

ARGYLE TOWNSHIP COURT HOUSE & ARCHIVES (ATCHA) PUBLIC ACCESS & REFERENCE POLICY

The Argyle Township Court House & Archives (ATCHA) strives to make its buildings, collection, and archives accessible first and foremost to the citizens of the Municipality of Argyle in Yarmouth County, NS. It further strives to make its buildings, collection, and archives accessible to the public at large and to its sponsoring bodies, the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the District of Argyle (MODA) and its staff, and the members of the Argyle Municipality Historical & Genealogical Society (AMHGS).

The Argyle Township Court House & Archives houses a limited but important collection of original artifacts which are used to interpret the history of Canada's oldest courthouse, within the context of the local area, the province, and the nation. Its artifacts and archival collection are further used and designed to interpret the history of the administration of local government and local justice as it transpired from Canada's oldest courthouse.

The Argyle Township Court House Archives houses the records generated by the Municipality of District of Argyle, and prior to 1879, the Township of the District of Argyle. The Archives also houses private sector records acquired from a variety sources, pertaining to the history of the communities, families, institutions, etc. that make up the Municipality.

Museum Access (Physical):

Access to our museum is provided throughout the year. The museum and gift shop are open to the public five days per week from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. for the months of May, June, September, and October. For the months of July and August the museum is open seven days per week from 9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. providing we have the summer staff to maintain these hours, and we have been able to sustain these hours for more than thirty-one (31) years as of 2016.

Handicap Access: At present (2016) our museum is not wheelchair accessible. We will, where possible, attempt to develop ways to provide visual access to the museum for those unable to access the entire museum, through interpretive tours offered on laptop computers, virtual tours on our website, etc.

It is also our intention to explore ways in which the building might be made more physically accessible without compromising the historical integrity of Canada's oldest courthouse and jail.

Archives Access (Physical):

Our archives building is wheelchair accessible on the ground floor level. Materials required by researchers located on other levels of the archives will be retrieved for clients by the staff.

Archives Access (Intellectual):

Intellectual access to the holdings of our archives is covered elsewhere in this policy.

EQUALITY OF ACCESS

The Argyle Township Court House & Archives will provide equality of access to its holdings to all people.

RESTRICTIONS OF RECORDS

Restrictions on Government Records

The Argyle Township Court House Archives holds some restricted government (municipal) records. These restrictions are established by provincial legislation and by the Freedom of Information and the Right to Privacy Acts. In cases where certain government records are restricted, they remain closed for 80 years from their date of creation.

Restrictions on Other Records

The Archives occasionally accepts materials by gift or by loan, which the donors or loaners wish to place restrictions on. Although the archives usually discourages placing such restrictions, when this is deemed necessary it is carried out. Our archives for instance holds copies of all the microfilmed Roman Catholic Church Records for the former Diocese of Yarmouth. These are restricted records and require a letter of permission from the Roman Catholic Chancery Office in Yarmouth, NS for their use.

ACCESS TO RESTRICTED RECORDS

Access to Restricted Government Records

Individuals have the right to apply to see restricted government records pertaining to themselves only. This may be done by completing an Access to Information Form that the archives will provide.

Access to Other Restricted Records

In the case of other restricted records, which are not governmental in nature, there will often be an option for obtaining permission to use the records for research purposes. For instance, in the case of the Roman Catholic Records for the Diocese of Yarmouth, a letter of permission may be issued by the Catholic Chancery Office in Yarmouth, NS. The Archives will supply the proper address and telephone numbers for obtaining permission in such cases.

INTELLECTUAL ACCESS

Catalogues & Finding Aids

The Argyle Township Court House & Archives strives at all times to provide intellectual access to the records of the institution. This is done by continually producing and improving upon a wide range of card indexes, fonds level descriptions, inventories, shelf lists, computer databases, and other finding aids designed to make its records more accessible.

Reference Services

The Argyle Township Court House & Archives provides the following reference services: -

- a. Research Carried out in Person - Researchers who use the collection in person will be given assistance in locating materials by the staff. Every effort will be made to put the needed records in the hands of the researcher, and to satisfy their research needs. The staff is encouraged to educate the researchers in the use of the facility, rather than do the researcher's work for them. [SEE "LEVEL OF ONSITE REFERENCES SERVICES POLICY which sits as an addendum to this policy]
- b. Research Queries By Mail - The Argyle Township Court House & Archives does attempt to satisfy "research-by-mail" requests. Due to a limited staff, only inquiries requiring one hour or less of staff time can be handled without charging the client, and such free requests will be limited to a one time basis, per client. See fee schedules below.
- c. Research Queries by e-mail - are dealt with in the same manner as those received by regular mail.
- d. Research Queries by Telephone - Due to a limited staff, only very limited queries can be accepted by phone, and those involving extended staff time will be subject to the same fee schedule as "Research Queries by mail."
- e. The Argyle Township Court House & Archives reserves the right to provide any of the above services, free-of-charge, if it is deemed a valuable exchange of information will result from the transaction, and will be of benefit to the institution and is in line with its mandate and mission statement.
- f. The Argyle Township Court House & Archives will attempt wherever possible to supply reference services to other heritage related institutions for free, or at reduced rates.

POLICY IN REGARD TO THE LEVEL AND TYPES OF ONSITE REFERENCE SERVICES AVAILABLE

The Argyle Township Court House Archives strives to make as much of its holdings as possible accessible to the public through the production of high quality finding aids for the public and for its own internal use.

Due to our limited staff and space there are limitations on the level of reference service we are able to provide to the public on an individual basis. The Municipal Historian & Archivist, and the Heritage Development Officer, our only two full-time employees are unable to provide individual attention to researchers on a consistent basis. We attempt wherever possible to enhance the level of service we provide through the use of volunteer research assistants and research assistants hired on a seasonal or contract basis.

The following outline will hopefully clarify the level of service we are able to provide to researchers who are able to come to the archives to do research in person.

- We do not carry out genealogical or historical research for people who come to use the archives. We do everything within our power to direct people to the best available records that would supply them with the information they need, and to offer other forms of assistance – but in the end researchers must carry out the research themselves.
- Our historical society provides genealogical courses for a fee, from time to time. Those wish who to learn how to carry out research or improve their research skills should take advantage of these courses or any others offered locally or online.
- Some of our records, especially those of the Catholic Church, are in French or Latin. We do supply a general vocabulary of Latin and French terms found in these records that will assist researchers. Beyond this we are not able to supply extensive translation services. The Archivist or assistants are willing and able to translate a specific word or phrase for researchers but cannot translate entire documents or go through entire bodies of records with the researcher on an individual basis.
- Researchers are encouraged to make careful notes regarding the call numbers of materials they use in the archives, if this is material they wish to use again. This will make the retrieval time much faster for the person providing the reference service and result in better service for the client as well.
- Genealogical researchers who have never carried out such research before, and have not been able to take one of our courses or another course will be referred to the appropriate guides for this purpose found in our research library.
- Researchers who feel they require assistance in their research are also encouraged to phone ahead. Those times when Research Assistants are present at the archives are the times when a higher level of service can be guaranteed.
- The Archives has always provided some research services for an hourly fee. This research is most often handled by one volunteer with the appropriate qualifications, and at certain times of the year, some staff will carry out the work as well. Rates are found in our fee schedule within this policy.

PHYSICAL ACCESS TO RECORDS & OTHER REFERENCE MATERIALS IN THE ARCHIVES

Access to The Library

While the Argyle Township Court House & Archives retains its present (2016) physical lay-out, the public has free and open access to all books and other published materials held in the open stacks in the main research room on the ground floor. If the required materials are located in the basement, or on the second floor of the archives, the staff will normally retrieve the item for the researcher. If more extensive access is needed to materials in the basement or on the second floor researchers will be provided a work space close to the materials needed. If for any reason the researchers cannot access materials in the basement or on the second floor due to physical limitations a more extensive retrieval of the said materials will be undertaken for the researcher.

Access to Genealogy Files

Genealogy files are also open to the public and materials may be retrieved by the researchers themselves.

Access to Other Records

- a. All records and findings aids held in binders on the open shelves in the research room on the ground floor level are accessible to researchers and may be retrieved by them. This includes such things as genealogies, Gravestone Inventory, Funeral Records, Deeds, Yarmouth County census record, etc.
- b. Microform - Records held on microform are available for direct retrieval by researchers, with the exception of any restricted records.
- c. All other records, held in the archives, in the fireproof vault, will be retrieved by staff members only.

Loans

The ATCHA research library of published materials is essentially a reference library as opposed to a lending library. However, short term loan of books and other materials are made to Society members only. This is handled at the discretion of staff. Only those reference books required on a daily basis by staff are not permitted to circulate. It is understood by the borrowing members that books will be returned at any time if they are needed by staff or researchers and they are contacted by phone or email to return the materials in question.

Since the ATCHA library is not part of the public library system, or the university library system, we do not participate in inter-library loans.

Archival materials are not loaned.

COPYING SERVICES

The use of cameras, phones (for copying purposes), personal scanners, and/or similar devices are not permitted in our archives/research library for copying documents, photographs, etc. If the use of such devices by the public is to be permitted this will be negotiated by the paid archives/museum staff and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

A photocopying machine is supplied on the premises.

All photocopying of materials requiring special handling will be carried out by staff.

Copying restrictions will apply to fragile items.

The public will be permitted to carry out some of their own copying at the discretion of the staff.

Photographic items will be photocopied at the discretion of the staff.

Where photographic copies of photographic items are required, this will be handled by staff only. It is not the policy of the Argyle Township Court House & Archives to loan original photographic items or negatives. As of 2016 we do not produce photographic prints for the public, but provide digital copies to the clients, which they can then have appropriately reproduced.

FEE SCHEDULE

Museum:

Interpretive tours:

\$2.00 per person or \$4.00 for families

Note: The fees for interpretive tours are very low at present (2016) and may require adjustment but need to be retained until there is a new printing of such promotional materials as rack cards, pamphlets, etc. and should be reconsidered at that time.

Group tours: School groups are normally done free of charge, but the schools often make a donation. When this is being done the paid staff will suggest a modest amount that would not exceed \$2.00 per person.

Other group tours will be calculated at \$2.00 per person, with a discount offered by the paid staff if and when appropriate.

Group tours such as FAM tours for the tourism or related sectors will normally be provided free of charge.

Use of Court House for weddings, wedding photos, and similar events is covered by a specific policy developed in 2016.

Archives:

1. A research or user's fee of \$3.00 per half day and \$5.00 for the full day is charged to all researcher's carrying out research in person at the archives, who have not already paid membership dues in the Argyle Municipality Historical & Genealogical Society. Paid members of Society do not pay the user fees.

2. Research Queries by Mail - All research queries are handled by staff and volunteers, under the supervision of a Certified Genealogist. For extensive research carried out by the archives staff or volunteers, members of the Society are subject to a \$30.00 per hour charge. Non-Members are subject to a \$35.00 per hour charge. Payment must be received in advance for any queries requiring more than one hour of staff time.

3. Research Queries by Phone - All research queries received by phone will be subject to the same fee schedule as Research Queries by mail.

4. Research Queries by E-mail - Research queries by e-mail are subject to the same fees as research carried out by mail.

5. Photocopying fees -	
- for Society members	for non-members
Letter size – 20 cents	Letter size – 35 cents
Legal size - 25 cents	Legal size - 40 cents
Ledger size - 30 cents	Ledger size – 45 cents

Note: All copies made from our computers using our printers are subject to the same copy fees as photocopies.

6. Photographic copies - We no longer produce photographic copies of our images for the general public or our members.

Researchers and other users requiring our images will be charged \$5.00 per image and will be directed to come to the archives with a USB.

The archives/museum staff reserve the right to limit the number of images being copied.

7. Commercial publications fees -
Images to be used for publication purposes
Black & white prints - \$35
Color images - \$60
Cover photo [cover of book or publication] - \$125

Note: The purpose of our publication fees are to generate a modest revenue stream for the archives. Many publications in the heritage sector do not realize profit. It is the intent of this policy that the archives staff has the authority to waive or reduce these fees accordingly on a case by case basis. It is more important that the Archives receives proper credit in print as being the source of the image/s in question.

8. Fee schedules will be clearly posted at all times in the archives.

9. All fees are subject to change and revision.

USE OF MATERIALS FROM ARCHIVES FOR PUBLICATION

When materials from the Argyle Township Court House & Archives are used for the purposes of publication, proper acknowledgement must be given to the institution. That acknowledgement should always include the name “Argyle Township Court House Archives” or the acronym “ATCHA.”

SECURITY OF RECORDS

Proper security will be provided for all records held by the institution. Restricted records and materials which are physically fragile will be housed in the fireproof vault. Physical access to these records will be by staff only.

REVISION OF POLICY

This policy is subject to periodic revision, as are the fee schedules.

10 August 1996

Revised and passed by Directors 13 Feb. 2007

Revised and updated by P. Crowell, 13 January 2016 – and approved by AMHGS Board with corrections 15 March 2016.