

Dundas County Archives – Newspaper Digitization Project

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100 Men Who Care South Dundas Application

Name: Susan Peters, Archivist dundascountyarchives@gmail.com
Company Dundas County Archives
Project Newspaper digitization Project

Amount Requested: \$10,000

The Dundas County Archives is jointly supported by the Municipalities of both North and South Dundas. It is located in the former St Cecilia School building on 5 College Street, Iroquois, along with the St Lawrence Medical Clinic. The archives are mandated to collect, preserve and make available for researchers records of both North and South Dundas. This includes records of the municipal government as well as private materials pertaining to the local communities such as businesses, sports teams, family research, agricultural organizations and other items of local historical value.

In order to adhere to this mandate, it has become evident that we are at risk of losing some of our print heritage. Many of the local newspapers are in a desperate state of deterioration. Our hope is to be able to digitize the old newspapers before they end up crumbling into dust. With the support of the publishers of the local newspapers of Winchester, Morrisburg and Chesterville, we would like to be able to digitize these valuable resources. We have also acquired back issues of Iroquois newspapers thanks to the generous donation of individuals. These newspapers would be scanned professionally, then digitized and uploaded onto a searchable web site. This will allow the digital access of the papers for potential researchers, reporters and any interested member of the public. By allowing for digital access to these documents, the original newspapers can be safely stored in the archives and preserved for future generations.

While the Municipalities of North and South Dundas do financially support the facility, their budgets have gone towards the infrastructure of the Dundas County Archives. As we are still in the process of establishing the facility, the municipalities have funded the purchase of shelving, archival boxes and other supplies and the environmental control requirements with a new air conditioner and furnace. Their budget does not support a special project such as digitization.

This project would help to serve the region by aiding in the preservation of our local heritage. There is only one single copy of each of the early local newspapers. Due to the acidic content of the papers from which these newspapers are printed, most of these are very brittle, acidic and crumbling. Every time they are handled they crumble a bit more. Once they are gone, they are gone forever. By digitization of these materials, we can ensure that the articles contained in these unique publications can be preserved and more importantly accessible to those who would like to research from them. The archives are mandated to make these invaluable materials accessible to the public.

Cost Projection:

Upon further research with other archival institutions, it is generally advised that this digitization project should be conducted by hiring a professional service experienced in archival practices. These records are too valuable to risk on inexperience. I, as archivist, would prepare the newspapers by carefully mending the tears or patching where I can. Once the papers are stabilized, they would be digitized by the professional service. I have received estimates from several different professional services to carefully scan the documents and then preparing the files to be hosted on a web site. The estimate is for a cost of one dollar per page to digitize these newspapers. The Morrisburg Leader from 1900 to 2018 has produced approximately 45,700 pages of print alone. Our proposal would be to digitize the earlier and more fragile papers at this time. I have selected one of the several potential service providers for the digitization, based on many recommendations of their work.

The cost of this proposed project would start the process of digitizing the older, more fragile newspapers. They have already been housed in archival acid free boxes, but the next act in their preservation would be to stabilize the tears and re-attach the fragments with the careful application of archival document repair tape and then digitize them so they can be searched and accessed without any further handling. The cost of hosting the digital content onto an MINISIS archival web site is estimated at \$1,000 to \$3,000 depending on the content.

As the Archivist of the Dundas County Archives, I have been given the authority to submit this proposal on behalf of the organization.

This organization can give tax receipts for donations through the Municipality of South Dundas.

What is the estimated cost of this project?

\$10,000

What is the estimated date of completion if this group receives the donation?

Completion will be planned for 2019 – however due to the fragile nature of the brittle and acidic newspapers, it will be advantageous to work cautiously rather than quickly.

How will completion of this project directly benefit the residents of South Dundas?

By acting to digitize the one of a kind past issues of the local Newspapers, (Morrisburg Leader, Morrisburg Banner, Iroquois Chieftain, Iroquois Post), we will be acting to preserve these documents from further deterioration. The digitized copies will be hosted on our web site and available for the public to search and research. By allowing this access to the newspapers, we will not only fulfill our mandate to preserve our paper-based heritage, but we will also be providing free access to these records. We would be saving these documents for our future generations. After all, once they are gone, they are gone forever.