NEWSLETTER
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Cover photo taken at Maze Lake by Maureen Atkinson, 2022.

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MESSAGE FROM THE AABC PRESIDENT

KATIE SLOAN

Spring on the West Coast has always been one of my favourite seasons, with the cherry blossoms out in full bloom, the greenery more vibrant, and short rainy days turn into longer sunnier ones. Spring always feels like a time of new beginnings.

Spring also marks the change in the AABC Executive. Congratulations and a warm welcome to the newest executive members: Alex Neijens, Treasurer, and Maureen Atkinson, Member at Large. Congratulations as well to Kat Louro, who is continuing on the Board in a new capacity as Vice President. Also, a heartfelt thank you to outgoing Board members, Jenny Seemen, Past President and Executive Member, and Stacey Gilkinson, outgoing Treasurer. Thank you, Jenny and Stacey, for your dedication and hard work over the past three years!

The AABC is also going through a time of change. In the fall of 2021, the AABC engaged with Vantage Point to develop a strategic plan for the Association over the next four to five years. The development stage of the strategic plan allowed the AABC membership and the Executive to do some self-reflection on its current position. It also allowed for us to identify the strengths of the Association, as well as areas where it can grow.

The following were identified as priorities/goals for the Association over the next 12-18 months:

- Develop an Indigenous Advocacy strategy;
- Review and update language in mission, objectives, and goals of the Association, in consultation with its membership;
- Complete an environmental scan of available funding and grant opportunities;
- Identify and/or strengthen partnerships with other archival associations;
- Review committees and determine opportunities;
- Clarify existing volunteer gaps; and
- Create an outreach strategy.

As the incoming President of the AABC, I am committed to work with other members of the Executive, volunteers, and the membership to develop a plan to meet these goals within the next five years.

There are other exciting projects coming up over the course of this year, with conference planning...
underway and a slate of upcoming distance education courses, webinars, and roundteas planned over the year. One exciting initiative will be “Archives 101: Archival Practice for Indigenous Organizations,” an AABC virtual course, to be held fall of 2022 and then again in early winter of 2023. These workshops will be run at low cost to participants thanks to a generous grant issued by the BC Arts Council, so please watch out for those!

I am both excited and honoured to take on the position of President of the AABC, and to continue collaborating with the AABC community on the great projects in the works for 2022-23!
On May 27, 2022, we passed a grim anniversary. The bodies of over 200 children, who died away from their communities, were located in unmarked graves on the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. Numerous other discoveries followed, with the remains of nearly 2000 humans, most of whom were children, found through ground penetrating radar. Children, who were often forcibly removed to residential schools where their physical, mental, and cultural well-being was neglected and outright destroyed while supposedly in the care of government mandated institutions. Children, who never returned to their communities, into the arms of their parents, or were given the chance to hold children of their own. Genocide is indeed the correct term when putting a name to the atrocities Canada has committed on First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples.

Across the country, communities, who long knew the truth of the atrocities committed through the Indian Residential School and colonial system, became the center of media attention; all as they dealt with the immense trauma of starting the process of recovering their beloved children from the earth. Although some outside the communities expressed dismay and shock that such discoveries were made, there had been testimonies and lived experiences relayed by the communities that indicated such burial sites existed. Likewise, in 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its Final Report which estimated, through an analysis of archival records and survivor testimonies, that over 3000 children had died in residential schools, and remained in unmarked burial sites. All of the reports from the TRC are available here.

Despite this reality, on the day of the anniversary, a U.S. based news outlet released a misleading report, calling the discoveries the “Biggest fake news story in Canada.”

We won’t link the article here and drive up traffic for the article. However, the piece put into stark relief the importance of words, of context, and the value we place on the established colonial narrative while silencing and delegitimizing the narratives and experiences of Indigenous people on their own lands.

Last month, on our social media channels and website the AABC Executive and the Indigenous Advocacy Committee provided a statement of mourning and solidarity to all Indigenous communities and remarked on the role of archives in lending unbalanced validity to colonial narratives. We also commented on the role of archives in illuminating truth, and the ongoing work of archivists in locating, preserving, contextualizing, and providing access to residential school and government records necessary to give the deceased back their names and their stories.

It is not our place, or our intent, to insert our own thoughts, feelings, or agenda into a tragedy that should be centered on the communities.
affected. The most important outcome of these discoveries should be giving the communities the resources they ask for to appropriately exhume and identify their loved ones, and then the resources and space to heal their communities within the bounds of their own cultural practice. The second outcome should be a commitment from all levels of government to weave reconciliatory policy and, more importantly, action, into every facet of their services on an ongoing basis in perpetuity; and to hold themselves accountable to the communities whose lands they occupy, everyday. The third is to support, and affirm, the lived experiences of the communities instead of to continuously denigrate and doubt their truths.

Most importantly, as outlined in our statement, the overall focus should be on the wellness and health of the communities who are experiencing trauma and distress as a result of the discoveries. Below, please find applicable resources.

We will take a moment to comment on our future intentions, in our capacity as a professional organization representing archives and archival workers in British Columbia. We hope you see in our strategic plan a commitment to reevaluate our priorities and challenge the limited ways we see archival professionals and archival labor, which has led to the exclusion of Indigenous and POC individuals from the archival profession. As a mostly white Executive Board, we should not be making decisions on how to build or support Indigenous archives and archivists. Instead, we will be focusing on ways to dismantle white supremacist structures within the AABC to make our Executive board a place where Indigenous participants feel welcome, heard and valued. We will also be making sure Indigenous communities are compensated and consulted at numerous junctures when we request their input, expertise, and labor.

Finally, as our colleagues begin assisting with archival research related to the Indian Residential School System, we want to take a moment to comment on the complexity of being settler professionals, or professionals from outside Indigenous communities, dealing with traumatizing records in service to Indigenous communities. We recognize that there are ways to feel, to mourn, and to process second-hand trauma without decentering the community and individuals who experienced the trauma. The AABC would like to better support our membership dealing with the mental load of processing traumatic records. We have added a list of resources within our archival toolkit here, but this is only a first step into providing more fulsome support for archival workers.

We welcome all within and outside of our membership to comment on the statement and this piece, and to hold us accountable as we bring Truth and Reconciliation to the forefront of our own work.

In kindness,

Kat Louro
Vice-President
IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING UNWELLNESS OR TRAUMA DUE TO THE DISCOVERIES, THE FOLLOWING SUPPORT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS SOCIETY

Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS) services include grief and loss counselling, crisis counselling, trauma counselling, Family and Group counselling and other supports including Traditional Healing Methods & Medicines. For more information please visit their [website](https://www.indefate.ca) or phone the IRSSS Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419 (Open 24 hours a day 7 days a week).

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM

Indian Residential Schools Mental Health Support Program (Government of Canada) provides mental and emotional health support services to eligible former Indian Residential School students and their families throughout all phases of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. For more information phone toll-free 1-877-477-0775.

FNHA FIRST NATIONS HEALTH BENEFITS MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS LIST

If you have questions about [providers](https://www.indigenoushealthBenefits.ca) you can call the IRS toll-free number at 1-877-477-0775, Monday to Friday, 8 am – 4 pm.

HOPE FOR WELLNESS HELP LINE

Hope for Wellness Help Line offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada. Phone and chat counselling is available in English, French, and Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut on request. Call the toll-free Help Line at 1-855-242-3310, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or use the chat box on their [website](https://www.hopeforwellness.ca).

CRISIS CENTRE BC

If you or someone you know is feeling hopeless or thinking about suicide, call or chat online with a crisis responder any time: 1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE), 24 hours a day.

Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789
Vancouver Coastal Regional Distress Line: 604-872-3311

ABORIGINAL WELLNESS PROGRAM

Aboriginal Wellness Program, run by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, offers adult counselling and support groups at 2750 East Hastings Street, Suite 288, Vancouver; Phone: 604-675-2551 or visit their [website](https://www.vch.ca/aboriginalwellness).

BC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

BC Mental Health Services includes a comprehensive list of resources, phone numbers, and support systems for each health authority found [here](https://www.bcmh.ca/).
Throughout this past year, the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre (NNMCC) in Burnaby, BC, and the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) in Toronto, ON, have collaborated to preserve and make accessible records focusing on the activities and achievements of Japanese Canadian women and to bring to light the strength, resilience, and contributions of these writers, activists, scientists, and more for the project titled Women of Change: Celebrating Japanese Canadian Leaders. As the Assistant Archivist, I was hired to inventory, rehouse, arrange, describe, digitize, and help to curate materials from three existing collections, including new accruals donated from the families.

This was a grant-funded project courtesy of Library and Archives Canada’s Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP), proposed by our two institutions who have previously undertaken projects together. We chose to exhibit the stories of six remarkable women: Tomiko Nishimura, Miyoshi “Mickey” Tanaka, Dr. Michiko Midge Ayukawa, Kinori Oka, Sono Nakazawa, and Justice Maryka Omatsu. They upheld the community for over a century and their excellence endures as adventurers, poets, scholars, scientists, dedicated community volunteers, judges, activists, and businesswomen. They did this in the face of sexism and racism, particularly during the internment of Japanese Canadian citizens during the Second World War, at which time Canada was at war with Japan.

During this war, Canadians of Japanese ancestry were branded as a threat to the West Coast of Canada and forcibly relocated inland in what is now termed the period of Japanese Canadian internment. Through government action, Japanese Canadians lost their community hubs along the coast, were illegally dispossessed of their property, forced into internment camps and labour camps, and many were separated.
from family and friends. Veterans from the First World War, who successfully lobbied for the right to vote in 1931, were now stripped of these rights and forced to surrender their lands. These actions were supported by the general Canadian population due to increasing anti-Asian sentiments in British Columbia. 2022 marked the 80th anniversary of the internment that began in 1942.

One woman was directly involved in helping Japanese Canadian community members who returned to Canada after the war. Miyoshi “Mickey” Tanaka was one of the creators and first editor of the journal The Bulletin, a monthly community publication started in 1958 after years spent keeping Japanese Canadian returnees informed of community activities through mailed flyers. This is the front cover of the April 2008 issue, which includes a transcribed interview with Miyoshi Tanaka in which she discusses her role as the journal’s original editor. She was also renowned for her work as a scientist and senior laboratory technician in the UBC Department of Anatomy, as well as an awarded volunteer at our own institution, receiving the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2013 for her contributions to Canada. This will be the third year since her passing and since the BC, Musqueam, and UBC flags were lowered on the UBC campus on August 30, 2019, in remembrance of her. More of these amazing women and their poetry, business, and research that benefited the Japanese Canadian community and beyond is now available for viewing.

The virtual exhibit Women of Change: Celebrating Japanese Canadian Leaders is the culmination of this digitization and research project focusing on these existing collections and is available for viewing on Google Arts & Culture. It can also be
found through the organizational websites for the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre and the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. The collections can be viewed at nikkeimuseum.org. For more content related to this project, please see recent issues of the community newspaper Nikkei Voice as well as Nikkei Images, Volume 27, No. 1. There will also be forthcoming physical exhibits at both the NNMCC and the JCCC, at which booklets, stickers, and buttons will be available.

This project was generously funded and made possible through the support of Library and Archives Canada’s Documentary Heritage Communities Program. The project and curatorial team is: Su Yen Chong, Theressa Takasaki, Tonya Sutherland, Sandy Chan, Kara Isozaki, Madelyn Martin, Lisa Uyeda, Sherri Kajiwara, and Nigel Town. Thank you to all involved for your time, support, energy, wisdom, and contributions.

Nigel Town is Assistant Archivist at the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre and their background is in museum and collections work, having worked for the Prince Albert Historical Society in Saskatchewan, the University of British Columbia as a Graduate Academic Assistant in Metadata, and the Vancouver Police Museum & Archives (VPMA) here in BC. They are pursuing dual Master of Library and Information Studies and Master of Archival Studies degrees at UBC.
The EAS Program is pleased to share a number of updates! The AABC website was redesigned and refreshed at the end of 2021 and we hope that you find the information and resources easier to find and use. Some notable updates include “The Manual for Small Archives” and the “BC Thesaurus”. Over the coming months, the Indigenous Advocacy Committee will be exploring opportunities to further develop the BC Thesaurus to include Indigenous subject indexing terms. We will be meeting with colleagues from the Xwi7xwa Library at UBC to discuss partnerships and collaborating with our Indigenous colleagues throughout BC on this project.

The bi-annual review of the links found in the “Archivist’s Toolkit” was completed in March 2022. Have you come across a great website, blog posting or useful archives website? Updates for the Toolkit can be sent to the EAS Coordinator for review and inclusion in the Toolkit at any time. Please send a message to aabc.advisor@aabc.ca.

BC HISTORICAL PHOTOS ONLINE
Did you know that the BC Historical Photos Online is a highly viewed section on the AABC website? This has become a popular research aid for historians, genealogists, fellow archivists, and those who enjoy BC’s engaging and diverse history, presented and preserved in a visual format. If you would like to add a link to your photo database or digitized collection, please send a message to aabc.advisor@aabc.ca.

AABC AND YUKON COUNCIL OF ARCHIVES 2021 JOINT CONFERENCE
The AABC and Yukon Council of Archives 2021 Joint Conference “We Walk Many Paths: Archival Journeys in BC, Yukon, and Beyond” held October 26-27, 2021 online brought together speakers and over 100 participants from across Canada. If you missed any of the sessions, the full recordings of each conference day are now available for viewing on YouTube (via the link above). A sincere thank you to all those who shared their knowledge, experience, and reflections on their archival journeys!
AABC DISASTER RESPONSE KITS

AABC Disaster Response Kits are now available... but we hope that you don’t need to use them! The 4 kits are stored in Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna and Prince George for quick distribution to Institutional members in those regions. The kits contain a range of supplies that can help you respond efficiently and quickly with items including gloves, masks, goggles, sponges, garbage bags, plastic sheeting, blotting paper, tissue paper, freezing supplies, and waterproof paper and pens for documenting the recovery process. The kits also include a binder of NEDCC resources that will help you with instructions on salvaging wet paper and photographs, how to handle mouldy records, and how to dry and/or prepare records for freezing. A list of conservators located in BC is included as well.

How do you access a Disaster Response Kit in the event of an emergency?

Send an email to aabc.advisor@aabc.ca with the subject line “URGENT - Disaster Kit Needed” and we will respond ASAP and make arrangements to have the nearest kit sent to you.

WEBINARS AND ROUND-TEAS

While we missed meeting in person for workshops and conferences in 2021-2022, the EAS Program offered 7 Webinars and Roundteas over the past year. Recordings for many of these sessions are now available – Webinars can be accessed by contacting the EAS Coordinator at aabc.advisor@aabc.ca and the links for Roundteas have been added to the website. As we move out of BC’s pandemic restrictions, the EAS Program will continue to offer Webinars and Roundteas online over the coming year. If you have any suggestions for speakers or a theme for a Roundtea discussion, please don’t hesitate to contact the EAS Coordinator.
The AABC held its Annual General Meeting virtually on Wednesday, April 27, 2022. During the 2022 AGM, the Executive and Committees reported back on all of the activities of the previous year, including an update on the new AABC 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. To learn more about these updates, please review the 2022 AGM Package.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to join us. It was a pleasure meeting with you all and we look forward to engaging with you throughout the upcoming year. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to outgoing Executive members, Stacey Gilkinson and Jenny Seeman, and a warm welcome to our new Executive members, Alexandra Neijens and Maureen Atkinson.

Meet the 2021-2022 AABC Executive Committee

Maureen Atkinson
Member-at-Large

I am the new Member-at-Large on the AABC Executive, but have had an interest in the association for many years, although I am not an archivist per se. I am a long time BC resident, grew up in Kamloops and then moved to the Northwest BC in my late 20s. After a few years in Vernon, my husband and I returned with our two small children to Terrace, BC, in 1998. Although I had some university and media training it wasn’t until 2002 when I finished my BA in history through UNBC. I continued on and completed a Masters of Arts through Athabasca University in 2008 and then a PhD in Canadian history at the University of Waterloo in Ontario. We currently live in Williams Lake where I teach for Thompson Rivers University Open Learning and on-campus history courses.

As a historical researcher and University Instructor I bring a different perspective to the association; as a client or ‘patron’ of the archives, rather than someone who is fluent in RAD descriptions or all archival best practices. However, I am passionate about access issues, and how the internet and digitizing of collections brings both ease of access, but then a whole new set of challenges for both the public and collection holders. I look forward to working with, and learning from, my other board members who are accomplished professionals.
Alex Neijens has a Bachelor of Arts in History from Queen’s University and a Masters of Archival Science and Masters of Library and Information Studies from UBC. She currently works as a Records Analyst/Team Lead at the BC College of Nurses and Midwives. Before this, she worked as a project assistant for the Digitized Okanagan History project at UBC Okanagan Library and as a digitization assistant at the UBC Vancouver Digitization Centre. During her free time, she enjoys knitting, cross stitching, baking, and sailing.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

The highlight of my career so far was working on the Digitized Okanagan History project (now known as BC Regional Digitized History or BCRDH) in 2017. I spent the summer driving around the Okanagan with the project team and a couple of flatbed scanners and laptops in the car (our very own mobile digitization lab!). We visited museums and archives around the region who had partnered with the project to scan some of their records to make them available on BCRDH’s online platform. Not only did this project open my eyes to the rich history of the Okanagan, it also gave me a real appreciation of what a digitization project entails, as I was involved in many of the project’s components—from training team members, to developing naming conventions, testing scanning methods for non-standard formats and materials, and conducting quality assurance checks on the edited scans.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

VOLUNTEER WITH THE AABC

Volunteer for AABC committees today and support archives and the archival profession throughout the province.

We are seeking enthusiastic and conscientious volunteers to sit on our standing and ad hoc committees. Participants will get an opportunity to network and gain valuable skills while fostering the development of the provincial archival community. Participation does not require a major time commitment and committee schedules are flexible.

We are seeking volunteers for the following areas:

- Conference Committee
- Constitution and By-laws Committee
- Indigenous Advocacy Committee
- Grants Committee
- Membership Committee
- Nominations and Elections Committee
- Programs Committee
- Finance Committee
- Communications Committee
- Regional Representatives (South Vancouver Island, Greater Vancouver, Kootenay - Columbia, and BC Northeast)

Volunteer spaces are limited so contact the AABC President, Katie Sloan, at aabc.president@aabc.ca to reserve your spot.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Making a donation is as important as ever. We understand that COVID-19 has made it difficult for many professionals to donate, but your contributions provide awards to UBC School of Information students every year and provide support to the annual ACA@UBC conference. This is a key part of the AABC’s mandate to foster the development of our provincial archival community.

Help us meet our goal and donate now.

PHOTOS WANTED

The AABC newsletter editorial team is looking for archival images to feature on these pages. Got something to share? Send a 600dpi or higher scan or photo with a suggested image credit to aabc.secretary@aabc.ca.
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Help showcase the incredible work of BC’s archives and archivists. The AABC Newsletter is back and we need your stories. Submit your 250-word newsletter content proposals to aabc.secretary@aabc.ca with the subject line: AABC Newsletter Proposal.

We’re open to all content ideas, including (but not limited to): articles, paper excerpts, opinion pieces, archives / archivist spotlights, upcoming events, and more!

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CLOSING REMARKS

The AABC communications committee would like to thank our membership for their interest in the Newsletter. Both the AABC and our newsletter are run by an inspiring and much appreciated group of volunteers. Please join me in thanking the following individuals for their tireless work on this issue of the newsletter:

Emily Larson, AABC Secretary / Newsletter Editor
Manda Haligowski, Graphic Design / Assistant Editor
Elizabeth Robertson, Social Media Volunteer / Assistant Editor
Katie Sloan, AABC President
Kathryn Louro, AABC Vice-President
Alexandra Neijens, AABC Treasurer
Maureen Atkinson, AABC Member-at-Large
Maria Paraschos, AABC Member-at-Large
Daniel Collins, AABC Past-President
Lisa Glandt, AABC EAS Coordinator
Nigel Town, Contributor

Finally, this newsletter would be nothing without our AABC community and readership. Thank you for your support and enthusiasm.

Disclaimer

The articles published in the AABC newsletter do not reflect the AABC’s position on archival practice and issues. The newsletter instead provides a platform for discussion and dissemination of ideas regarding archival practice and issues from heritage practitioners and stakeholders.