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*Saanich Archives collects and preserves archival material relating to the Municipality of Saanich. We welcome donations of photographs and other records that document the heritage of Saanich.*

## **Saanich Archives Acquires Annie Girling Photographic Fonds**

Saanich Archives has received a donation of more than 1,000 glass plate and film negatives of Saanich and Victoria taken from 1912 to the 1940s by amateur photographer Annie Girling. Included in the donation is Annie's 1901 Instantograph field camera for quarter-plate glass negatives together with her plate holders and printing frames.



*Portrait of Annie Girling (Courtesy of Maureen Mackenzie)*

Anne Alice Girling was born in Suffolk, England in 1880 and studied photography at the Woolwich Polytechnic before coming to Canada with her parents and ten siblings in 1912. The family settled on the shores of Swan Lake in Saanich before moving to Thetis Lake and later to Finnerty Road where they converted an old school house to a family home. Annie's father worked in construction and later for the Municipality of Saanich as a roads superintendent.

Annie never married and continued to live with family members in the Finnerty Road house until her death in 1953. During her lifetime she experimented with photographic methods, capturing images of her family and community as well as nature scenes and artistic still lifes. She kept a darkroom in her home and developed her own images. Her collection of work, nearly destroyed when the house was demolished in the 1960s, was kept safe for over 30 years by a photographic historian who attempted on several occasions to donate the material, without success because the images could not be identified.

In November 2008, Saanich Archives accepted the collection, hoping that over time the people and locations in Saanich could be identified using other resources in the archives. However, two days before the donation took place, a letter to the editor appeared in the Times Colonist mentioning veterans of WWI by the name of Girling. Through this link, descendants of the Girling family were contacted, including a great-niece of Annie Girling, and the family is able to help identify the images. Their own family albums include prints made from the glass plate and film negatives, complete with captions on the reverse.

Over the coming months Saanich Archives will be scanning the negatives and making the images available through our searchable online database at <http://saanicharchives.ca>. Annie's 1901 mahogany field camera and a second 1905 camera are on display at the Saanich Archives reference room.

This remarkable collection provides a record of Saanich in its formative years as a municipality and represents the work of a female photographer in the early 20th century.

## Recent Acquisitions

You can now check our most Recent Acquisitions on the Saanich Archives website. Find out about new archival resources available to you by clicking the link on our homepage.

- Tod Inlet Boating Association (1946-1995) - photographs, clippings, financial records, correspondence, maps, and certificates relating to the Association
- Aerial Photograph Collection – aerial photographs of Saanich, 1955-1980
- Oral history interviews with Jack Bugslag, Lindsay Lambert, Jim Askey, and Virginia Griffin
- Annie Girling Photographic fonds – More than 1000 glass plate and film negatives (see cover story)
- Cora E. Browne Collection – Cedar Hill School class photographs, 1933-1942, and report cards from Cedar Hill School (1932-1940) and Mount Douglas High School (1940-1943)
- Todd Family fonds – further photographs donated and available online
- Askey fonds – Photographs relating to the Askey and Fieldhouse families, and to the Carey area, particularly Kent Road. Included are photographs of the Lansdowne Airfield. All are available online.



*Ernest Salisbury (on airplane), Lansdowne Airfield, 1930  
(2009-004-004)*

## From the Vault

Archives staff are always working to make our records more accessible, and to make the public aware of what is available in our archival holdings. The following are records that have recently been processed and are available for viewing in the reference room:

**Secession of Ward 6 (Central Saanich) fonds** (Acc. #2007-032) – description available

**Police Occurrence Book** (Acc. #2007-105) – description now available.

**Heritage Inventory Structures** (Acc. #2006-015) – additional photographs now available online

**Mt. View High School:** Photographic Record Before Demolition, report by Stuart Stark, March 2007 (Acc. #2007-064)



*William Richard Pridmore, Cliff Osborne and a member of the Alexander family with horses Duke and Major, ca. 1914 (2007-033-018)*

**Pridmore Family fonds** (Acc. #2007-033) – Research material on Pridmore genealogy including copies of death and marriage certificates, ephemera from World War II including a War Service certificate from the Municipality of Saanich to Peter Pridmore, newspaper clippings, and photographs of the Pridmore, Bugslag, and Atkins families (ca. 1870 to 1945). All photographs are now available online.

## Photographic Mysteries

In an ideal world, every photograph that was received at the Saanich Archives would come with detailed information as to who, what, where, when and why. While this can occasionally be the case, often the details are incomplete and it is our job to caption and date the photographs as accurately as possible to make them useful to researchers. Sometimes we receive or come across photographs in our vault with little or no information at all; photographers, individuals, and locations must be listed as 'undetermined' or are described generally.

Can you shed some light on our 'mystery' photos? If, in viewing photographs on our website, you recognize a person or a place that we have not, please let us know! Similarly, if you can expand on the details that we do have, or notice an error or omission, we encourage you to contact us.

Here are a few to get you started. Enjoy!

- 2008-030-001
- 2008-024-001
- 2007-054-027
- 2007-033-053
- 1981-021-061b
- 2007-051-070



*Students at their desks in a classroom, with teacher (2008-030-001)*

## Research Tips

### ... Royal Oak School

The recent controversy surrounding the development plans for the old Royal Oak School property has prompted you to do some research into its history at the Saanich Archives.

Start with the **vertical files**. These contain newspaper and magazine articles collected over the years on places, people and subjects of local interest. The vertical file on the old Royal Oak schoolhouse will provide you with general information and lead you to other Archives sources such as:

**Photos** – Photos of the school taken at different times over the last 120 years can be viewed on the Saanich Archives website.

**Pioneers** – Pioneer families associated with the building of the school can be researched in the vertical files "Pioneers" section.

**Heritage structures** – The new publication *Discover Saanich heritage structures: Saanich heritage register 2008* and related heritage inventory files contain information on the history, construction, and past owners of heritage buildings.

**Books** – In the Archives reference book collection is a volume entitled *The History of Royal Oak School*, by D.M. Young (1991).

**Clerk's Files and Clerk's Subject Files** – Documents and correspondence dated between 1914 and 1980 from the Municipal Clerk's files pertain to the construction, ownership and use of the Royal Oak School and property.

The material from all of these sources will give you an understanding of the history of the old Royal Oak School.

## Black History Month

February is Black History Month, and the Saanich Archives is hosting an exhibit to honour the contributions made to our community by black pioneers. Visit our display case in the Saanich Centennial Library foyer to view photographs and information on:

- The Alexander family
- Fielding Spotts

If you would like to find out more about these and other fascinating people from Saanich's history, feel free to visit the Archives. Staff are available to answer any questions.



*Charles Alexander, early Saanich pioneer (1981-018-004)*

### Archives Orientation

New to archival research? Join us on a Wednesday morning for an orientation session. Tour the archives, explore the collection, and learn how to use our reference files and finding aids.

Every Wednesday at 10 am

Approx. 45 minutes

Drop in

## Reference Room

The Saanich Archives' collection of local history books continues to grow! Currently, staff are working to catalogue and label the entire collection in Dewey Decimal format, as the public library does with their books; the completion of this project will mean easier searching for those people interested in a particular subject. During this time, visitors are still encouraged to sit and browse our nearly 1500 books!

Our latest titles include:

- *Songhees Pictorial: a history of the Songhees people as seen by outsiders, 1790-1912* (Grant Keddie)
- *Discover Saanich Heritage Structures: Saanich heritage register 2008* (Donald Luxton & Associates and Jennifer Nell Barr) – available for purchase at the Archives: \$24.95 + GST Cash or Cheque accepted
- *John Muir: West Coast Pioneer* (Daryl Ashby)
- *Victoria Underfoot: Excavating a City's Secrets* (Brenda Clark, Nicole Kilburn and Nick Russell)
- *Settler Feminism and Race Making in Canada* (Jennifer Henderson)

### *DID YOU KNOW?*

- ⊕ Lansdowne Airfield (now the Lansdowne School playing field) opened in 1928 and was BC's first licensed airport.
- ⊕ It took 11 horses to haul the polar axis for the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory up Saanich Mountain.
- ⊕ The average price of a lot in the "Burnside Park" development (1913) was \$150.