

Flying Dust :: Midterm Report :: June 23, 2017
Community-Engaged History Collaboratorium
University of Saskatchewan

Contacts

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Introduction | Summary of Findings

This report marks the midterm point in the second year of Flying Dust First Nation's partnership with the Collaboratorium. It offers an assessment of the work that has been done so far, as well as reflections and goals for the next two months.

As stated in the project proposal submitted at the start of the summer, our goals have been to (a) conduct original research and (b) populate the database, with an eye to four themes or time periods our community partner outlined:

- I. Flying Dust during the Resistance - 1880s
- II. Early (pre-treaty) maps of the region - prior to 1870
- III. Genealogy mapping
- IV. Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range (PLAWR) - 1950s

In general terms, the first of our two goals (conducting original research) has largely been met, as this was my main responsibility in May and June. Being on campus, my time was almost entirely spent on finding, making note of, and scanning primary source material, and sharing them with Darsana to transcribe, if necessary, and upload. Because my term is over at the end of June and Darsana is based in Flying Dust, it is unlikely that any more

front-end research will take place this summer. (The major exception are the letterbooks, which I was unable to access because of the necessity of travel.)

With regards to the particular topics our community partner directed us to, we have had the most progress with the material on the Resistance and the PLAWR, and limited progress with maps and genealogies. A full list of the sources studied can be found under “Methodology”. At the same time, in addition to everything we found, a few sources remain that could be examined next summer. These can be found under “Recommendations”. Also included in this report are a section on challenges we have faced so far, the final goals we hope to meet by end of August, and Darsana’s timeline for the upcoming weeks.

Methodology

Below is a list of the source material we researched, and an indication of the progress made on each one. Parts of the cycle in blue are completed; those in gray have yet to be completed. I was unable to successfully locate, get access to, or digitize items 12-16, so they will not be in the picture for rest of this summer but next year’s students could benefit from looking into them further. As for item 11, the letterbooks, they require travel to make copies of the textual material; if Darsana is able to travel to Prince Albert for this purpose then the letterbooks can be included in the research this year.

1. Annuity Pay Lists
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcribed → Added to database
2. Indian Affairs Annual Reports
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcription N/A → Add to database
3. Meadow Lake Band Register Document
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcribe → Add to database
4. Bolsover House Journal
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcribed → Add to database
5. RG 10 Microfilms
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcribe → Add to database
6. Meadow Lake Agency, Daily Journals
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcribe → Add to database
7. HBC Records
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcribe → Add to database

8. Alexander Dietz fonds (University Archives)
 - i. Beardy-Okemasis Land Entitlement Claim, Report
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcription N/A → Add to database
 - ii. Kopahawakenum's Band Genealogical Research
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcription N/A → Add to database
9. Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range Records (Provincial Archives)
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcription N/A → Add to database
10. Maps
Located → Digitized/Indexed → Transcription N/A → Add to database
11. Letterbooks (Prince Albert Historical Society)
Located → Digitize/Index → Transcribe → Add to database
12. *Saskatchewan Herald*
Located → Digitize/Index → Transcription N/A → Add to database
13. Genealogical Study of Families in Flying Dust
Located → Digitize/Index → Transcription N/A → Add to database
14. North West Mounted Police Records
Located → Digitize/Index → Transcribe → Add to database
15. Our Lady of Peace Roman Catholic Church Records
Located → Digitize/Index → Transcribe → Add to database
16. Oral Histories
* The hard drive containing them is missing. See "Recommendations" section below.

Final Goals

By the summer's end, we hope to:

- 1) visit PA to digitize the letterbooks;
- 2) complete transcribing and/or cataloging all the sources identified in the "Methodology" section (with the exception of items 12-16);
- 3) enter new sources into database (for those that we do not upload, store originals and transcriptions properly for next year) and edit existing entries when necessary;
- 4) organize the documents used/created this year in a central location (physical or electronic) for next years students to consult; and
- 5) complete a final report for submission to our community partner and supervisors.

In order to create criteria for the functionality of the database, at the end of the summer we will ask the following questions:

- 1) Is the database populated with relevant historical data?
- 2) Is it user-friendly?
- 3) Can it generate statistically-significant aggregate statistics on Flying Dust?
- 4) Does it contain quality primary and secondary sources?
- 5) Can community researchers use it to to create a final product (e.g., book or curriculum)?

Timeline | July & August

July 3 rd	RG10 Microfilms, Meadow Lake Agency daily journals
July 10 th	Flying Dust Culture Camp
July 17 th	HBC Records
July 24 th	PLAWR Files
July 31 st	Maps, Alexander Dietz fonds
Aug 7 th	Saskatchewan Indigenous Summer Games in Regina
Aug 14 th	Alexander Dietz fonds
Aug 21 st	Final Report, touch ups to annual report/annuity lists/database files

*Once travel can be arranged at the office, Darsi's trip to PA for the letterbooks will be made to fit accordingly.

Challenges

The biggest challenge I encountered during my work term was the time frame. The past two months went by quickly, what with workshops, training and catching up in the first half and immediately jumping into archival research in the second. Because my individual research goal was to obtain and digitize enough primary source material for the rest of the summer, I never fully settled in before I had to begin planning for my departure. On the one hand, my focus on making sure I went through enough material meant that I achieved my own research goals. On the other, I have learned how valuable it is to develop long-term connections when doing community-based history.

Another challenge was not meeting and engaging with the community in person. Towards the end of my term, a couple opportunities to travel to Flying Dust became apparent but I will not be able to attend both the Treaty Days and the Cultural Camp. Although the

lack of personal engagement and experience in the community did not directly affect or impair the work being done, it would have added a whole new dimension to it.

Similarly, I was hoping and expecting to try my hand at certain things, like transcription. Aside from doing a limited amount of such tasks, I did not experience a variety of research methods and tools. Had I stayed on for the rest of the summer, however, we would have probably split the work more evenly with Darsi. It would have been exciting, also, to see the database improved and our contributions added, but at this point in the summer, it is too early to see these results.

A few issues also arose during the course of long-distance research, particularly with Library and Archives Canada. An important source, the Meadow Lake Agency daily journals, were ordered but I was mistaken regarding when the records would be sent and how much they would charge. Despite going through their website and making my best guess, I only discovered the details weeks after the request was placed. The journals have arrived and will be processed this summer, but perhaps I could have been more proactive in getting the information beforehand so that expenses like this one could be anticipated.

Moving on to research demands from Darsi's perspective, the biggest she faced so far was the limited amount of collaborative work between the students. We met too briefly during training and recognized early on that long-distance communication would be an obstacle unless we dealt with it. We therefore arranged to exchange emails weekly, in which we summarized our activities over the past week and our goals for the upcoming one. We also spoke over the phone, on average, every other week. Despite all these measures, staying connected remained a problem. This was especially so for Darsi who was working alone in the band office, because the distance meant a lack of peer guidance and day-to-day interaction with other students and researchers.

Likewise, Darsi's position at the band office in Flying Dust includes other jobs and tasks aside from exclusively working on research with the Collaboratorium. At first, I did not realize how much of her time was dedicated to other things, so I expected the annuity lists, for instance, to be finished sooner. Having considered this, for the rest of the summer, we have set more realistic goals to allow room for her other duties.

Speaking of communication, we both expressed the wish to have more and better engagement with our community partner. As of yet, I have yet to meet Joey and person and Darsi has not been introduced to Dr. Carlson. Given both their busy schedules, it could be difficult to get a hold of them, especially our community partner. As such, there were times, when we received little feedback as to how the research was going, particularly in the critical first few weeks. In one sense, the self-direction it provided was a valuable learning experience, but it came at the risk of not finding suitable information. That stated, there is a chance for Darsi to improve on these issues with half of her work term remaining. Having

identified this as an area for improvement, it is a good time to reassess and arrange for more regular emails or phone calls with Joey and Sam. In effect, these will take the place of the check-in's we have had up to this point, and maintain, if not strengthen, Darsi's connection to the Collaboratorium.

Recommendations

To combat the above mentioned challenges, we believe it would be beneficial to consider the points below for next year's project.

- Hiring two students to work in Flying Dust, in order to lighten the load Darsi occasionally felt and offer peer support for both students.
- Ensure the students attend the entirety of the training period in Saskatoon and perhaps include a few group-building activities in addition to the workshops. Doing so would provide the students with the necessary information while making stronger connections with other researchers at the Collaboratorium. Additional training for long-distance students would also be helpful, when necessary.
- Arrange for a meeting early in the summer (May) with the students, the community partner and Collaboratorium supervisors. If possible, arrange a visit or day trip to Flying Dust early on, as well.

As for research goals next year, enough will be gathered, processed, and on the database to begin (a) conducting oral histories effectively, and (b) producing new secondary source material including lesson sets, modules, documents related to legal cases (e.g., proposals, summary of research findings), presentation boards, pamphlets, and so on. In all likelihood, however, there will still be a few items left over from this summer for next year's student to complete first.

- Depending on how much Darsi is able to get through in the next two months, some documents or transcriptions might be completed and only need to be made to the database. These would be found in the final report.
- Although we paid little attention to secondary sources beyond reading some literature related to this year's research, we noted and created an extensive bibliography that I would draw attention to. Next year's students could benefit from having it as a reference since it lists what the University Library has pertaining to Flying Dust, linked to a variety of topics. (You can find it under "Working List of Secondary Sources".)
- With regards to archival and other sources, for a number of them (described below) we either ran out of time or they were simply not the focus of this summer's research. Still, they could be worthwhile to study further next year.

i. *Saskatchewan Herald* microfilm

- I began to look into this source after seeing that it was included in the Beardy-Okemasis Land Entitlement Claim package in the Alexander Dietz fonds. I went only able to go through the first few months.
 - If next year's student decide to look into this further, five reels are available in the Murray Library (for the years 1878-1900) and the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan has microfilm for all years.
- ii. Record Groups 2, 15, 18 and 88
- As with the *Sask Herald*, I noticed that the Beardy-Okemasis report included evidence from:
 - RG 2 - Privy Council Office
 - RG 15 - Department of the Interior
 - RG 18 - Royal Canadian Mounted Police (includes North West Mounted Police)
 - RG 88 - Surveys and Mapping Branch
 - I began to look into the RG 18s and RG 88s but, with the exception of some items and reference numbers I noted (see "Guide to RG 88s" in the Maps folder), I was unable to pursue these. They could contain important sources on Flying Dust.
- iii. Genealogical Study of Families in Flying Dust
- This package was given to me by Dr. Carlson early in May but I was unable to study it in any detail. It was stored at the office, but will be returned to him.
- vi. Our Lady of Peace Roman Catholic Church Records
- I contacted the archivist, Janice Trudel, at the Roman Catholic Diocese of Prince Albert and asked her a some questions but nothing more. Their records have sacramental information like marriages, baptisms, etc. from the late 1800s which could be of use to future researchers.
- v. Oral Histories
- The hard drive with the interviews appears to be missing, since it was not at the office or with Dr. Carlson, and staff from the Digital Research Center were not able to locate it. The DRC should be contacted about this again, and if no other versions or back-ups can be retrieved, students may want to consider repeating them. (Note that some interviews were time-logged last year and have been added to the database.)

Conclusion

Overall, the research term has been productive so far and the transition at the end of my work term has been going smoothly. I have transferred and shared all the necessary

material with Darsi and made suggestions for how to go about processing it and organizing the time she has left this summer, as can be seen in the timeline. Now that the annuity pay lists are complete, Darsi is familiar with what transcription entails and how to create new entries and upload items to the database. There should be no shortage of things to do for the rest of the summer. If anything, there is more than enough, in which case she will have to prioritize some records over others, which should be done in consultation with Joey.

The past two months have gone by quickly, and I have learned a lot which I consider valuable in them. From learning how to do archival research to gaining an appreciation of the history of indigenous communities in this province, it has all been an extremely rewarding experience. Not only as a history student but also as a Saskatchewan resident for the last twenty years, working with the Collaboratorium has been a great opportunity. I look forward to hearing about the rest of the project, as well as all the other work the Collaboratorium does.