

COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The commission has made good progress on many fronts this year. This report is a summary of accomplishments, work-in-progress, and future initiatives and needs.

Status of the Archives

Joan Gundersen has maximized the existing space, but as the archives continue to grow, space is at a premium. The commission recommended to the bishop that space contiguous to the archives' present location be identified for use. This would adhere to best-practices in archival storage and would alleviate the anxiety over preserving material which has been stored in the cathedral basement, which is not environmentally sound and often floods. At its June 22, 2013, meeting, the commission was informed that the archives will potentially get an additional room on the third floor next to its present location.

Additional support to manage the day-to-day functions of the collection and to continue the entry of data into the PastPerfect database will again be provided this fall by a field placement intern from the School of Library Science at the University of Pittsburgh. The field placement provides ten hours of help per week at no cost for the term, for which the student receives three credit hours. The interns work directly with Joan. This opportunity provides much-needed support for data input, thus providing better access to, and knowledge of, what the archives contain.

The old computer in the archives has ceased working and we were able to replace it with a laptop that had previously been used by Bishops Price and Johnson.

The archives has been getting requests for digital access to its earliest registers, especially from the History Society. While the diocese's photocopy machine has scanning capabilities and a USB port for downloading, the acquisition of a dedicated scanner for the archives should be addressed. Perhaps a donor might be identified who would be willing to cover the cost of this essential equipment.

The commission has discussed several issues this year that relate to access to particular kinds of items in the archives. For marriage and death records, the commission has recommended that the material cut-off period will be 70 years (nothing after 1943 will be made public; this is a moveable date). However, entire registers will be made available electronically: online version will have a page that ends public access and will be posted on the archives website; full register will be available for use on-site. This year we will work on guidelines for when personnel records can be made accessible.

It is desirable to have an adequate and inviting space to allow researchers and scholars to use the material on-site. As more of the archives is registered and made available to the public, interest in using the materials on-site will grow. This should be made a priority in the coming year.

Other Needs

The archives still needs a microfilm reader to access information in that format which is housed in the collection. We also are trying to identify a reader for zip-disks, as several necessary files are stored in this fashion.

Website

Work on developing a revised web page for the archives was completed this year. This revision includes the history of the diocese, hours and use policies. We have a space for online records when we are able to post them. The web page can be accessed at: <http://www.episcopalpgh.org/archives/>.

Meetings

We have now scheduled regular meetings for the commission for 2013–2014. This will allow the members of the commission to work together to accomplish the goals we have set before us. The archives is a great asset to the diocese and the general public. As such, we hope that the operating budget will remain intact. The codification of history and practice provides the foundation to see where we have been as we work toward where we want to be in the future.

If there are questions concerning this report or on any aspect of the archives, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,
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Convener, Commission on Archives and History