

## Archives Council of Prince Edward Island Response to the Royal Society of Canada on 'The Status and Future of Canada's Libraries and Archives'

We have provided responses to the list of questions sent to Associations.

### 1. What is the nature and make-up of your organization?

The Archives Council of Prince Edward Island (ACPEI) was established in 1987 as an umbrella group for institutions involved in the preservation and promotion of the province's documentary heritage. The objectives of the Archives Council are:

- to provide a network for archival cooperation throughout the province;
- to acquire funds, whether through gift or otherwise, to assist the Corporation with its objects and purposes;
- to provide, develop, coordinate and implement projects of mutual interest;
- to represent the archival community of the province in a national network;
- to promote the archival preservation and conservation of Prince Edward Island's historical;
- documentary sources and, as required, to make representations to government and other agencies to promote such preservation;
- to encourage the establishment of archives by record creating bodies and to prevail upon these bodies to open the historical records to public research;
- to assess and report on the needs of the provincial archival community to provincial, federal and private funding and policy making agencies, and to make representation to these agencies for funding to fulfill these needs ;
- to establish and promote adequate standards, procedures and practices among archival repositories in the province;
- to promote public understanding and use of both archives and the historical resources of the province.

The Archives Council of Prince Edward Island currently represents thirteen institutional members:

- le Centre de recherche acadien de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard
- Alberton Museum
- City of Charlottetown
- Community Museum Association of Prince Edward Island
- Confederation Centre Art Gallery and Museum
- Garden of the Gulf Museum
- MacNaught History Centre and Archives
- Medical Society of Prince Edward Island
- Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation
- Prince Edward Island Regiment Museum

- Public Archives and Records Office of Prince Edward Island
- Robertson Library, University of Prince Edward Island
- St. Peter's Cathedral Archives

2. Does your organization provide services:
  - a. directly to Users?

ACPEI maintains the province's union list of archival descriptions, Archives PEI. The union list is accessible to the general public through the ACPEI website, serving as a point of entry for the province's archival repositories. Descriptions entered into Archives PEI are subsequently uploaded to the national archival description union list, Archives Canada.

- b. to members who make-up the organization?

Until its cancellation by Library and Archives Canada in 2012, ACPEI received an annual grant of approximately \$41,000 through the National Archival Development Program. This funding was used to staff an advisory service which focused on providing support to the membership in a number of areas including: preservation and conservation; archival description; and, disaster preparedness. The existence of the advisory service tacitly acknowledged disparities among the ACPEI membership in terms of staffing, expertise and access to technical resources. By providing such a service, ACPEI encouraged archival practice in line with commonly-accepted national standards.

Apart from membership fees, the National Archival Development Program was the sole source of funding for the Archives Council of Prince Edward Island. With no replacement funding available from other public or private sources, ACPEI was forced to shut down its advisory service in the spring of 2012. While the greatest impact has been on the ACPEI membership, it is worth noting that the general public made use of the advisory service as well, especially in the area of material conservation.

Since the demise of the ACPEI advisory service, the focus of Council work has been on promoting collaboration between member institutions. Much of this work is informal in nature, involving the exchange of information, technical resources and the like. At present, though, the only service formally being maintained by ACPEI is the provincial union list of archival descriptions. All other cooperation proceeds on an ad hoc basis.

3. In terms of Question 2, describe the services provided directly to Users, and if they are consortial in nature please describe the mechanisms in place to define, refine and measure the impact of the services, particularly as they relate to Canadians.

ACPEI maintains its union list of archival descriptions with technical assistance from the Public Archives and Records Office of Prince Edward Island. Use of the Archives PEI site is measured using common metrics such as unique page visits, click through and the like.

4. Would Canadians know of, or understand, the contribution you make to library/archival service in Canada?

ACPEI is routinely contacted by researchers looking for more information regarding fonds and collections referenced in the Archives PEI union list of archival descriptions. This, along with website usage statistics, suggests there is a general awareness of this service among subject area researchers.

5. What inhibits you from providing services that ultimately would improve library/archive services to Canadians?

Please see 2b above.

6. What do you see as the challenges for libraries and archives in the forthcoming years?

From the perspective of the Archives Council of Prince Edward Island, the greatest challenge lies in maintaining standards in the absence of national funding programs. The Canadian archival community, primarily through the work of the various working committees of the Canadian Council of Archives, has established a number of standards in the areas such as archival description and conservation. Without access to stable funding, smaller jurisdictions especially will have difficulty meeting these.

Submitted by Donald Moses  
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