



SCHOOL OF INFORMATION STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP

This report focuses on two collections: 2AAA FM (RW3271)
and the Wagga Tigers Football Club (RW2887).

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Introduction

The scholarship offered by the Charles Sturt University Regional Archives (CSURA) is one that is extremely rewarding. I was lucky enough to be awarded the scholarship in 2017 and it was a worthwhile experience. As I had only been studying in the Bachelor of Information Studies course for one year, I felt that it was the perfect time for me to put some of the skills that I had been learning into working practice in an archive and the scholarship gave me the opportunity to do that. Over the 280 hours that I completed at the archive, I was given two projects to work on that complimented my personal interests. The first was Wagga's local community radio station 2AAA FM. As I have a show on a community radio station in Melbourne, learning more about a fellow community radio station was of particular interest to me. The second project focused on the Wagga Tigers Australian Rules Football Club. As I have a passion for Australian Rules football, this also piqued my interest significantly. Having been given two projects that were based around my interests certainly helped my work at the CSURA but it was also the general archive work that helped me learn more about the profession. This report will look in detail at the two projects that I worked on at the archive but also the experience as a whole, what I got out of it and how this experience can be of benefit to others who are thinking of applying for the scholarship.

2AAA-FM Radio Station

Historical Background

The 2AAA-FM collection covers the early period of the station from 1978-1983. The station started life in 1978 when a group of interested parties led by Stuart Carter from the Student Union of the Riverina College of Advanced Education, which is now Charles Sturt University (RW3271), decided to form the FM Radio Committee to establish Wagga Wagga's first community radio station. Over the next two years, the Wagga Wagga Media Cooperative was formed which consisted of members from the FM Radio Committee, the Riverina College of Advanced Education and the Trades and Labour Council (RW3271).

By the late 1970s, community radio stations started appearing all over the country with the first being Radio Adelaide in 1972 (Community Broadcasting Foundation, 2018). As a result, the Wagga Wagga Media Cooperative had many reference points to choose from when it came to applying for their own license. They were able to research other community radio

stations and find out their process in applying for a license as well as other legalities associated with starting a radio station. Eventually, in December 1980 a license was granted (RW3271).

The co-operative's first chairman, Bevan Walls, was an integral part of this achievement. He was able to bring all of the interested parties together in order to achieve this common goal. However, more work was needed in order for the station to start programming. First of all, a name for the station was required and they decided on 2AAA with the A's standing for 'accessible', 'accountable' and 'alternative' (RW3271).

Next was the matter of the radio station itself to contend with. In these early days of the station, many of the volunteer announcers had different musical interests so the station focused on different types of music at various points during the day. This resulted in several committees being formed around each different style who then reported to the programme manager. The meeting minutes that resulted from these groups form the bulk of the notes in the collection.

The next and arguably most vital part of the station's early existence was finding somewhere from which to broadcast. Initially it was decided to broadcast test programmes in the Australian Arcade in Fitzmaurice Street. This decision would result in some ingenious methods of soundproofing such as using hundreds of empty egg cartons on the walls (RW3271). There is a photo from a newspaper article in the collection which shows this in all of its glory.

Following the test programming, 2AAA finally began its official broadcasting on 31 July 1981 on 107.1 FM which is the same frequency that is used today. In order to achieve this significant moment, the local community rallied around the station by donating money towards a 'Buy-A-Brick' campaign (RW3271). This campaign also helped the station achieve its next significant outcome which was to have a permanent home to broadcast from.

Although the Arcade was suitable for test programming, it was felt that a more permanent solution was needed in order for the station to satisfy its specific needs. 2AAA eventually built their own station on the corner of Young and Coleman Streets where it stands to this day. The station prides itself on effective, quality programming and as they enter their 37th year of existence, they have become an important institution of Wagga Wagga.

Accessioning the Collection

When it came to accessioning and processing the collection, I was given broad instructions by the Collection Management Archivist on what was required. As this collection had been organised at some stage, there was an order already in place. However, as that had been done some time ago, I was instructed to organise the whole collection in the way that I felt was best. I was also left to my own devices by the other staff at the archive which gave me extra confidence in my accessioning role. I decided to take all of the items out and place them in groups that were organised by brief descriptions on post-it notes. I found out later that many of these groups would need to be re-organised as I became more familiar with the material. However, this method of organisation proved to be the style that I was most comfortable with. It enabled me to organise groups in each section that made the most sense and for me to be able to change the items in each group easily.

Although this collection started by having two accession numbers, the collection itself was small. In one accession, there were two standard type-one boxes and the other had one. All of the items were paper and covered a variety of material. These were placed into four different categories which seemed to be the best way of organising the material. The first is 'Boards and Committees' which contains documentation that mostly relates to meeting minutes from the various committees that existed in the early period of the station. The second category, 'Station Establishment', relates to the application of the radio license, early procedures and guidelines, information regarding the initial test programmes as well as organisational charts. The third category is 'Administrative Records' which consists of policy statements, notes regarding training and studio procedures as well as internal newsletters and various correspondence. The fourth category focuses on promotional material which includes advertising and sponsorship material, external newsletters, newspaper clippings and various photographs. This is the order that the material can be found when searching the physical boxes.

Once everything was organised, the next task was disposal. While organising the material, I had been keeping a group of material aside that I felt was not relevant to the collection. Much of this was duplicate material but there was also a lot of information that had been seemingly kept for research purposes. For example, there was material relating to other community radio stations around the country which was interesting and no doubt valuable when 2AAA was established but not relevant to keep now in relation to the station. Once the disposal

material was finalised and measured, it was shredded. This resulted in the collection being reduced to two standard type-one boxes and a collection of thirty-seven photographs being placed within a photograph box among photos from other collections. The final task was to enter all of the information into the archive's database system. This allowed finding aids to be developed so that users of the collection will be able to find what they are looking for as easily as possible. The accession list is added as Appendix 1 in this report. I also wrote an agency history about the collection to give a broad overview of what is in the collection. It was great to have finished my first collection and feel that I was able to have put some of the things that I have learned through the course into practice.

The Wagga Tigers Australian Rules Football Club

Historical Background

The Wagga Tigers started in 1861 as the Federals football club with their first recorded game of football against a team from Albury ten years later (AFL Riverina, 2018). They did not compete in a specific league until 1887 when they won the inaugural premiership in the Murrumbidgee District Football Association (Wagga Tigers, 2018). At that stage, their colours were red and white verticals which were later briefly changed to blue and white after World War II as the club had to borrow jumpers from the RAAF (Wagga Tigers, 2018). In 1949, the club were able to borrow jumpers from the Richmond Football Club in the VFL which resulted in the yellow and black strip and the name change to the Wagga Tigers (Wagga Tigers, 2018), both of which remain today.

The Wagga Tigers have had several periods of great success. They won five out of six premierships between 1957 and 1962 although this was followed by a thirteen year premiership drought. This was broken in 1975 which was the start of another period of success with the Tigers winning six of the next eleven premierships. Although these periods were famous in the club's history and created local heroes of players and coaches such as Doug Priest, Clive Anderson and Gerald Pieper, it was the 1990s that have arguably become the club's most famous period. This was largely due to the arrival of the former AFL Essendon captain, Terry Daniher, in 1993. He captain/coached the club to five of the next six premierships and with the club also winning in 1999, a dynasty was born. Since 2000, the club has gone on to win three more premierships but have not been able to create a club with

the same consistent winning level as times gone past. However, the club is still considered to be one of the Riverina area's strongest clubs.

Accessioning the Collection

Unlike the 2AAA collection, the Wagga Tigers collection was unprocessed so it involved starting from scratch. This meant that there was not even a rough order to base this collection on and that the collection would be organised entirely to my specifications. This collection was also much larger than the 2AAA collection. There were fifteen type-one boxes and one A3 box. I decided to start by organising all of the items into particular areas and then into an order that made sense. Like the 2AAA collection, this also involved deciding what was to be disposed of. This was a task that felt quite risky as I was always aware that I might dispose of something of value. However, most of what was disposed of were items such as deposit and cash books, duplicates and other items deemed to have low historical value. This resulted in the size of the collection being reduced to four standard type-one boxes, four photograph boxes, one A3 box and one A2 box.

The accession itself was again divided into four sections. The first is 'Administrative Records' which includes meeting minute books, Presidents' reports and sponsorship material dating from 1954 until 2006. The second is 'Financial Records' which includes employees' earnings records, cash and wage books and financial reports dating from 1966-1977. The third group is based around football-related records which include material such as football records and newspaper clippings relating to the club's many premierships. The fourth group is photographs which is a major part of the collection and took a long time to sort through. Not only did it involve disposal decisions but each photograph required a short description handwritten below each photograph which was time consuming but rewarding when completed.

Once the material was organised into a clear order and placed into boxes and photograph albums, the information was then entered into a spreadsheet. Like with the 2AAA collection, the spreadsheet information was merged into the archive's database system so that finding aids could be developed for users of the collection. The accession list for the Wagga Tigers collection is added as Appendix 2 in this report. An agency history was also written about this collection for the archive's website which is now online for the public to access.

Other Tasks

Once I had finished both collections, there was still time left for me to work on other tasks to help the Collection Management Archivist, Jill Kohlhagen. The first of these was to help set up an exhibition relating to a Wagga Teachers' College reunion. It was great to have an opportunity to work on something different to have a varied experience working in an archive. This involved obtaining relevant material from the archive's collection and selecting material that we felt was most relevant to the Teachers' College in different areas. For example, we chose photographs relating to sporting activities, musicals and aerial shots of the campus. There were also films, taken at the time, which were shown as a sideshow. It was great that Jill allowed me to select items for the exhibition. Even though I knew very little about what the exhibition was about, it showed that she had enough confidence in my ability to find and select suitable items, which was pleasing.

There were several other small administrative tasks that I was asked to help on during my final few days at the archive but the most significant of these was to write blog posts relating to both collections for the archive's website. Although both were based around the agency histories that I had already written, myself and Jill revised them in order to give a broader history that was intended for a broader audience. We also retrieved photographs from the collections that we felt would interest the website's users. Both blog posts came up extremely well and I was proud of the work that Jill and I put into them.

Conclusion

Working on these projects at the archive was a great experience for me and one that I thoroughly enjoyed. It allowed me to put theory into practice but it also gave me hands-on experience of working at an archive. The opportunity of meeting and working with other archivists was also an extremely worthwhile experience. It helped me gain greater knowledge about the profession that is not necessarily what one gets from pure study. The role of accessioning in particular was also very enjoyable and something that I would love to do as a career, given the opportunity. The task of organising all of the material into groups into a clear order seems to work well with my personality and it shows to me that I have chosen to study the right profession for me. As a result, I encourage any students who are studying archiving to apply for the scholarship as I believe it is a worthwhile experience.

References

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