

Before I began this internship, I have had experience working in the archival and curatorial fields, specifically I worked in the Canadian military museums of Southern Alberta, however I had very little supervision, as the workspace was constantly busy and understaffed – meaning I had to teach myself some of the tools of the trade. Afterwards I worked on St. Mary’s University founders’ collections, with no supervision. What I’m essentially saying is that I have had little to no guidance or assurance that I was doing the ‘right’ thing, in regards to my work – I would be told at the end of these stints that I had done a great job, but I just couldn’t believe them, I couldn’t believe I had done good work. Going into this internship I had the expectation to work in an environment which would reassure my actions through supervision that I’d be working in a professional archival experience, essentially a space which would show me the correct procedures/actions which I believed I was not capable of performing. Previous to this, I knew the basics in regards to public history; I’ve worked with artifacts from as early as the 2nd Boer War, catalogued, dated and stored them accordingly – both in physical databases and electronic databases. During my time at St. Mary’s I was responsible for creating a brand new archival system based on Microsoft Excel – as the university lacked access to proper digital archival technologies.¹

As I’m writing this, I see what I have done earlier makes me proud, I just never recognized it until I began working in this internship. When I was working in the internship, I learned how to operate more modern digital archival spaces, which I believe can be an easily transferable skill to any other archival program. Furthermore, I had no idea that I would be writing for the public in this position, the blogpost assignment has proven to also be an

¹ I chose Microsoft Excel because it would then be easier for the university to transition the data I had stored into a new database, which they began constructing with the university’s library when I finished my contract. The first archival system was on Microsoft Word, which would not have transitioned as smoothly – as the database was incomplete and there are numerous limitations to word.

immeasurably useful skillset, which can follow me into any field, or path I choose to take. However, I do know that my public facing writing skills are very new and will require some hardcore work in the future, it is a skillset which I will be constantly developing upon; but thanks to this internship I have a feeling of where I need to go. This was only made possible by pushing out of my comfort zone, I never have written with a public audience in mind before, I was encouraged to talk more and work co-operatively with other interns; this pushed me to present the roughest copy of my work to everyone, to hear what they had to say. Only through their criticism and the help of Dr. Kole, was I able to make it presentable and something completely different from what I have written before. I spoke more in each meeting, fighting against my anxiety and I am grateful for everyone being so patient with me as I struggled to formulate my words and thoughts together, now I feel more confident with what I have to say, I feel like what I say matters – this feeling is incredibly foreign to me, and similarly contributes to my anxiety which will never go away. But now I feel like I can take it on, better than before.

Just to wrap this up, I am immensely grateful for this experience – I now feel confident with my ability to do good work. This internship will be integral in helping me peruse my lifetime goal of becoming a professor, as I hope to use this experience to help land a job in an archivist occupation, to help pay for my future education. I've been able to network with other staff members at the JOTPY, and I hope they can help me in the future land a position which would help me pursue these goals. Again though, I want to put more emphasis on what I believe was my greatest takeaway, this experience taught me to be happy about my own work – to know that I can make something meaningful and contribute to the field of history. I can't put it into words of how proud I am of what we are accomplishing here, I remember Dr. Tebeau said it himself; we are working on the greatest collection for the pandemic in the world, this is a big

deal to say the least. Thank you so much for this amazing experience, and opportunity to contribute something meaningful to history; I can't believe that one day someone will use an artifact that I curated, this internship has proven to me that I can not only do good work – but I can create something important.