

## THE PRESERVATION OF KNOWLEDGE: AN ARCHIVAL PROJECT AT THE FIRST NATIONS HOUSE OF LEARNING, Xwi7xWA LIBRARY

Over the course of the last year, an exciting project has been evolving at the First Nations House of Learning, Xwi7xwa Library. What started out as preservation assessment of the Xwi7xwa (pronounced whei-wha) Library's archival holdings, grew into a rehousing project and a restructuring of the archives, which was established in the 1970s. The library collects and maintains materials of interest to First Nations, locally and nationally. In April of 2011, Ann Doyle, Head of Xwi7xwa Library, decided to host the project, which forms part of a larger preservation initiative at the University of British Columbia headed by Preservation Librarian Alvan Bregman.



The project was conducted by a, then first year Master of Archival Studies student, Samantha Schmidt, studying at the UBC's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, as part of a Professional Experience project for credit. The project was split into three main phases: (1) the preservation assessment, (2) participation in and supervision of the rehousing project (3) and arrangement and description of new accessions. In the first and second phase, the student inventoried and assessed the library's textual, textile, object, audio, and visual records for preservation needs, ordered the necessary supplies and rehousing the records. In the final phase of the project the student arranged and described records of enduring value to First Nations and the Xwi7xwa Library in archivally sound enclosures.



This project was beneficial to everyone associated. The Xwi7xwa Library gained knowledge and expertise relating to the preservation and organization of archival records. Furthermore, the library added to their existing framework of knowledge organization systems and can now provide access to historical British Columbian Aboriginal education records in new ways. The student was able to apply knowledge attained from coursework and gain hands on experience applicable to her future career. UBC, through Alvan Bregman, was able to further demonstrate the university's commitment to the stewardship of valuable archival collections.

Submitted by Samantha Schmidt