



Story Submission Guidelines

People's Archive of Rural Ontario (PARO)

**People's Archive
of Rural Ontario**

VISION & MISSION

The People's Archive of Rural Ontario (PARO) seeks to create a world where bridges of understanding are built between the urban and the rural, and where rural voices and stories are valued. PARO will create a space where these voices and stories can be shared, readily accessible and live on into perpetuity.

PARO will establish a freely accessible online community, where everyday people can tell everyday stories about everyday lives in and about rural Ontario.

WHAT IS A RURAL STORY?

PARO welcomes submissions from all. If there is a story that has rural connections, PARO is interested in it.

Stories are a universal way in which we communicate and make meaning with each other in our daily lives. When we tell a story, "we are providing context that allows others to interpret our unique experiences" and enables others to relate to our experiences through empathy (see, [Chase Lockshin, n.d.](#)). Storytelling is the process through which one tells a story through different mediums (e.g. words, images, or sounds; see, [Johnson, n.d.](#)). At PARO, we are interested in stories that are conceived by their storytellers as pertaining to the 'rural.'

What does 'rural' mean? Ask ten people and you are sure to get ten different responses. In general terms, rural spaces can be defined by their low population density. Statistics Canada defines a rural area as one with a population of under 1000 people. But there are other considerations as well, such as proximity to a town or city, and the types of activities that happen in that space. 'Rural' certainly includes agricultural activities and farmland, but also involves so much more. A holistic definition considers population density, geography, infrastructure, human activities, economics and more. The difficulty of pinning down a single definition of the term 'rural' reflects, in part, the diversity of rural people and places. Rural Ontario is not just one thing - one experience, one type of land, one form of community.

PARO welcomes stories from all people and all parts of rural Ontario. If you identify yourself, your community or your interests as 'rural', then your story has a place in PARO.

STORY GUIDELINES

Our general guidelines for submissions are as follows:

- PARO accepts submissions in text, audio, video and/or photo formats.
- PARO is a living archive for the future - a place for historical and contemporary stories. Submissions may be situated in any time period up to the present.
- Submissions can be works of fiction or non-fiction.
- Submissions can be 'your' story or a telling of someone else's story (with their permission, if they are still living).
- Stories can be of an individual, group, organization, community, an event, a practice, a resource, a celebration, an object, or a place.
- PARO will not publish content that contains publicity, advertising or has commercial value.
- PARO is a space for rural stories. All rural stories. Contributors are free to define 'rural' for themselves and their work.
 - PARO recognizes that the term 'rural' is not synonymous with agriculture and that, while farming can play a large role in rural communities, 'rural' encompasses much more than this. In order to be respectful, contributors will be required to explain in a few sentences why they consider their submission to be rural. This will be included in the publication if necessary.
- PARO aims to establish a living archive that reflects and is enhanced by our rich and diverse Ontario communities. PARO welcomes submissions from all persons particularly those who identify as Indigenous, racialized, having disabilities, and from persons of all sexual identities and gender identities.
- PARO is grounded in an anti-oppressive approach. While it is important to tell difficult stories that reflect the oppression present in our communities, submissions that do not contribute to the establishment and maintenance of anti-oppressive communities (both online and offline) will not be accepted.

STORY PRODUCTION & REPRESENTATION

PARO is a multimedia archive, accepting submissions and producing stories in text, audio, video, and/or photo formats.

Text

- Submissions should not exceed 1200 words but we will consider longer submissions if you send us a justification for the additional length.
- Files may be submitted in .txt or .doc formats.
- Three to six photos (with captions) may be included in a text piece. (Please see the guidelines for photo submissions below.)

Audio

- PARO will accept submissions up to 10 minutes in length.
- Files may be submitted in .mp3, .mp4 or .wav formats.
- Each audio clip must include descriptions of where the recording was made, and all subjects featured in the record.

Video

- PARO will accept video submissions of up to 10 minutes in length or documentary submissions of up to 30 minutes in length.
- Digital albums or digital stories (where still images are enhanced with text, music and/or audio) are also accepted up to a length of 10 minutes.
- Files may be submitted in .mov or .mp4 format.
- Videos should be uploaded at a minimum resolution of 720 (1280 x 780 pixels), as well as in 16:9 ratio (widescreen format) where possible.
- Videos must be accompanied by a write-up that includes descriptions of the subject(s) and the location(s) where the film was recorded.

Photo

- PARO will accept individual photos, up to eight photos as part of a text story, and photo albums of eight to fifteen photos.
- Photos must be submitted in .jpg format.
- All photos must be accompanied by a caption, including descriptions of the subject(s) and the place where the photo was taken. Where applicable, this caption should also include a description of the event or activity featured in the photograph.
- Photos submitted under the 'People' category should be portraits (featuring the subject's face and neck and may or may not include the shoulders). These portraits must also include:
 - The subject's name(s)

- Their age
- Their occupation(s)
- The nearest town and the county where they live
- A short quote from the subject (if they have one to share)
- All photos must include a credit, i.e. who took the photo.
- For each photo, you may include the make and model of the camera and any other specifics about your shot, if you wish.

PARO STORY CATEGORIES & THEMES

PARO proposes to place content into one or more of the following (expanding) categories to help create a user-friendly interface and allow browsers to easily locate content:

- People
- Our Work
- Our Leisure
- Our Concerns and Struggles
- Our Creativity
- Our Environment
- Crisis and Change

PARO welcomes diverse, multi-thematic stories and encourages contributors to submit stories that fall under more than one theme.

For 2021 we are focussing our efforts on soliciting and featuring contributions relating to the theme of **crisis and change**. This theme may intersect with one or several of the above-listed categories and can be interpreted broadly as rural people and communities contend with a variety of struggles, improvisations, and contentions through moments of crisis and change at a variety of geographical and temporal scales.

Within the theme of **crisis and change**, stories may certainly engage the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic as a crisis inspiring struggle, contention, and resilience; however, storytellers are certainly not limited to the Covid-19 crisis in this storytelling project as rural experience of 'crisis and change' pre-date and extend beyond Covid-19.

We gratefully acknowledge support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Francis and Ruth Redelmeier Professorship in Rural History, and the Canada Research Chair in Gender, Justice and Development.