

**LEVEL OF DESCRIPTION:**

Fonds

**No.:**

AU012

**TITLE:**

Edward Polanski fonds

**CREATOR:**

Polanski, Edward

**DATE RANGE:**

1900-2001, predominant 1964-2001

**EXTENT:**

240 transparencies and other materials

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

Edward J. Polanski, former mayor of Athabasca, Alberta and son of Joseph (Joe) and Angeline Polanski, grew up in Thorhild, Alberta, along with his only brother Frank. Ed married Phyllis Tomnuk of Thorhild, and they had five children: Carmen, Kelly, Michelle, Grace and James.

Growing up in Thorhild, Polanski worked in his father's hardware store where he took a liking to electronics. After graduating from Thorhild High School in 1952, Polanski decided to head to Toronto to attend the Radio College of Canada. Polanski studied in Toronto from June 1952 until 1953, when he returned to Thorhild and opened a radio and television sales and service store next to his father's hardware shop.

While in Toronto, Polanski made his own television receiver and brought it back with him to Alberta. He used the receiver to receive distant stations in the United States. In just a year and a half, Polanski logged over 46 television stations. He also mounted antennas onto a 90-foot tower beside his store. At this point, no one in Thorhild had ever seen a TV picture before. Because of this, farmers would come and sit in Polanski's store for hours just for the chance to see some kind of reception.

In 1954, after Polanski found that reception from Edmonton's CFRN station was not adequate for domestic antennas, he replaced lines with coaxial cable. People who had purchased televisions from Polanski's store also wanted the improved reception and paid him \$3.50 a month to have it.

Polanski made his first trip to Athabasca in a curling bonspiel in 1959. Since Athabasca is located in a valley and surrounded by large hills, he found that there was no television reception available. Once he realized this, he built a system called CATV in Athabasca in

1960. This system served about 300 subscribers who each paid a \$165 installation fee and \$5.50 a month for one channel.

Polanski sold CATV in 1973, three years after he acquired a license for a system in Edmonton. His Edmonton system, QCTV, served 80,000 households in 1977.

**CUSTODIAL HISTORY:**

Ed Polanski received funds from the Town of Athabasca, Athabasca County and Athabasca University to collect oral history for a Y2K project. Polanski was unable to complete the project and the materials were left in the custody of the Town of Athabasca. In 2008 the Town of Athabasca formally deposited the audio and video materials collected by Polanski to the Thomas A. Edge Archives & Special Collections at Athabasca University, along with a sum of money, so that all the material could be digitized and a history of the area could be produced for the Town of Athabasca's Centennial.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

The fonds consists of slides which depict the Klondike Karavan which travelled from Athabasca to Edmonton, Alberta. The fonds also includes textual records, cinefilm reels, videotapes, audio cassettes, and audio reels which show interviews of people who live in or around Athabasca, speeches that were made at various events, the *Athabasca Story* play, scenes of Athabasca, and audio recordings of music. The textual records describe the contents of the audio and video tapes.

**SOURCE OF TITLE:**

Title taken from the contents of the fonds.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

Fonds also includes 100 audio reels. –58 videotapes. – 11 audio cassettes. – 4 cinefilm reels. – 0.3 m textual records

**ARRANGEMENT NOTE:**

The records were received in no discernable order.

**LANGUAGE NOTE:**

The material is in English.

**ACCESS CONDITIONS:**

None.

**USE CONDITIONS:**

Permission for use required. Subject to *The Copyright Act*.

**FINDING AIDS:**

File list and digitized material is available.

**INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING ACCESSIONS:**

2008.009

Further accruals are not expected.

**RELATED RECORDS:**

Records that pertain to Edward Polanski can be found at the Athabasca Archives in Athabasca, Alberta in the Athabasca Archives Athabasca Pottery Discovery Day collection; Edward Polanski fonds and the Royal Alberta Museum, Western Canada History Department fonds.

Other records related to Edward Polanski include Dorothy Nielsen fonds at the Athabasca Archives.

Materials from the collection were used to create *Athabasca Memories* a five-disc set celebrating the Athabasca, Alberta centennial containing music, photographs, moving images and oral history.

**GENERAL NOTE:**

Information for the biographical sketch was taken from articles written by the Athabasca Advocate about Polanski's film project.

Fonds description written by Ashley Eisen in 2011 and updated by Marissa Fraser in 2017.

**SUBJECT HEADINGS:**

Video recordings—Production and direction

Audio-visual materials

Sound recordings

Performing arts