



Provincial archivist Peter Bower and Chief Conservator Charles Brandt assist Ms Joy Cohnstaedt in cutting the ribbon.

Manitoba Opens Conservation Lab

The new paper conservation laboratory of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba was opened on 12 August 1982 by Ms Joy Cohnstaedt, Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources. Ms Cohnstaedt began the ceremony by outlining briefly the early history of the Archives and the social implications of archives in general to the people of Manitoba. "An essential part of protecting our documentary heritage is the very matter of preserving it...." she said. "This laboratory is concrete recognition that while acquiring information and making it available for research are important activities, the entire archival process is much diminished if substantial efforts are not made to make significant documents last for posterity to study, appreciate, and enjoy."

Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, which was conducted by Ms Cohnstaedt on behalf of the

Honourable Eugene Kostyra, approximately 140 guests toured the facility in small groups. Chief Conservator Charles A.E. Brandt described the basic functions and capabilities of the laboratory which is equipped to treat paper-based archival documents including manuscripts, maps, plans, broadsides, books, and works of art on paper. Yet to be completed and installed is a sophisticated fumigation/freeze-drying chamber.

The 2,000 sq. ft. laboratory, believed to be one of the most advanced archival facilities in North America, includes two large work tables (one of which is a light table) which together form a working surface of 120 sq. ft., a portable washing sink (6'x10'), a high-quality water system, complete book bindery, Weidner-type drying rack, paper conservation table, various microscopes, camera equipment, a small adjoining room for

cleaning documents with pressurized air and vacuum-dust arrester, humidifier for relaxing documents, a large table for flattening documents between felts, fumehood with attachments for non-aqueous deacidification, and adequate storage units for all conservation supplies and materials. Safety provisions include fire blankets, appropriate first-aid items, safety shower, and off-site bunker storage for bulk quantities of chemicals.

Conservation staff consists of Brandt, John Kohler and Greg Hill (Assistant Conservators). On-the-job training experience is also being provided for Cindy Zelmer (University of Manitoba Fine Arts Student) and Connie Bart (on leave of absence from a major Winnipeg photographic studio).

Charles Brandt