

**University of Toronto Archives and  
Records Management Services**



**William N. Irving Personal Records  
B2001-0046**

Garron Wells  
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## William N. Irving (1927-1987)

### Biographical Note

William Nathaniel Irving was born in Toronto on November 11, 1927. At the age of 10 his family returned to the United States where he received most of his education. After military service with U.S. forces during World War II, he entered the University of Alaska in 1948 and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology in 1952. Graduate study was undertaken at Harvard University from 1953-1957 and University of Wisconsin at Madison (1959-1964). His Ph.D. in Anthropology was awarded in 1964 with a thesis on Arctic small tool tradition. "His academic training, a mixture of anthropology and natural sciences, was essential for his subsequent directorship of the Northern Yukon Research Programme..."<sup>1</sup>

In 1964 Professor Irving moved his family to Ottawa where he took a position as Head, Western Canada Section, Archaeology Division, National Museum of Man. From 1965 to 1968 he was head of the Northern Canada Section. His interest in the Canadian north continued as he conducted archaeological reconnaissance, survey and excavations at sites in the Yukon from 1965-1968. In 1968 he was appointed Professor of Anthropology at the University of Toronto, a position he held until his death on November 25, 1987.

During his career Prof. Irving published extensively on archaeology and anthropology of Alaska, District of Keewatin and Northern Yukon. In 1975 he assumed the directorship of the Northern Yukon Research Programme, based at the University of Toronto. This was a multi-disciplinary programme involving scientists from many different fields. "Under Bill's direction the Northern Yukon Research Programme focussed not only on the Old Crow Basin but also adjacent portions of the Porcupine River drainage and upland sites such as Bluefish Caves in the surrounding mountains. Most aspects of prehistoric human use of the region were investigated, from caribou fences to Pleistocene archaeology, as well as questions regarding the faunal, climatic, geological and vegetational history of Eastern Beringia".<sup>2</sup>

Prof. Irving was active in many professional organizations including the Canadian Archaeological Association, Council for Canadian Archaeology, American Anthropological Association, Society for American Archaeology, Arctic Institute of North America and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Julig and W. Hurley, University of Toronto. "Obituary: William Nathaniel Irving (1927-1987)" *Canadian Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 12, 1988, p. 210-217

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 212

**Scope and Content Note**

.70 metres; textual; 1914-1990

This accession holds records relating to Prof. Irving's university education, manuscripts of some published and unpublished works, correspondence mainly relating to his professional and academic activities both before and during his years at the University of Toronto, and administrative records of the Northern Yukon Research programme during his years as director. Records relating to his work with the National Museum of Man (1964-1968), as well as artifacts, data and research materials etc. relating to the Northern Yukon Research Programme (1975-1980) are held by the Canadian Museum of Civilization Archives in Ottawa.

Other materials not contained in this accession include most of his lecture notes and other teaching materials relating to the courses he taught during his nearly 20 years at the University of Toronto. As well, there is only a sampling of his manuscripts of published and unpublished works. Records relating to his field work for both American and Canadian museums during his thirty year career will not be found here but may have survived, as noted above, with the individual institutions.

**Series 1****Education**

.19 metres; textual

1952-1964

This series documents William Irving's university education at University of Alaska where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology in 1952, Harvard University (1953-1957) and University of Wisconsin (1959-1964) where he undertook graduate studies, receiving a Ph.D. in Anthropology in 1964. Included are course notes relating to anthropology, statistics, linguistics; correspondence; copies of term papers, research proposals.

Arranged chronologically.

Box 001, Box 002 (01) – (08)

**Series 2****Professional activities**

.22 metres; textual

1968-1984

Throughout his career, Prof. Irving was involved in many associations relating to sociology, archaeology and anthropology both in Canada and the United States. Files in this series contain correspondence, manuscripts of papers, and other documents relating to his activities with the American Anthropological Association, Canadian Archaeological Association, Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, Council for Canadian Archaeology (of which he was chair 1968-1970), and Society for American Archaeology. Also included are records relating to some conferences such as the Conference on Japanese Thought and Culture (1975).

Arranged alphabetically by file name.

Box 002 (09) – (16), Box 003 and Box 004 (01) –(03)

**Series 3****University of Toronto**

.10 metres; textual

1914-1990

Prof. Irving joined the University of Toronto as professor of anthropology in 1968 after four years at the National Museum of Canada. The files in this series document, among others, include activities of the South West Campus Users Committee, a committee established in 1978 as a result of the report of the South-West Campus Redevelopment Task force. The Task Force reported on space needs and sharing of resources among academic units. The Department of Anthropology was one of many in the "Social Sciences" group who submitted briefs. The Task force recommended the relocation of the Department of Anthropology to Sidney Smith Hall.

There is only on file of lecture notes for ANTH 417, 418 (1973-1974).

Box 004 (04) –(09)

**Series 4**                              **Northern Yukon Research Programme**  
.13 metres; textual                              1975-1983

This programme, based at the University of Toronto, received a grant from the Canada Council in 1975 for a five year project to study the remains of early man near the village of Old Crow in northwestern Yukon. Prof. Irving was director of the programme and led a team of scientists from various disciplines. This series includes correspondence, budgets, notes, and interim report (1977) relating to the work of this programme while Irving was director.

Box 005

**Series 5**                              **Manuscripts of published and unpublished works**  
.06 metres; textual                              1962-1976

This series contains manuscripts of published and unpublished papers, talks and articles by Prof. Irving as listed below. Additional manuscripts may also be found in Series 2.

<b>/Box</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Dates</b>
006 (01)	Academy of Medicine. "Pleistocene man in the Yukon and New World"	Jan. 14, 1976
(02)	"An approach to the pre-history of the Far East, from Farther East" Pre-congress Symposium IX ICAES, Montreal	1973
(03)	"The Arctic small tool tradition" <u>Proceedings</u> VIIIth International Congress of Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences.	1968
(04)	"Brachiation and Human Phylogeny"	n.d.
(05)	"Late Pleistocene radiocarbon dated artifacts from northern Yukon Territory". With C.R. Harrington	[1973]
(06)	"Northwest North America and central United States: a review". University of Wisconsin, 1962. <u>APUA</u> , Vol. 10, No. 2	1963
(07)	"A provisional comparison of some Alaska and Asian Stone Industries". Published in <u>Arctic Institute of N.A. Technical Paper No. 11</u>	1962
(08)	"The statistical analysis of the data". Chapter for Oschinsky monograph	n.d.