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OVERVIEW

Providing public access to its holdings is essential to the fulfillment of the Mount Royal University Archives and Special Collections’ mandate “to support teaching, learning, and scholarship through the development of archival holdings and specialized library collections.”

These guidelines explain how the Archives and Special Collections makes its holdings accessible to Mount Royal University’s communities, while preserving them so that the holdings remain accessible to users in the future.

HOLDINGS

The Archives and Special Collections holds records and publications relating to the history of Mount Royal University, as well as other collections that support teaching and research. Holdings are selected and acquired according to the criteria and procedures described in the Acquisition Guidelines. Holdings include:

- textual records (such as correspondence, diaries, reports, and meeting minutes)
- photographs
- audio and video recordings
- maps and architectural drawings
- publications including rare books, university yearbooks, academic calendars, and campus newspapers

TERMS OF ACCESS

The holdings of the Archives and Special Collections are open to all: Mount Royal University students, faculty, staff, as well as members of the public.

Holdings may only be accessed in the Reading Room (EL4330A in the Riddell Library and Learning Centre) during weekday open hours. Descriptions (finding aids) of holdings and digitized records are accessible online via Archives Search, the descriptive database.

While providing access to its holdings, the Archives and Special Collections complies with relevant legislation such as the Copyright Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP), as well as with Mount Royal University’s institutional policies.
ACCESS PROCEDURE

1. Users intending to access the holdings must register at the Archives and Special Collections’ Service Desk and present an MRU Campus Card (issued to students, faculty, and staff) or Community Borrower Card (a free card available to everyone that can be issued by archives staff).

2. Users must comply with the rules in the *User’s Guide to Accessing and Handling Archival Records* (attached) while accessing the holdings. Failure to do so may result in suspension of access privileges.

3. Access may be restricted to records containing personal information or other information protected under *FOIP*. Access may also be restricted to records that are in fragile physical condition, or which have had access restrictions placed on them in the terms of their donation. Access restrictions are noted in finding aids. If restrictions are encountered, please consult the Archivist as access may still be possible following review/redaction or the signing of a research agreement.

4. Reproduction of records is permitted for personal research purposes, except in rare cases where there are restrictions on reproduction (noted in finding aids). Users are welcome to take photos without flash, or they can request photocopies from archives staff (note that *printing fees* apply for photocopies).

5. Users will be held responsible for intentional damage to or loss of records.

DIGITIZATION

Digitization of select records from the holdings is carried out by archives staff in order to improve access and to protect fragile originals. Digitized materials are made publicly accessible online through **Archives Search**, the descriptive database.

The Archivist selects records and publications for digitization based on:

- anticipated or actual frequency of use
- preservation issues that may restrict access to originals

INQUIRIES

These guidelines are administered by the Archives and Special Collections and are subject to change. Inquiries can be directed to the Archivist at **phouston@mtroyal.ca** or (403) 440-5197.
USER’S GUIDE TO ACCESSING AND HANDLING ARCHIVAL RECORDS

This guide explains how to access the holdings of the Mount Royal University Archives and Special Collections, and how to safely handle archival records. All users are expected to follow the rules below, which help to ensure the continued preservation of the holdings for future users.

READING ROOM RULES

- Food and drink (including water) are not allowed in the Reading Room.

- Personal belongings (bags, coats, umbrellas, etc.) must be stored in the lockers provided before entering the Reading Room. Books and binders must also be stored in lockers if the holdings are being accessed.

- Laptops, phones, and cameras are allowed in the Reading Room.

- When working with holdings, only pencils (not pens) are permitted.

- The Reading Room is a silent study area. Please watch your personal belongings, as the Library is not responsible for loss or damage.

ACCESSING RECORDS

- Archival holdings may only be accessed in the Reading Room (EL4330A) and may not be borrowed.

- Users must register with archives staff prior to accessing the holdings, and will be asked to present an MRU Campus Card or government-issued identification.

- Users may request multiple files or items from the holdings, but will be brought one box at a time. Archives staff will retrieve requested items from the stacks and bring them to the Reading Room.

- Access to some records may be restricted due to issues including protection of privacy, fragile physical condition, or the terms of donation. Access restrictions are noted in finding aids. Restricted records may still be made accessible to researchers through review/redaction or the signing of a research agreement – please discuss with archives staff.
Photography of records without flash is permitted for research purposes, unless there are restrictions on reproduction as noted in the finding aid.

**HANDLING RECORDS**

- Make sure that your hands are clean and dry. Gloves are not usually required.

- When lifting a box of records, hold it securely underneath.

- Take one file from a box at a time, marking its position with a bookmark (available from archives staff). When finished with the file, return it to its original position in the box before taking another.

- Ensure that file contents are kept in their original order, and do not remove items from files.

- Handle records carefully, assuming that they could be fragile. Place records flat on the table when viewing them.

- Do not write on, trace, or mark records.

- Wear a pair of cotton gloves (available from archives staff) when handling photographic negatives.

- When handling books and bound items, avoid forcing or putting pressure on the binding. Use a book stand (available from archives staff) to support fragile bindings.