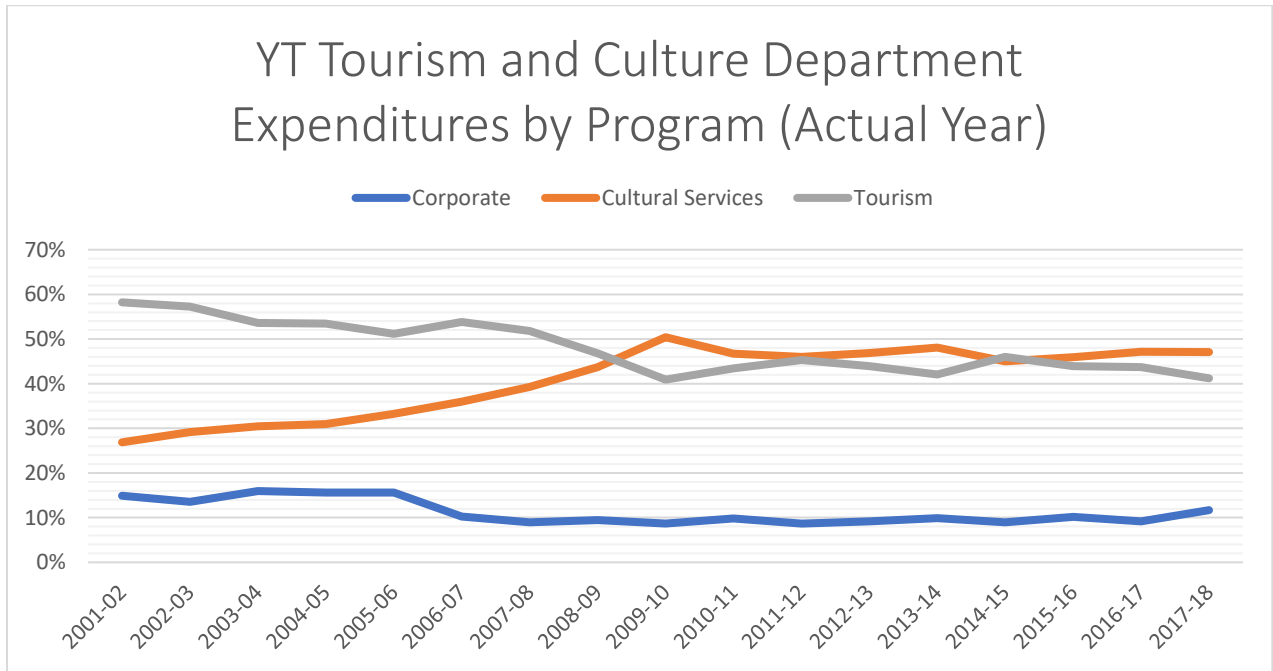


Figure 2: Yukon Tourism and Culture Department Expenditures by Program (Actual Year)

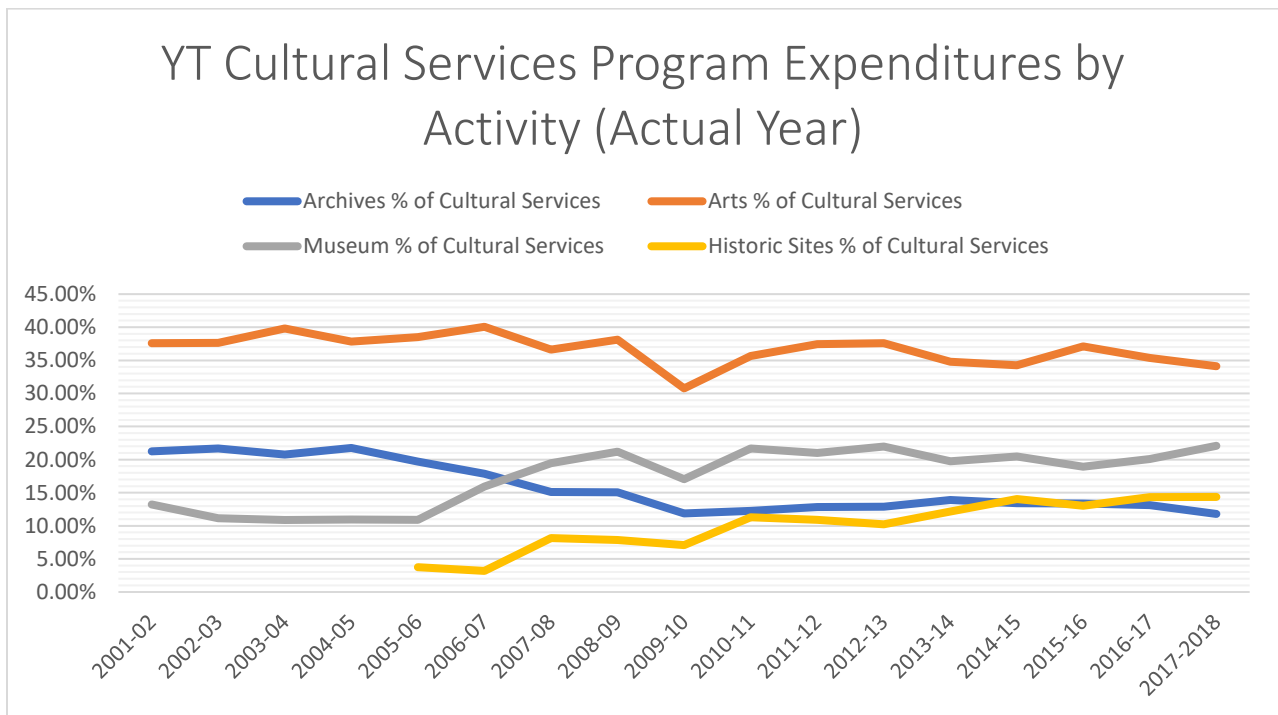


Figure 3: YT Cultural Services Program Expenditures by Activity (Actual Year)

Outside of operations and maintenance expenditures, the Yukon Archives received capital funding for their vault expansion project and preservation projects. The largest sum of funding was reported in the 2016-2017 year at \$4,000,000. Additionally, the territory has used transfer payments to support the Friends of the Yukon Archives Society and the Yukon Council of Archives.

The Northwest Territories and Nunavut territorial archive budgets are more challenging to analyze because unlike the Yukon, the two territories do not include expenditures down to Yukon's level of detail. Though the exact nuances and shifts in funding for museums and archives will not be possible to analyze, it remains worthwhile to examine the budgets at the next available level: for the Northwest Territories this is the Culture and Heritage Division; for Nunavut this is the Culture and Heritage/Heritage Branch.

For the Northwest Territories Culture and Heritage Division, I analyzed the last thirteen budgets (2008-09 to 2020-21). I was specifically looking to examine the expenditures of the Culture and Heritage Division in dollar figures and by percentage within the overall budget of the NWT Government. The Culture and Heritage Division, since the 2006-07 actual year, has increased in expenditures from \$3,668,000 to \$6,907,000 in the 2018-2019 actual year. In terms of Culture and Heritage's percentage within the overall budget, the division began at 0.33% in the 2006-07 actual year, increased to as high as 0.47% in the 2012-13 actual year, and slowly decreased to 0.39% in the most recent budget. The division's decrease since the 2012-13 actual year negatively impacts the quality of work and capacity of archivists to fulfill their mandates. Why? Though in dollar figures the division's expenditures continue to rise, these expenditures could be substantially higher if within the overall budget the division's percent of expenditures remained the same. This means archives, recognizing the decrease in funding percentage to the

overall division, must fight tooth and nail to continue to finance their operations to fulfill their mandates with strained resources.

For Nunavut's Culture and Heritage/Heritage Branch, I analyzed the branch's expenditures from the last 16 budgets (2006-07 to 2020-21). The branch's expenditures since the 2004-05 actual year have increased from \$3,154,000 to \$5,257,000. However, after comparing the branch expenditures as a percentage within the overall budget, it is possible to see a decrease in funding to the branch based on the percentage allocated each year. Since the 2004-05 actual year, the branch's expenditures as a percentage has decreased from 0.42% to 0.31%. While initially this decrease may seem insignificant, if the 2018-19 (actual year) branch had expenditures equal to that of the 2004-05 (actual year) branch, the expenditures would have been \$1,937,270. greater. Like the NWT Archives, Nunavut's archives must ensure within their branch that adequate funding is received when the percentage of expenditures decreases.

A drain on Nunavut's Heritage Branch's resources stemmed from a storage agreement with the Northwest Territories. From 1999 to 2017, the branch paid \$7,164,000 to store their cultural objects and archival records at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. For the first 13 years, the storage and maintenance costs increased from \$147,000 to \$190,000 totalling \$2,144,000; however, in the 2012-13 year the costs jumped to \$1,000,000 and over the next six years the branch incurred storage and maintenance expenses totalling \$5,020,000. The high storage costs undoubtedly influenced the decision to move the records out of Yellowknife.

As an overall picture, it is possible to compare Yukon's Cultural Services Program, Northwest Territories' Culture and Heritage Division, and Nunavut's Culture and Heritage/Heritage branch as percentages within their governments' overall budgets. What stands out is Yukon's significantly higher percentage of expenditures compared to the Northwest

Territories and Nunavut. (figure 4 and 5). While both the Yukon and Northwest Territories experienced overall increases in their expenditures since the 2005-06 actual year budgets, Nunavut saw a small decrease in expenditures as a percentage within the overall budget. If the Northwest Territories and Nunavut published budget figures at the archives level it would be possible to better understand the exact nature of how archives compare against other activities such as museums or the arts. While an examination has shown that expenditures in terms of dollars has increased at the program (YT), division (NWT), and branch (NU) level, Yukon's Cultural Services is the only "program" to have seen greater than a 0.1% expenditures increase in the overall budget. Archives are valuable assets to governments and must advocate their worth to ensure that they continue to grow and that their percentages within the overall budget, at the very least, remain stable.

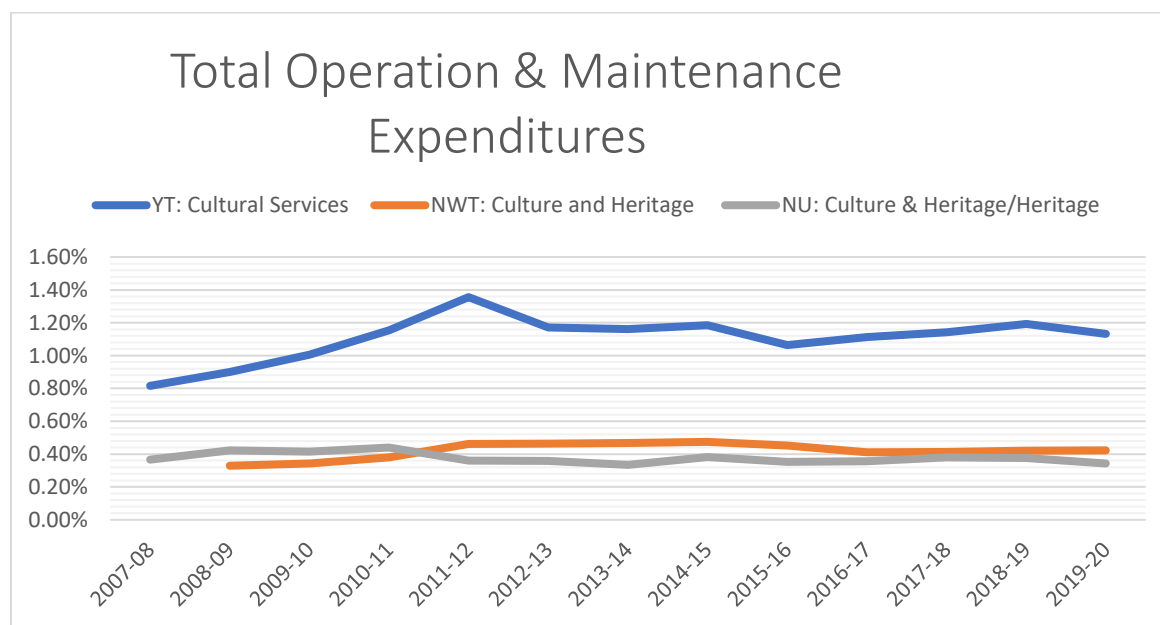


Figure 4: Total Operation & Maintenance Expenditures by Program/Division/Branch

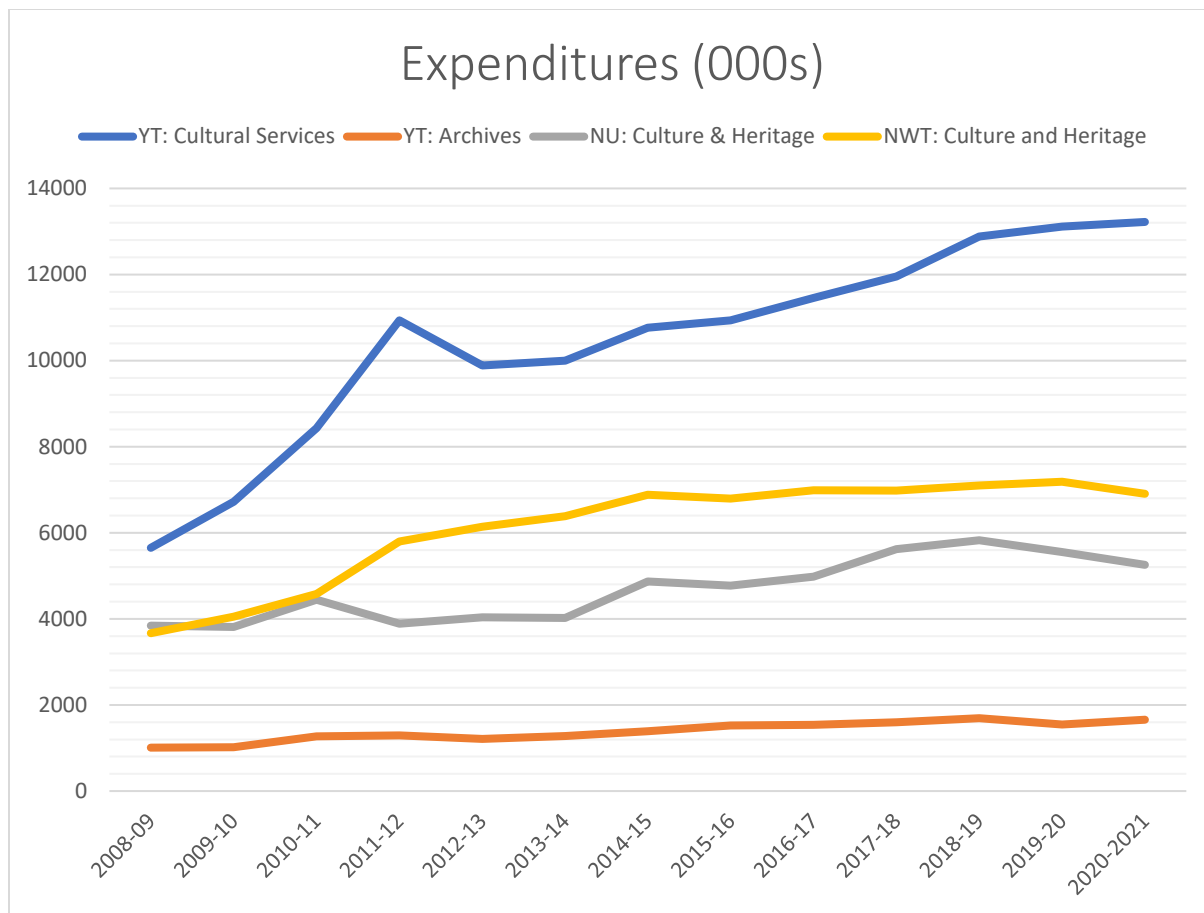


Figure 5: Expenditures (000s) by Program, Activity, Branch, and Division

Conclusion

The case of Nunavut transferring its records from Yellowknife to Gatineau exemplifies that archives are often presented with scenarios that encompass numerous challenges.. Geography and shifting political boundaries impacted the custodial history of these records. The Northwest Territories originally encompassed the eastern arctic which now forms Nunavut. Prior to 1999, records created in the eastern arctic were drawn to the territorial capital which was Yellowknife. However, following Nunavut's creation, some of the records from the eastern arctic created prior to 1999 were later determined to be valuable to Nunavut and meetings were held concerning the division of assets between the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. From

these meetings certain records were transferred to the custody of Nunavut while others remained with the NWT Archives. However, the NWT Archives continued to facilitate access, manage and store these records because of Nunavut's inability to store the records. Absent adequate infrastructure, the Nunavut archives were physically unable to house the records in Nunavut resulting in the eventual relocation to Gatineau, QC. In order to build an adequate facility, the Nunavut Archives would require a massive financial investment, and would still face the challenge of a small population spread across a vast geography. The management of additional archival records in the north surely would warrant the hiring of an additional archivist. Ideally, this archivist would be from Nunavut but owing to low post-secondary graduate rates in the territory and little archival professional development in Nunavut, this makes for a daunting scenario.

Yet these challenges are not insurmountable. Archives are resilient and used to working with strained financial resources. The future of Nunavut Archives can and should be bright. What would the ideal future archival state look like? Undoubtedly, a new storage facility would house the territory's records with adequate digital infrastructure and tools to manage digital records. The future archive would include an online searchable database with descriptions available in Inuktitut that would provide all communities with digital access to the records. Participatory models of description would be available to users who could provide input into the records online. The future archive will employ a team of archivists ready to manage the territory's records. These archivists will come from Nunavut and will be fluent in Inuktitut. What will it take to get to this future archival state? There needs to be a concerted effort to lobby the government for increased resources to get to this future archival state. Archivists must draw upon and explain the value and necessity of archives to society. They must show how culture is

important to the well-being and health of society.⁷⁵ Archives are institutions which provide access and care to records of culture.

⁷⁵ Koenraad Cuypers, Steinar Krokstad, Turid Lingaas Holmen, Margunn Skjei Knudtsen, Lars Olov Bygren, and Jostein Holmen. "Patterns of Receptive and Creative Cultural Activities and Their Association with Perceived Health, Anxiety, Depression and Satisfaction with Life among Adults: The HUNT Study, Norway." *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* (1979-) 66, no. 8 (2012): 698-703. Accessed April 19, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/23268883.

Chapter 3: The Native Press photograph collection at the Northwest Territories Archives

It is easy to forget the rare, privileged, and meaningful role archivists hold. It is easy to forget because of the disconnect that tends to exist between the archivist and the user of the archive. The archivist is often separated for long periods of time between the work they do and the impacts of their labour. Indeed, only by engaging with users, witnessing their connections, and listening to their interactions can the disconnect be mended and the full circle of archival work be appreciated and improved. This was the case for the project I worked on at the NWT Archives.

In this chapter I examine the first phase of the NWT Archives' project to digitize and describe 5000 photographs from the Native Press photograph collection. I argue that by partnering with communities pertinent to collections, description projects will result in more meaningful and valuable relationships that, as one of many benefits, yield better, collaborative descriptions. When collaborating with communities, archivists are better positioned to mitigate challenges that affect description projects such as unfamiliarity with the subject matter which leads to incorrect or incomplete names, places, or events.

I will begin with an overview of the creators of the Native Press (the Indian Brotherhood of the N.W.T. Communications Unit, the Native Press, and the Native Communications Society of the Western Northwest Territories), the photograph collection, and its custodial history. I will then detail the project and its phases, the partnership between the Tłı̨chǫ Government and the NWT Archives, the challenges faced during the project, and how these challenges were mitigated. Lastly, I will include a section on the lessons learned from the projects and the merits of partnering with former employees and community members.

The Creators: IB-NWT, Native Press, and NCS

A brief overview of the Native Press photograph collection's creation and creators is required to understand how the collection was formed. The Native Press collection's beginnings are linked to the communications unit of the Indian Brotherhood of the N.W.T (IB-NWT). IB-NWT emerged following the Federal Government's 1969 White Paper.¹ The White Paper sought to assimilate Indigenous peoples fully into the Canadian state by eliminating the Indian Act, dismantling the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and breaking up reserves into private property.² In response, the National Indian Brotherhood and provincial and territorial chapters emerged and organized as vocal opponents of the paper.³ IB-NWT was formed on 3 October 1969 with Morris Lafferty as the first president.⁴ The proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and the filing of the 1973 Caveat which resulted in the Morrow Decision were two of the defining issues for the Brotherhood in its first decade. To connect and inform its members spread across the Western Northwest Territories, the IB-NWT required its own communications network and set about establishing an internal communications unit.

The IB-NWT established the communications unit to promote communications between Indigenous peoples in the western Northwest Territories. James Wah-Shee, president of IB-NWT, hired Brian Thompson as a communications consultant to establish and manage the communications unit. The unit's main functions were publishing a newspaper and producing radio content. The purpose of the paper was predominantly political. It was meant to support and amplify the actions of IB-NWT and be critical of the policies of the Government of the

¹ Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969* Ottawa, 1969.

² Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000) 51.

³ For written responses see Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1969).

⁴ Dene Nation, "History", last accessed 11 October 2019 <https://denenation.com/about/history/>.

Northwest Territories. *The Brotherhood Report* was the unit's first publication but was quickly succeeded by the *Native Press* newspaper. In May 1971, the first issue of *Native Press* was published and distributed to communities in the Northwest Territories with a circulation of 2,200 papers in its first year. Reflecting back on the paper in 2009, Roy Dahl, former staffer, described the mandate of the newspaper as "advancing the cause of land claims in an environment where native rights always seem to take a back seat to the news of the day. Over time, it expanded its role to protecting and preserving the languages, history, cultures and traditions of the Dene."⁵ The overall success and impact of the establishment of the communications unit was summed up in the 1974 IB-NWT Annual report.

The fact that our N.W.T. Indian people can now see and read and hear this kind of information has gone a long way in a short time towards their involvement once again in their Territory, and has fostered the willingness to request more, as well as enabling them to demand control of their communities, re-enforcement of their Treaty Rights, Settlement of their Land Claims, strengthening of their forms of Indian Government, and a sense of hope and confidence is fast replacing the sense of alienation.

The fact that community people are taking the time to catch every word they can find on the subjects close to their home, and coming forth to be heard themselves, through the *Native Press* and the radio program shows that indeed our system can meet their needs to receive information as quickly and as accurately as we can relay it.⁶

Yet for all the unit's accomplishments, they were consistently held back because of their financial fragility.

Inadequate funding from federal and territorial governments plagued the IB-NWT's communications unit. For example, the IB-NWT 1974 Annual Report highlighted that following the unit's establishment, the communications unit submitted a budget requesting \$70,000 dollars from the Territorial Government but received a paltry \$2,500.⁷ By 1973, the unit's fortunes improved and it received \$169,000 from the Secretary of State's office but by the next year

⁵ *Native Press*, "From My Desk" Roy Dahl, June 2009.

⁶ NWT Archives, N-2002-014-1-4, IB-NWT Annual Report 1974, 29-30.

⁷ NWT Archives, N-2002-014-1-4, IB-NWT Annual Report 1974, 29.

funding ran out again. The unit's financial woes stemmed from their direct association with the Brotherhood which was a political organization. According to the Secretary of State's policy, this association categorized them as ineligible to receive money.⁸ The staffing situation at *Native Press* in 1972 illustrates the effects of the financial droughts. In the summer of 1972, the newspaper operated on a shoestring budget and was forced to let go 50% of its staff.⁹ For the latter half of 1972, Ted Blondin and Violet Camsell managed the newspaper until funding was acquired at the beginning of 1973. Ultimately, the communication unit's direct association with the Brotherhood necessitated a split. A new organization was required to oversee the *Native Press*.

In August 1974, on paper, the Native Communications Society of the Western Northwest Territories (NCS) was separate from IB-NWT. Yet NCS's early history is inseparable from the Brotherhood. Indeed, the Brotherhood was instrumental in arranging the February 1974 meeting which brought together members from the Committee for Original People's Entitlement, the Tree of Peace, and the Métis Association of the Northwest Territories to discuss the creation of a communications society. The society also received legal advice from IB-NWT's lawyer, Gerald Sutton. Sutton's involvement concerned parsing the procedures for submitting the re-drafted by-laws and the formation of an interim board.¹⁰ With the following pieces in place, NCS was legitimate and immediately set to meet with the Secretary of State in Montreal. The *Native Press*,

⁸ NWT Archives, N-2002-014-1-4, IB-NWT Annual Report 1974, 32.

⁹ Data collected from Native Press newspaper staff lists during the year 1972.

¹⁰ According to IB-NWT's 1974 Annual Report, the original by-laws drafted months earlier were lost by Sam Raddi, member of COPE. NWT Archives, N-2002-014-1-4, IB-NWT Annual Report 1974, 34.

which was conceived within the Brotherhood, now fell under NCS's purview. The new relationship would irrevocably shape the newspaper's future.¹¹

The most successful branch of either the IB-NWT's communication unit or NCS was the *Native Press* newspaper. The *Native Press* newspaper was irregularly published bi-monthly in its early years owing to a fluctuating staff, inadequate funding, and an Edmonton based printer for many years. Nevertheless, the newspaper managed to cover a range of topics from local stories to national events. In addition to political commentary, recipes, Dene legends, and poetry adorned the pages. By catering to its Dene and Métis audience, the *Native Press* won the support of communities which mainstream media typically neglected. The newspaper's success was owed to its talented staff. Tony Buggins, a previous editor, was an accomplished musician. Photographer Tessa Macintosh trained other photographers at *Native Press* before going on to work for the NWT Government. Lee Selleck, editor of the *Native Press* and the *Press Independent* for many years, later went on to work as Director of Research, Library and Information Services at the Legislative Assembly of the NWT. Brenda "Bren" Kolson was an accomplished writer and published poetry and novels and won literary awards for her work. The *Native Press* attracted talent but was reliant on their parent organization receiving federal funding. In the end, NCS's ambition was to move into a new building and implement a video and radio department. Instead, losing significant federal funding resulted in the newspaper's demise in 1993.

Several attempts to bring back the *Native Press* occurred after 1993. In 1996, NCS and Dene Nation partnered together to release a fall issue of the newspaper. Dene Nation Chief Bill

¹¹ One of the major hurdles for *Native Press* following NCS succeeding IB-NWT as the controlling entity was establishing journalistic independence from IB-NWT. Articles found in *Native Press* illustrate the confusion over the new structure and staff attempted to inform and convince its readers of this reality.

Erasmus intimated the importance of reviving the *Native Press* because it “reflects the opinions from voices throughout all the communities. It provides unity under one cover, titled *Native Press*. It can be looked upon as a collection of value and knowledge that will be referred to for generations to follow.”¹² In 2009, Roy Dahl, former staff member of the *Native Press* attempted to resurrect the newspaper.¹³ In 2016, Dahl and his son Zach purchased the naming rights to *Native Press* and published a few issues as an independent newspaper.¹⁴ This iteration of the *Native Press* continues to be published amidst the project to digitize and describe the original *Native Press*.

The Native Press Photograph Collection.

Consisting of more than 200,000 negatives, the Native Press photograph collection spans over 20 years from 1971-1993. The photographs are ultimately a product of the IB-NWT’s political movement that sought to challenge the settler narrative in the Northwest Territories through a visual medium. Important political moments in the north were documented in the collection such as the rise of the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, the Morrow Decision, the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, and the Dene Nation land claim process. *Native Press* photographers captured images of pollution of the land and its harmful effects on the people of the north. Featured in the newspaper were images of contaminant spills from Giant Mine and nurses taking hair samples of Dettah children to detect levels of arsenic. The *Native Press* newspaper brought important issues relevant in the western Northwest Territories directly to communities. Articles written by staff informed and fostered dialogue concerning political

¹² Native Press, “Dene Nation and the Native Press as Partners”, September/October 1996, 2.

¹³ Priscilla Hwang, “Father and son resurrect N.W.T. Indigenous newspaper Native Press after decades”, *C.B.C.*, 7 February 2017, last accessed 3 December 2019 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/native-press-newspaper-northwest-territories-1.3970765>

¹⁴ Hwang, “Father and son” 7 February 2017.

decisions made in Yellowknife and Ottawa from a Dene and Métis perspective. Meetings concerning alcohol bans, new roads, and major infrastructure projects were no longer simply topics in text; the *Native Press* provided visual context to who was attending the meetings, who were the main community participants, and who was presenting policy from the Federal and Territorial Government.

At its heart though, the *Native Press* was a newspaper for the people and its photographers captured intimate images of drum and tea dances, children playing along the banks of the Deh Cho, and life on the land. Talented photographers such as Phillip Mercredi, Tapwe Chretien, Tessa Macintosh, Brenda Kolson, James Jerome and Dorothy Chocolate among many others at *Native Press* connected people spread across the western Northwest Territories through a visual medium. Former staff members from the *Native Press* highlighted the impact of the photographs: “Everyone read the paper, including elders who did not read English, yet still read the paper faithfully because of the pictures – they recognized people and had participated in the events reported on or knew people who had.”¹⁵ A frequent columnist for the newspaper touched on the collection’s significance when they described how the “Native Press for many years was considered THE paper for the Dene. Information valuable to the Dene communities were readily provided by the elders so that information could be shared and treasured. ... These pictures are a reminder of the hardships, and the proud heritage we Dene have.”¹⁶ The *Native Press* had a significant impact on communities in the western Northwest Territories. Its photographic legacy was powerful and rightly deserved attention for its meaning and value to the north.

¹⁵ NWT Archives, accession folder N-2018-010.

¹⁶ NWT Archives, accession folder N-2018-010..

The Native Press photograph collection was donated to NWT Archives in 2018 by the Native Communications Society of the Northwest Territories – the parent organization of the *Native Press*. Though the collection was packed up and put on deposit at NWT Archives in the summer of 1994, its custodial history was more complex than its 25-year hibernation. When the *Press Independent* (formerly the *Native Press*) folded in 1993, NCS Board of Directors transferred responsibility of the collection to the Dene Cultural Institute (DCI). DCI eventually transferred back ownership of the collection in 2002, resulting in a new deposit agreement signed in 2003 between NCS and NWT Archives that lasted fifteen years before the collection was formally donated to the territorial archives.

NCS Transfers Responsibility

Staff of the *Native Press* photographed, kept, and cared for over 200,000 negatives during the newspaper's operation. The collection was immensely valued by NCS but approaching March 1993 the society was in financial trouble owing to high rent expenses from the new NWT Communications Centre building, a million dollar loan, and the withdrawal of core funding from the Secretary of State's office.¹⁷ NCS's precarious financial position and the impending closure of the *Press Independent* led NCS Board of Directors to sign an agreement in principle with Vi Beck of Type Unlimited in March 1993 for the newspaper's sale. To quell fears over the loss of the collection in the sale, NCS printed a statement in the 19 March 1993 edition of *The Press Independent*: "The board would not allow a transfer of the print and photo archives, as that would be an abrogation of their responsibility to the Dene/Métis people who, over the past 20 years, have contributed their stories and photographs to the paper. These archives at some point

¹⁷ Native Press, "New facility planned", 19 February 1988, 1; Roy Dahl, Native Press, "from my desk" June 2009.

will be transferred to an appropriate vehicle such as the Dene Cultural Institute for safekeeping and protection.”¹⁸ NCS recognized the collection was invaluable to the communities it served but also to itself as an important foundation and resource that could be drawn upon for print media, research, and curriculum development.

Just as NCS recognized, archives are vital branches of organizations and act as foundations which support core activities. Tom Nesmith stressed that “[i]nstitutions of all kinds benefit from efficient identification of important recorded knowledge, savings in records storage costs, and protection of evidence for legal purposes”¹⁹ Becky Tousey and Elizabeth Adkins also note that companies see benefits for “media relations, brand marketing, internal communications, speechwriting, and presentations for internal and external use. Archives add value to all these business activities and more. They can be used to enhance the reputation of a company and to both communicate and build on a corporate culture.”²⁰ When Vi Beck of Type Unlimited purchased the Press Independent and printed the Northern Star, the paper floundered and printing stopped in 1994. The absence of the Native Press collection was not solely responsible for the demise of the Northern Star; yet, without the visual wealth that supported the *Native Press* in its 22 years of printing, the Northern Star could not draw upon the same memory foundation to efficiently function and serve the communities it intended to.

In November 1993, the Board of Directors of NCS approved the transfer of the Native Press photograph collection to DCI while retaining ownership of the collection. The board based

¹⁸ The Press Independent, “It’s a fond farewell”, 19 March 1993, 1.

¹⁹ Nesmith, “Ox and the Virgin” 247.

²⁰ Elizabeth Adkins, Becky, Haglund Tousey, “Access to business archives: US access philosophies.” Paper presented at the access to archives: The Japanese and American practices conference, Tokyo. May 2007, last accessed 25 March 2020, http://www.archivists.org/publications/proceedings/accesstoarchives/10_B-TOUSEY_E-ADKINS.pdf

their decision partially on a proposal sent by DCI. Pat Burke, Chair of NCS, was “impressed within the Dene Cultural Institute’s Five Year Plan and the goals for the Press archives within that plan.”²¹ DCI saw the Native Press photograph collection playing a pivotal role in achieving the institute’s goals by utilizing the photographs in publishing materials and in the development of cultural education.²² However because DCI was currently in the process of building a new cultural centre they suggested NCS partner with the NWT Archives in Yellowknife to deposit the collection as an interim measure.²³ NCS took up the suggestion. Staff from the NWT Archives boxed the collection up in August 1994 and transferred the collection to their storage where it would remain definitively.

The deposit agreement made with NCS, DCI and NWT Archives is not uncommon in the archival world. Yet, partnerships between small community archives and mainstream heritage institutions can be complex and challenging. Flinn, Stevens and Shepherd pointed out the dilemma of sustainability and autonomy in their research on community archives and partnerships with mainstream archives.²⁴ The authors argued that sustainability and autonomy “appear to have a complex relationship and interaction, one which shifts and evolves during the course of the life of a community archive. If achieving sustainable resources means accessing public funds, there is almost certainly a trade-off in terms of a loss of autonomy and

²¹ Dene Cultural Institute, “Native Communications Society for the Western Arctic Transfers Archives” *Dene Cultural Institute Quarterly* Vol. 2 No. 1, January 1994, 8.

²² Dene Cultural Institute, “Native Communications Society for the Western Arctic Transfers Archives” *Dene Cultural Institute Quarterly* Vol. 2 No. 1, January 1994, 8

²³ Dene Cultural Institute, “Native Communications Society for the Western Arctic Transfers Archives” *Dene Cultural Institute Quarterly* Vol. 2 No. 1, January 1994, 8

²⁴ Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, Elizabeth Shepherd, “Whose memories, whose archives? Independent community archives, autonomy and the mainstream” *Archival Science* 9 (2009): 80.

independence.”²⁵ Indeed, although NCS and DCI gained public storage space at NWT Archives and controlled access to the collection, it changed their relationship to the collection.

In 1994, DCI signed a deposit agreement with the NWT Archives to manage the collection. However, after nine years a new deposit agreement was signed in 2003 which named NCS as owners of the collection once again. Efforts to process the collection occurred shortly after the new agreement was signed. Former *Native Press* staff members who poured years of hard work into the collection, were concerned over the collection’s stagnation at the archives and provided input on how to move forward. One former staff member offered recommendations as how to revive the collection by bringing together former *Native Press* staff members and particularly those with knowledge of the context of the photographs and the database.²⁶ An ambitious attempt was made in 2003 to describe the collection but had to be scaled back due to inadequate resources.

The Catalogue

Perhaps one of the few lamentable facets of the transfer of the Native Press collection to NWT Archives involved the partial loss of a database containing a catalogue of descriptive information associated with a substantial portion of Native Press negatives. Staff of the *Native Press* and the *Press Independent* managed the catalogue during the newspapers’ operation in the 1980s and 1990s. More than a decade’s worth of information relating to people and places in the negatives was entered into the catalogue and stored on magnetic tapes that were accessible by computer using a File Pro database.²⁷ Understandably, procuring this information was of vital

²⁵ Flinn, Stevens, Shepherd, “Whose memories, whose archives?” 80.

²⁶ NWT Archives, accession folder N-2018-010

²⁷ NWT Archives, accession folder N-2018-010

importance for the NWT Archives staff. Archives staff were initially uneasy over the handling of the collection - both over the perceived failure to tap into the expertise of *Native Press* staff and in the delay in procuring the computerized catalogue.²⁸ Staff recognized the consequences of not tapping into the *Native Press* staff knowledge and that the context and usability of the collection would be significantly hampered if they failed to do so.²⁹

The urgency to acquire the database was well understood and a timeline of events documented NWT Archives staff's repeated attempts to retrieve and access the catalogue.³⁰ After the collection was boxed and deposited in August 1994, an archival staff member attempted to gain access to the catalogue from tapes sent by NCS using "File Pro" software borrowed from the Housing Corporation.³¹ Partial access was successfully attained by employing Notepad in Windows which yielded a number of names and places but this was as close as staff came to fully attaining the catalogue, though further efforts were pursued.. It must be remembered that during this time NCS was experiencing financial hardship that consumed their available resources and that the organization was undergoing a massive reorganization of its functions which saw the complete elimination of its newspaper branch.

The efforts to retrieve the Native Press catalogue remain in a txt file at the NWT Archives. The file is an important archival record and has been used in the collection's processing. Though the NWT Archives still holds and has used the partial database, it begs the questions of whether it is possible to access the original database today?

²⁸ NWT Archives, accession folder N-2018-010

²⁹ NWT Archives, accession folder N-2018-010

³⁰ NWT Archives, accession folder N-2018-010

³¹ NWT Archives, accession folder N-2018-010

In 1994, both the expertise and the technology and software to access the *Native Press* negatives catalogue existed. However, there are numerous challenges to access this information today. The Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, who led development of the Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS), a key standard for digital archiving today, highlights that “the rapid obsolescence of digital technologies creates considerable technical dangers, particularly a much greater risk than in the past of losing the possibility of restoring, rendering, or interpreting the information.”³² Decades have passed since the original catalogue has been accessed on a computer stored at an NCS warehouse. Decades have passed since staff have seen what the catalogue looks like. Perhaps with new forensic technology the information could be retrieved, however, other options include finding the computer itself, finding a computer from the era able to run the original application, or running an emulation in a virtual machine.³³

If the computer had survived after all these years, obsolescence, or the degradation of hardware and software, could have occurred. Digital materials are far more unstable than analog records. Harvey and Mahard pointed out that “what is different about digital objects is their instability; they are much less likely than are analog materials to remain readable and understandable without active, managed care.”³⁴ A second concern would be whether the files on computer still contain a readable bitstream. Mike Kastellic explains that “when the physical medium of a digital file decays to the point where one or more bits lose their definition, the file

³² Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, *Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS)*. Magenta Book (2 June 2012) 1-4 <http://public.ccsds.org/publications/archive/650x0m2.pdf>

³³ For an example of information recovery see The Invisible Photograph Part 2: Trapped: Andy Warhol’s Amiga Experiments which follows a group of artists, computer scientists, archivists, and curators who recovered Andy Warhol’s lost digital works <http://www.nowseethis.org/invisiblephoto/posts/108>

³⁴ Ross Harvey, Martha Mahard, “Mapping the Preservation Landscape for the Twenty-First Century,” *Preservation, Digital Technology and Culture* 1 (2013): 12.

becomes partially or wholly unreadable.”³⁵ Taking into consideration the time that has passed since the catalogue has been accessed and the unknown whereabouts of the computer, combined with known complications concerning obsolescence, data loss and degradation it is unlikely, though still possible, that the information could be retrieved.

Staff recognized the catalogue was an essential archival record and it is unfortunate that the original catalogue was never fully acquired by the archive. It is important to understand why records like this catalogue are essential archival records. In Greg Bak’s article which examines archivists’ historic treatment of archival records and metadata, Bak has argued that these types of records are “evidence of relationships among records and record users. It is not “meta” data; it is archival data. It is data that must be acquired and managed as a necessary part of the record. It is data that make the difference between a bunch of discrete solitary items, and an interrelated set of archival records.”³⁶ Indeed, if the catalogue had been treated as part of the archival record, the work required to describe the images today may have been reduced.

While the loss of the original catalogue is lamentable the collection’s description is now being built from the ground up with input from former staff members and members of the communities who the *Native Press* photographed. Significant effort is being directed to share again the visual treasure that was so valued by its readers. *Native Press*’ audience found themselves, family, and friends represented in media that mainstream sources often ignored and should be able, in the present, to find themselves and their friends and family members again. Creating a new catalogue brings urgency to the NWT Archives and interested partners efforts to digitize and make accessible to the public, this important collection. Platforms to share the

³⁵ Mike Kastlelec, “Practical Limits to the Scope of Digital Preservation,” *Information Technology and Libraries* 31.2 (2012): 64.

³⁶ Bak “Not Meta Just Data” 5.

Native Press photographs now exist in ways previously unimaginable when the *Native Press* operated. The digital realm has changed how archives can reach users. How archival records are shared digitally needs to be carefully considered and input from potential partners and users should be sought out.

Donation to the NWT Archives and the Tłıchǫ Partnership

NCS formally donated the Native Press photograph collection to the NWT Archives in 2018. The donation was made possible due to the efforts of Territorial Archivist Erin Suliak. Additional factors which influenced NCS's donation included the proposed partnership with the Tłıchǫ Government to describe Tłıchǫ content in the images and the change of executives at NCS. Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd surmised "that one of the most dangerous times for the long-term sustainability of a community archive is in the period after its original driving force moves away or passes on."³⁷ For the Native Press collection, 2018 was not the most dangerous time: 1993 and 2003 were. Arguably, the original driving force were the staff who had meticulously cared for the collection over 20 years and knew the images intimately, and who had put hours of work into the File Pro database. When the *Press Independent* closed and its staff moved on, DM Communications, NCS's company, was in debt to its creditors and the collection could have been seized. This possibility forced NCS to transfer responsibility for the collection to DCI and the physical records on deposit at the NWT Archives where it sat undescribed with intermittent access and use over the next 25 years.

The driving force returned in 2018 with interest from former Native Press staff.. By 2018, NCS was largely without the means to process, advance description or administer access to the

³⁷ Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd, "Whose Memories," 80.

collection but they were interested in facilitating access to all northerners. By donating the collection to NWT Archives, the collection could be processed by archival staff and the images could be digitized and described in NWT Archives' descriptive database, which can be viewed anywhere with an internet connection. Additionally, the NWT Archives is part of a government funded division under the Education, Culture and Employment Department and benefits from a comparatively stable funding source that can sustain long-term description projects.

The Tłıchǫ Government – NWT Archives Partnership

One of the factors which influenced the Native Communication Society's decision to donate the collection in 2018 was the Tłıchǫ Government's partnership with the NWT Archives to describe Tłıchǫ content in the collection. Through successfully being awarded funding from the National Digitization Heritage Strategy, a Tłıchǫ consultant was hired by the NWT Archives to assist in identifications of people and places. In turn, the NWT Archives would provide the Tłıchǫ Government with digital copies of the 5000 images at the end of the description project. Identification workshops in Behchokò offered the chance to share the images with elders and at the Annual Gathering with community members from the Tłıchǫ Nation.

The Tłıchǫ Nation consists of four communities which include Behchokò (Rae-Edzo), Gamètì (Rae Lakes), Whatì (Lac La Martre), and Wekweètì (Snare Lakes).³⁸ Currently, Behchokò is the only Tłıchǫ community with year-round road access. While the road to Whatì is expected to be completed within the next few years, it remains accessible only by air, or by boat in the summer. This is the same for Gamètì and Wekweètì. For archivists conducting community workshops, the high cost to travel by air to all four communities poses financial barriers. The

³⁸ Tłıchǫ Government, "Communities", last accessed 5 December 2019 <https://www.Tlıchǫ.ca/community/>; A large number of Tłıchǫ citizens also live in Yellowknife.

decision to conduct two workshops for the project in Behchokò was motivated by resource limitations. Additionally, population size and geography also factored into the decision. Behchokò is the largest and closest of the four communities to the major hub of the area – Yellowknife. Behchokò has a population of 1874 (2016) and is only a 110 km drive.³⁹ Whatì is the second largest community with a population of 470 and is over 150 km away.⁴⁰ Gamètì's population is 278 and a trip by airplane is under an hour.⁴¹ Wekweètì is the smallest community with a population of 129.⁴² Due to its proximity, accessibility, and population size, Behchokò was selected to host two of the three community identification workshops. The workshops were held on June 3, 2019, and June 25, 2019. The third community identification workshop was held over three days in Gamètì during the Tłı̄ch̄o Annual Gathering from July 9-11, 2019. Each year, the gathering rotates to a different community and brings members from the four communities. The invitation from the Tłı̄ch̄o Government offered the opportunity to share images and work with many people from all four communities without financially being able to visit everyone.

My role in the Native Press digitization project was only one small part of a large operation to make these invaluable images accessible to the public but it warrants explanation. As part of my role as a contract archivist, I was hired to describe 5000 digitized images from the

³⁹ Statistics Canada, "Behchokò, Community government, Northwest Territories" (2016) last accessed 5 December 2019 <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=6103031&Geo2=PR&Code2=61&Data=Count&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All>

⁴⁰ Statistics Canada, "Whatì, Community government, Northwest Territories" (2016) last accessed 5 December 2019 <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=6103034&Geo2=PR&Code2=61&SearchText=Whatì&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=6103034&TABID=1&type=0>

⁴¹ Statistics Canada, "Gamètì, Community government, Northwest Territories" (2016) last accessed 5 December 2019 <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=6103049&Geo2=PR&Code2=61&SearchText=Gamètì&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=6103049&TABID=1&type=0>

⁴² Statistics Canada "Wekweètì, Community government, Northwest Territories" (2016) last accessed 5 December 2019 <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=6103052&Geo2=PR&Code2=61&SearchText=Wekweètì&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=6103052&TABID=1&type=0>

Native Press photograph collection, submit 1000 annotated community identification sheets, create *fonds* level description, attend three community identification workshops, and interview former staff members from the *Native Press*. The project was supervised by Senior Archivist Leslie Gordon who offered amazing support throughout my time in Yellowknife. I also worked closely with our Tłı̄chǫ contractor who helped identify people, places, and events in the images. Because the project was a partnership with the Tłı̄chǫ Government, we worked with fantastic administrative staff who problem-solved logistics and assisted with invitations for our identification workshops. Preceding my arrival was the work of the digitization contractors who digitized the images I was responsible for describing. Again, the project had many people involved and I was just one part of it.

During the project, two community identification workshops were held in Behchokò. Preliminary meetings with our Tłı̄chǫ Government partners were held to determine who would be invited to attend the workshops. Due to financial limitations, hosting a large community event was not feasible. Instead, our partners invited select members from the community. Though no formal criteria existed, we were interested in inviting community members who were alive when the photographs were taken and were well connected within the community. Our Tłı̄chǫ consultant and Tłı̄chǫ Government partners contacted members from the community and booked a meeting space to host the event. Myself and our Tłı̄chǫ consultant set about identifying 200 images which contained images of the four communities or community members. We created a binder containing 200 photo ID sheets which could be used during the workshops to physically annotate names to individuals within the photographs that otherwise would have been difficult in our Excel spreadsheets. During the first workshop, 150 images were examined. An additional 100 images were selected following this workshop to prepare for the second workshop.

Ultimately, the workshops proved to be valuable owing to the increase in the number of eyes on images. With multiple participants, the project could achieve consensus descriptions that provided ostensibly greater accuracy than an individual could attain.

The community identification workshop in Gamètì provided an exceptional chance to share the Native Press photograph collection in person with as many people from all four Tłı̄chǫ communities. The NWT Archives were invited to attend the Tłı̄chǫ Annual Gathering. For this event, the Tłı̄chǫ Government provided an interpreter to assist in the identification process. In preparation for the gathering, we printed large scale images from the collection to hang on walls. The 50 large scale images that were selected featured all four communities. Additionally, I created a binder of photo ID sheets that pertained to the four communities. 5000 digitized images were played on a loop on a small television screen in the room.

The challenge in selecting images for the Behchokò and Gamètì workshops was determining before the trips where the images were taken or whether the individuals were Tłı̄chǫ so that the images brought were relevant for the participants. I will explain below the processes from the beginning of my project to the end. As set out in my contract schedule, I was to describe the collection in 1250 item-level description blocks and submit one block on May 31, June 28, July 26, and August 23. On top of the 5000 descriptions, I was to provide 1000 annotated community identification sheets before July 16. The identification sheets were provided to me by our digitization contractors. Each community identification sheet consisted of an image and description fields. I worked with our Tłı̄chǫ consultant to go through each community identification sheet to identify people, places, dates, and activities. Yet because of the timelines for submitting deliverables it meant that not all 5000 images were reviewed before selection for the workshops occurred. The selections instead were based on these 1000 sheets

reviewed and the description blocks I was working on. This meant that there may have been some images that should have been brought, but were not, simply because the timelines did not allow for the entire collection to be reviewed before the workshops.

The entire description process, while challenging, was fluid. More and more images were described as a result of working with our Tłı̄ch̄o consultant, analyzing the *Native Press* newspapers, or from identifications shared at each workshop. By the time we were ready to attend the Annual Gathering in Gamèti we had a sense of what images we wanted to bring and focus on - despite not reviewing the entirety of the collection. From these annotated community identification sheets, we selected a sample to bring to the workshops based on their content. These sheets were furthered annotated at each workshop as more information was shared.

Images Selection

Owing to the large size of the collection, it would have been impossible to describe at an item level all 200,000 plus images. To adequately scope the project, 5000 images from the first seven years were selected to be described. By selecting a representational sample of images from the *Native Press* contact sheets, archivists could provide far quicker online access to the images than if all the images were scanned. Additionally, by sampling images, the same number of events could be covered without requiring every image to be scanned. The drawback to this method, however, is that there is little indication of the actual size of the collection. Also, the method is subjective, and the archivist becomes the arbiter for who and what makes it online. This means that photos of greater relevance could be missed. Staff of the NWT Archives recognized early on the value of involving former staff of the *Native Press* in the cataloguing phase because of the potential for them locate important photographs and provide context. There currently are no fields in the NWT Archives descriptive database to document the decision of the

archivist to select images from the collection. Greg Bak, Danielle Allard, and Shawna Ferris raised similar concerns though these pertained to how archivists created descriptions from participatory input. In the authors' examination of LAC's Project Naming, they argued that "[t]hough it is obvious that community knowledge has been integrated into the descriptions, the process by which this happens remains opaque."⁴³ The authors argued that the descriptions themselves "are not sufficient records on their own to fully articulate the complex context of their creation."⁴⁴ Indeed, the archivist's decisions need to be fully documented to better understand not only how participatory information is included in the creation of descriptions but how the archival records themselves are selected for digitization.

So, how were the images selected? While I was not personally involved in the selection, it was partly determined by utilizing the original *Native Press* contact sheets. Native Press staff used a grease pencil to circle which negatives they wanted developed for use in the newspaper. These circled images were generally selected for our project because the chance of finding associated information in the published newspapers increased greatly. The drawback to this method, however, meant that we were left with few digitized images of specific communities. For example, of the 5000 images, only eight were identified as being photographed in Wekweètì. This disparity between communities reflected a major challenge for this description project: how to balance the quantity of Tłìchq̓ content with that from the rest of the western Northwest Territories. Another challenge for archives and description projects such as this involves time and funding. With more employees, more equipment, and more community visits the Native Press collection could be described at the item level. Yet, the reality remains that there will

⁴³ Greg Bak, Danielle Allard, and Shawna Ferris, "Knowledge Organization as Knowledge Creation: Surfacing Community Participation in Archival Arrangement and Description," *Knowledge Organization* 46, no. 7 (2019): 510.

⁴⁴ Bak, Allard, Ferris, "Knowledge Organization as Knowledge Creation," 510.

always be financial and time constraints which force archivists to implement methods that strive to yield the best possible results within existing resource constraints, and then to inform our users of the decisions made.

During the project I was provided with a variety of resources to assist with description which included an Excel spreadsheet, the original *Native Press* contact sheets, the *Native Press* newspaper collection, NWT Archives staff, a Tłı̄ch̄o consultant, and former *Native Press* staff. The Excel spreadsheet provided a brief overview of the contact sheets and listed the subject of the contact sheets, date, high-level descriptions of the contents of the contact sheets, and data from the recovered *Native Press* database. My first task was to verify the information from the Excel spreadsheet with the original contact sheets and add any additional information which could later be used while creating the item-level descriptions. From the contact sheets I created my own contact sheet level descriptions. The contact sheets contained a wealth of information and provided not only a good overview of the collection but also insights into how images were selected by *Native Press* staff for use in the newspaper.

The NWT Archives holds physical copies of the *Native Press* which were an invaluable source for the description project as there were not only names of individuals and places, but contextual information contained in the articles. To ensure this information was not lost, in the item-level description fields, if a digitized image was used in the newspaper, a reference with the newspaper's dates and page number was included. This reference provides users the ability to gain greater contextual information about the image. If eventually the *Native Press* is digitized, the potential to link newspaper pages in the description could provide the user with a seamless flow of information, even though this currently is not possible.

At the NWT Archives, I also had an extremely knowledgeable group of people to assist me with descriptions. I was fortunate to work alongside members of the NWT Archives staff, many of whom grew up in Yellowknife and were familiar with particular places and people and were able to provide more accurate descriptions. Along with the archives staff, I also worked with our Tłı̄chʻo consultant who was an invaluable source of information, particularly for identifying Tłı̄chʻo individuals and places. In the early phases of the project we worked together for two-hour identification shifts. Our consultant also assisted with selecting individuals to attend the two Behchokò workshops.

Another resource for description work came out of the two workshops that were held in Behchokò and a third workshop that was held during the Tłı̄chʻo Gathering in Gamètì. The workshops allowed for many voices and provided consensus-based descriptions on certain individuals that may have been in question. A good example of clearing up misidentifications occurred in Gamètì. In one of the photographs brought to the workshop, an individual was identified the first day with a possible name. However, an individual later came in during the second day and determined that this name was incorrect. How did they know? Easy- the person was not his mother. These workshops were instrumental as they offered a chance to share back the photographs that since 1994 had been stored in Yellowknife.

As part of my work, I interviewed five former staff members and ran tailored identification workshops. Going through 5000 images with each former staff member would have been too time consuming and so I selected images from both the regions they grew up or lived in and the time periods they worked at *Native Press*. The information gathered from the interviews was used to improve the administrative history in addition to identifying more individuals and places. Without the input from these interviews, the provenance of this collection

would have felt hollow. A variety of sources is required to construct the provenance of the records. As Tom Nesmith aptly recognized: “What an archivist decides to include or emphasize when constructing this provenance will help shape the meaning of the records and thus the reality they create for their readers.”⁴⁵ To only have included what the newspaper wrote would have altered and diminished the multiple voices and references that when put together offer a more whole description. Yet the process of constructing the *fonds* description will not be featured because there are currently no fields for this information either in the *Canadian Rules for Archival Description*, or in the NWT Archives database of archival descriptions. Jennifer Douglas argued that “it is imperative that we start to more openly acknowledge – in both our theoretical statements and the embodiment of these in archival description – that the archives is a construction built by many hands and formed over time. Instead of hiding the “constructedness” of the *fonds*, we must begin to actively embrace it.”⁴⁶

Digitizing, describing and making accessible the Native Press photograph collection is a multi-year project that has immense potential. While the first phase of the project which covered 1971-1977 has been digitized and described, there remains a great deal of work left. The images capture an important time period in the western Northwest Territories which documented the rise of the Dene Nation. Yet the images also captured the intimate and the mundane. Understanding how the collection came to the NWT Archives is another important element in the history of the collection. This period underscores the value of the collection but also the challenges of preserving a collection of this size for organizations that do not have the same expertise and financial backing as some larger heritage organizations. Working in partnerships with the Tłı̨chʼo

⁴⁵ Tom Nesmith, “Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives” 36.

⁴⁶ Jennifer Douglas, “Towards More Honest Description,” *American Archivist* Vol. 79, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016): 50.

Government offers the chance to share these images again with the people most relevant to the collection. Community-based descriptions offer opportunities to share knowledge and improve upon the archivist's ability to better describe records.

Conclusion: Atop Pilots' Monument



Figure 6: View from Pilots' Monument in August (copyright Jason Carrie)

On my last day in Yellowknife, I went down toward Old Town to pick up a few gifts to bring home. I stopped in to a few shops and meandered around on my bike until I worked my way around McDonald Drive before turning onto Ingraham and peddling hard up the hill towards Pilot Monument on “The Rock.”¹ I took in the spectacular, panoramic views of Old Town, Joliffe Island, the downtown core, Back Bay, and Yellowknife Bay. I climbed up to the monument on my first week in Yellowknife and it was a fitting way to spend my last hours in

¹ Built in 1967, Pilots' Monument pays tribute to the bush pilots who connected Yellowknife to the country, and it sits high up on what Yellowknifers call “The Rock.”

town. I reflected on the people I had met, the places I had been, the amazing food I had eaten, and the project that had brought me to Yellowknife in the first place.

The Native Press project was an unbelievable work opportunity that I never expected to be a part of. The experience was crucial to this thesis because it provided the chance to work on a northern collection in the north. While I had framed what I thought might be the challenges of archives in the north prior to working in Yellowknife, ultimately, I had no real sense of whether these were accurate. As a southerner, my interpretation of the archival challenges could easily differ from archivists who have spent their lives living and working in the north. The case study provided an opportunity to compare the challenges I identified in chapter 2 with the Native Press photograph project on which I worked. I found that many of the challenges I earlier identified were encountered in the project.

In terms of geography, the Northwest Territories pose a challenge for description and outreach. Even with the Tłı̄chǫ Government partnership, only two of the four Tłı̄chǫ communities were visited. Due to the time of year, the only community accessible by road was Behchokò. For the trip to Gamètì, a plane charter was arranged through the Tłı̄chǫ Government. Whatì and Wekweètì, unfortunately, were not visited due to the geographic spread of the communities. This spread is common for Indigenous communities and rural towns across Canada with archival records located in far off centres. Remember too, the Native Press collection consists of images from all over the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta, and the Tłı̄chǫ component of the collection is only a small part of a large collection. Ideally, all relevant communities would have been visited. Yet, this was simply impossible because of the physical distance separating each community and the associated financial cost. Some small steps taken to address this challenge were to put up digital copies on the NWT Archives database and

to donate copies directly to the Tłı̨chǫ Government who could share the digitized images with their communities. One suggestion that was mentioned occasionally was to seek an invitation to attend a Dene Nation assembly to share the collection. The Dene Nation assemblies bring together members from nearly all the Northwest Territories regions and would provide an excellent opportunity to build networks to share the collection. While digitization can provide access online - if adequate digital infrastructure is in place - and address challenges of geography, outreach in person can instantaneously elicit feedback and reach individuals who may not be interested in accessing images online. These workshops are ultimately what Bastian has argued for – bringing these records to the very places and people for whom they are most meaningful and valuable.

The Native Press photographs have always been housed in Yellowknife. Yet, these photographs contain so much relevant information to so many communities. While it is tempting to call for the collection to be broken up and split among communities, this would pose irreparable harms to the collection. As Joan Schwartz argues, “archival value in photographs resides in the interrelationships between photographs and the creating structures, animating functions, programmes, and information technology that created them. It is for this very reason that we must preserve the functional context which transforms photograph images into photographic documents”² Instead, the challenge for NWT Archives is to find ways to share the collection back with **all** the communities. NWT Archives’ vision statement is very supportive of this work: “The NWT Archives is dedicated to preserving and sharing historical records to

² Joan M. Schwartz, ““We make our tools and our tools make us”: Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomats,” *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995): 50.

support culture, research, and the democratic rights of the people of the Northwest Territories.”³

The partnership with the Tłı̨chǫ Government was one example of how to share the collection.

Non-digital infrastructure posed a challenge for determining which communities were able to be visited during the portion of my project. Behchokò was the only Tłı̨chǫ community accessible by road in the summer. Additionally, the legacy of the collection and its storage at NWT Archives is intrinsically tied to the lack of available infrastructure at DCI when NCS sought to transfer the collection during its fragile financial period in 1993-1994. Following the resolution of the DCI-NCS ownership in 2002, NCS at any point could have retrieved the collection but without staff and a storage facility to manage the collection, it remained at NWT Archives’ storage facility. The storage challenges faced by NCS are common for organizations with archival records in the north and across the country. Laura Millar reported on the severity of the problem in the Yukon in her community archivist report. Nunavut’s decision to transfer its archival and archaeological collection to Gatineau further underscores the storage challenge for archival records in the north.

While working on the Native Press project, the main financial challenges associated with our work was our limited ability to pay to host large community events and visit every Tłı̨chǫ community. The ideal workshop that was never held during the project was a community-wide identification workshop held in Behchokò. The town’s large population size, the substantial percentage of images taken in Behchokò, and its proximity to Yellowknife all pointed to a great opportunity. Yet, renting a community hall, feeding many people, renting audio-visual equipment and ensuring that archives staff are present to help ensure that the knowledge that is

³ NWT Archives, “NWT Archives Operations Manual – April 2017” 6. Last accessed 5 December 2019 https://www.nwtarchives.ca/documents/nwt_archives_Operational_Guidelines.pdf

shared is captured, ultimately, is very expensive. The challenge for the project was to ensure that events were scoped to the funding available.

At the NWT Archives, the employees are well educated and knowledgeable in their field. Where education poses a challenge for archives in the north is the hiring pool of archivists from the north. For contracts such as mine, which required hiring a contract archivist, there are no university or college programs in the Northwest Territories pumping out graduate students educated in archival studies. The lack of archival training programs in the north means for contracts such as the Native Press project, hiring archivists from the south with, perhaps, limited understanding of northern history. Though I have taken courses on the Canadian north in my undergraduate and master's degrees, my knowledge of the territory was quickly put into perspective after starting work on the project - I had much to learn.

Language easily could have been one of the biggest challenges for this project had it not been for our Tłıchq consultant and interpreters. Because of the time period of the project, many of the participants who were invited to the Behchokò workshops were mature adults and spoke fluently in Tłıchq. During the identification process our consultant had to interpret where the image was taken and who was in it. In Gamèti, because the town is much more isolated than Behchokò, Tłıchq was used overwhelmingly more than English and many of the visitors to our workshops spoke to our interpreter who helped assist in the photo identification. Ultimately, without our interpreters, language would have posed an immense challenge for the project and lessened the outcomes from the workshops. The project owes much its success to the interpreters.

The Native Press photograph collection description project provided an opportunity to describe again an invaluable and meaningful collection to the north. By partnering with the

Tłıchq Government, NWT Archives and TG could pool expertise and share the collection back to the communities. Ultimately, fonds and item-level descriptions were immensely improved because of the input of former *Native Press*/NCS staff and Tłıchq community members. The collection's provenance is tied to the IB-NWT communications unit, staff of the *Native Press*, and staff of NCS. The complex custodial history stands in stark opposition to its seemingly mundane storage at the NWT Archives. Understanding how the collection was created and who brokered access are important elements in archival description. These elements are important because they alter the user's understanding of the collection.

Archives are needed in the north because they are meaningful and valuable to society. They are meaningful and valuable because of their connections to power, rights, and politics. Access to records is access to power, its access to the ability defend your rights, and to document Indigenous political movements. The growth of archival institutions and collections in the north is a welcome sign. Place, as where records are created and where records are stored still matters, though digitization has allowed for greater than ever access to collections. In the north, there are archival challenges of geography, retention and repatriation, infrastructure, education, finances, and language. Yet, northerners are resourceful and have found ways to answer these challenges. The Native Press project is one example, which also highlights the meaning and value of archival records. During the project we were met with challenges of navigating a geography that prevented us, due to financial limitations, from visiting all four Tłıchq communities. However, through an invitation to the Tłıchq Annual Gathering we were able to meet with Tłıchq citizens from all four communities to share knowledge. Borrowing from Erik Ketelaar, who borrowed from Abraham Lincoln, archives of the north, by the north, and for the north represents the idea

that archival records from the north, by northerners, should remain in the north and be accessible to northerners.⁴

⁴ Eric Ketelaar, "Understanding Archives of the People, by the People, and for the People" in J.D. Bindenagel (ed.), *Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets Proceedings* (Washington D.C., 1999) 750.

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