

Archival Sources

Treasures from Ontario's Archives

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Lumbers Family Papers

(Harriett Stabback Series)
City of Toronto Archives
(fonds 93)

The Lumbers family fonds is a unique accumulation of financial records, correspondence, and photographs that documents four generations of the family of William Lumbers, a Toronto businessman who settled in Toronto in 1842. The father of ten children, Lumbers operated a large cattle and dairy business near the Gooderham and Worts Distillery just south of Front Street, and, after 1881, a firm that sold natural medicines. The majority of the records in this fonds pertain to the

children of William's son John Lumbers and his wife Matilda. The Harriett Stabback series (Series 452) is a fascinating exception. It contains the correspondence of Harriett Ayre Stabback (1810-1862), the mother of Matilda Lumbers, who immigrated to Canada from England in 1835 to join her brother James Stabback and his wife Mary (Pengelley), and who opened a dressmaking business under her own name shortly thereafter [*Toronto City Directory*, 1835].

Comprising eighteen letters dated between 1833 and 1835, Harriet Stabback's correspondence documents the period just before and after the immigration of James and Mary Stabback. Harriett's brother James came to Cana-

da in 1833 and quickly found a favourable situation in the city of York. After obtaining leave from his workplace, James travelled back to England in the spring of 1834 to wed Mary Pengelly, with the intention of returning to Canada with his wife and sister. Harriett, however, did not accompany

City of Toronto Archives

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<<http://www.toronto.ca/archives/>>

The Archives collects documents created by the City of Toronto municipal government and by its predecessor municipalities as well as non-government records that complement the government records and help create a more complete view of Toronto's history.



them.

The letters, received by Harriett from James, her sister-in-law Mary, Mary's sister Eliza Pengelly, and Harriett's future husband Edward Cooper, document the impact of immigration on the Stabback and Pengelly families. Letters from Mary relate her apprehensions about immigrating, her sense of isolation in her new home, and her efforts to persuade Harriett to join them in Canada. They also make note of prevailing fashion trends in Toronto ("green bonnets are very much worn in the summer"), a subject likely to be of interest to Harriett. James' letters explain his desire to immigrate despite the concerns

of his family ("they are all very anxious for me to stop but I am still of the same mind as when I left London, as I can see no real prospect of doing any good in England"), while later letters detail the particulars of the voyage to America, such as the cost of transporting luggage. James also describes what he sees as favourable conditions for Harriett's dressmaking business. Eliza's letters share family news, including her concerns about Mary's health ("I know not how the winter will terminate with my Sister she being so very delicate when at home"), while Edward Cooper's lone letter captures his disappointment at Harriett's decision to remain in England.

As a body of letters,

the Harriett Stabback correspondence provides intimate insight into the experience of early immigrants to Toronto at a time when the city itself was establishing its own identity. In a predominantly female voice, these letters reveal the toll that this experience exacted on those who made the journey and those who stayed behind, while at the same time capturing the confidence and optimism that drove many to seek out new opportunities in a new land. Despite the absence of Harriett's own letters, the correspondence is also notable for the portrait it paints of a businesswoman on the verge of making that very same journey herself.

The Leeder Family of Saugeen Township

Bruce County Archives

In 1851, at just 16, Nathaniel Leeder immigrated to Canada from Norfolk, England, where his father operated a mill. After brief stops in Quebec City, Hamilton and Doone, Ontario, he settled in Saugeen Township, Bruce County, in 1853. Only a year later, he was joined by his parents, Robert and Hannah, and his three brothers who each took up the task of cutting plots from the forest. The Leeders were among the first to settle in the area.

The family's early records document the struggles of a mid-nineteenth-century immigrant family to gain a foothold in rural Ontario. The account books (mostly from 1880 to 1929) say a lot about the business of agriculture, including transactions, inventories and details about the day-to-day operations of a family farm. The journals of Nathaniel and his son Ed, which begin in 1854 and go to 1919, give depth to the farm's business records and document the substantial technological changes their business underwent, but also add details of family life along with a description of an interesting trip to the Muskoka area in search of land in the

1870s.

The Leeder Family fonds (approximately 80cm in size) bear witness to the establishment of local government in what was then a remote part of the province. Nathaniel served his community as

Bruce County Archives

Part of the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre

33 Victoria St. N., P.O. Box 180,
Southampton, ON, N0H 2L0,
1-519-797-2080 or 1-866-318-8889
<www.brucemuseum.ca>

Housing almost every kind of record pertaining to Bruce County, the Archives is a treasure trove for researchers into genealogy and many aspects of history.

Tavern Inspector, Inspector of Noxious Weeds, and Township Treasurer (1892-1914). Ed, who like the rest of the family shared a passion for farming, was also township Tax Collector and both father and son served on the local school board.

A century of correspondence (predominantly 1854-1918) with five generations of family members from all over North America, Europe and the Caribbean is particularly rich in dealing with the life of the immigrant in Ontario, emigration

from England and the military service of three of Nathaniel's grandsons in France during World War I. But, at the same time, we find details of such esoteric topics as life in Cuba, Sir Frances Drake's estate, and education in England, which describe a family with a wide range of interests.

The records also tell us much about the community beyond the farm. Both Nathaniel and Ed regularly attended meetings of the West Bruce Farming Institute and the Patrons of Industry. Ed

also served for a time with the 32nd Bruce Battalion, and was president of the Saugeen Farmers Club and director of the Star Cheese and Butter Company. Of course, religion played a pivotal role in both family and community life – Ed, his wife Elizabeth, and their seven children, were devout members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They even donated a corner of their farmland to build a church where Ed served as the presiding elder for many years.

The Records of David Thompson

Archives of Ontario F443

The Archives of Ontario is pleased to announce the completion of an updated description of the David Thompson fonds, including entries from his many journals and notebooks documenting the daily experiences and observations of this celebrated Canadian explorer.

The Archives acquired these records in 1903 from the Ontario Department of Crown Lands, which had earlier obtained them from Thompson's family after his death in 1857.

Thompson's records describe his career as a fur trader, explorer, astronomer and mapmaker. They include his notebooks and journals, which document his journeys into what is now the interior

of Canada and the northwest United States, the mapping and surveying of Canada, and relations between fur traders and aboriginal peoples. Also included are field books of surveys he conducted for the Treaty of Ghent Boundary Commission, miscellaneous outgoing correspondence largely relating to boundary issues in the 1830s, hand-drawn copies of the surveys, and Thompson's 'Great Map' of western Canada and the northwestern United States. The fonds also contains records created after Thompson's death including index entries made by the Department of Crown Lands as well as typed transcripts of the notebooks and journals created by Archives staff.

These records have been divided into six series: Thompson's notebooks and journals, 101 books dating from 1789-

1851 (F-443-1); his boundary survey fieldbooks (F-443-2); correspondence (F 443-3); transcripts of his journals and notebooks (F 443-4); boundary survey maps prepared by him under Articles VI and VII of the Treaty of Ghent (F 443-5); and his map of North-West Territory of the Province of Canada (F 443-6).

The earliest entries in Thompson's notebooks and journals – those written between 1789 and 1812 – doc-

Archives of Ontario

77 Grenville Street, Toronto M5S 1B3

1-800-668-9933 Toll-Free Number
(Ontario only)

(416) 327-1600 Reception

<<http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/>>

Records created by the government of Ontario and its predecessors and records from the private sector including individuals, businesses, clubs and associations, labour and political organizations.

transcribed in its entirety.

One of the greatest gems in the collection is the Map of the North-West Territory of the Province of Canada (F 443-6), also known as the 'Great Map'. Based on survey data compiled during Thompson's twenty years of travel and exploration in the fur trade, this remarkable work is on permanent display in the Archive's Main Reading Room where it is housed in a special case that regulates temperature, humid-

ity and light exposure.

Access to the original records in the collection is restricted for conservation purposes, but the textual records are available on microfilm either in the Main Reading Room or through the Archives Microfilm Interloan Service.

2007 will mark the beginning of a multi-year effort to commemorate the life and work of David Thompson. The North American David Thompson Bicentennial Ini-

tiative will be organizing activities and exhibits throughout year to commemorate one of North America's most accomplished surveyors, map-makers and naturalists. For more information on the bicentennial activities go to: <www.davidthompson200.org>

For more information on the David Thompson fonds or to find out about the Archives Microfilm Interloan Service visit the Archives of Ontario's website.

Politics, Pistols and Plays:

Highlights from the Hamilton
Public Library Archives

The Special Collections Department of the Hamilton Public Library houses some 633 archival units, all centring on Hamilton-Wentworth history. Here are a few highlights that may be of interest to researchers in a wide variety of fields:

Ellen Louks Fairclough Collection

On 13 November 2004, Canada lost one of its greatest political pioneers. The first female secretary of state, first female cabinet minister, and first and only female Postmaster General, Ellen Louks Fairclough charted new territory for women in the political arena. Her personal accomplishments were indeed noteworthy, but

perhaps her greatest contribution was the introduction of a private member's bill. When passed, it ensured

equal pay for equal work, thus enabling Canadian women to enjoy comparable professional experiences to Fairclough's own.

At the end of her political career, Fairclough, a Hamilton native and MP for Hamilton West, donated her personal

Hamilton Public Library Archives

55 York Boulevard, Hamilton,
Ontario, L8N 4E4
(905) 546-3200

<[www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/
LibraryServices/Localhistory/Archives.htm](http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/LibraryServices/Localhistory/Archives.htm)>

Collection consists of manuscript and archival records relating to Hamilton and the Hamilton-Wentworth area including records of local businesses and organizations, family papers, government records of the City of Hamilton and the County of Wentworth, military records, etc.



*Ellen Fairclough. Courtesy of Special Collections,
Hamilton Public Library.*



papers to the Special Collections Department of the Hamilton Public Library. Included in the extensive collection are scrapbooks of newspaper articles assembled by Fairclough and her staff, photographs of Fairclough with prominent politicians including former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, and the manuscript of her autobiography *Saturday's Child*. Political cartoons relating to Fairclough's career will be of particular interest to feminist scholars, for they reveal much about evolving Canadian attitudes to women in positions of power.

Pringle Papers

From the mid nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, any musical or theatrical company on a North American tour made a stop in Hamilton. The city had an opera house specifically built to host superior performances from all genres, and as a result, theatre going became a regular pastime for Hamilton high society.

The Pringle family attended most of these events, and saved all of the programs, which they donated to the Special Collections Department of the Hamilton Public Library. Consequently, the theatrical record holdings from that era are as complete as possible.

Some highlights from the collection include the only known programs for the Garrick Club (currently known as the Players' Guild), which claims to be the oldest continuous amateur theatre group in North America, and archival material for Summers' Mountain Theatre, the first open air theatre in Hamilton to make use of the city's escarpment. The Pringle Papers are invaluable to those researching the city, its theatrical history, and the development of theatre in general.

For more information see www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/LibraryServices/Localhistory/Pringle+Papers.htm



Grand Opera House. Courtesy of Special Collections, Hamilton Public Library.

Planned Parenthood

For most of the twentieth century, it was illegal to disseminate information on birth control as well as contraceptives. Unwanted pregnancies, however, posed serious health risks in older mothers, and the number of deaths resulting from crudely performed abortions was staggeringly high. In order to remedy the situation, small, underground movements developed across Ontario to encourage planned families.

Hamilton was home to the second of these clinics. Founded in 1932, the Birth Control Society of Hamilton (now called Planned Parenthood) was founded and driven by the women of the upper class, a fact that allowed its continued existence despite illegal status. The Special Collections Department of the Hamilton Public Library is fortunate to house the complete records of the Birth Control Society, for they were moved out of the Planned Parenthood building shortly before it was destroyed in a fire in 1985. The development of the society from a small, illegal meeting in the house of one of Hamilton's elite families to a busy, legal clinic in the heart of the city is clearly noted in the minutes and records, and the conflicting perspectives on the morality of birth control appear in clippings from newspapers and magazines. Researchers will want to pay special atten-

tion to articles from the 1936 trial of Dorothea Palmer, and to the documented opposition to the clinics by the Catholic Church.

For further information see: www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/LibraryServices/Localhistory/Planned+Parenthood.htm



Elizabeth "Lily" Anne Hendrie accompanied by her children. Courtesy of Special Collections, Hamilton Public Library.

Brown-Hendrie Papers

When Elizabeth "Lily" Anne Brown married Colonel William Hendrie in 1901, two of Hamilton's most prominent families formed a powerful alliance. Lily's father, Adam Brown, emigrated from Scotland in 1833 and quickly integrated into upper-class life. A leader in business, politics, and philanthropy, Brown made a name for himself as a Member of Parliament and as postmaster of Hamilton. The marriage of his daughter to William Hendrie, businessman and soldier, only served to in-

crease the family's extensive social connections.

The Brown-Hendrie Papers paint a portrait of this merger specifically, and of upper class Ontario family life in the last part of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century in general. There is a wealth of material in the collection, and some highlights include the diary of Mary Kough Brown (Adam Brown's wife); personal letters between Lily Hendrie and William Lyon Mackenzie King; and a scrapbook of photographs, news clippings and poetry from World War I.



Land Papers

The Rebellion of 1837, although potentially disastrous to the political structure of the day, was effectively quashed by clear-thinking military strategists and their soldiers. Significant leadership in opposing the Rebellion came from Hamilton, and several military officials, including Sir Allan MacNab, were recognized for their efforts.

The papers in this collection at the Hamilton Public Library relate primarily to Robert Land's Third Gore Regiment stationed at Hamilton. The largest extant collection of Hamilton's militia lists, the Land Papers provide great insight into the workings of a nineteenth-century military regiment. In addition to the lists of units, orders, and supplies, the Land Papers comprise letters between high-ranking officers and attestations of loyalty to the Crown, including one signed by "the coloured citizens of Hamilton".

This collection was the first to be acquired as an archival unit by the Special Collections Department of the Hamilton Public Library, and was the first to be processed according to standard practice. Currently located at the Special Collections Department, it is also available on microfilm at the Archives of Ontario.

More information can be found at <www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/LibraryServices/Localhistory/Land+Papers.htm>.

Michael D. Harris fonds

(Archives of Ontario F 4419)

In 2003 Michael (Mike) D. Harris, the 22nd premier of the Ontario, donated to the Archives the private records of his political career as MPP for Nipissing (1981-2002), Progressive Conservative party leader (1990-2002), and Premier of Ontario (1995-2002). These consist of a variety of media both created and accumulated by the former premier and his staff.

Mr Harris's role as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, and particularly his election campaigns, are most strongly represented in the fonds. This includes documentation of his successful leadership bid in 1990; communications materials for the 1995 and 1999 elections, including speeches, press releases, and television ads; some records relating to the 1995 transition in government as co-chaired by David Lindsay; general and issues correspondence; and photographs.

Speeches; scheduling, tour and itinerary records; some briefing books related to trade missions, and photographs of official events and trips document his role as premier.

As for Harris's role as MPP, the fonds includes the records of his executive assistant, Bill King, and his constituency assistant Gord Prisco; correspondence and meeting files with constituents; Nipissing campaign records; scrapbooks and ephemera; and audio and video recordings of events involving Harris in the riding.

In addition, the fonds contains some personal correspondence files, mostly letters of thanks and congratulations sent or received by Mr Harris.

The records that make up the Michael D. Harris fonds have been arranged into twenty-nine series reflecting the activities for which they were created. More information can be found in the Archives Descriptive Database accessible through the Archives of Ontario's website. Some access restrictions apply.

John White fonds

Archives of Ontario (F 4448)

Thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Robert Hotz of Middleton, Maryland, the Archives of Ontario has recently received the personal notebook of John White, a lawyer and the first Attorney General of Upper Canada.

In addition to financial memoranda, the notebook includes a diary kept from 1792 to 1797 with early entries describing White's trip from Montreal to Kingston. After this, brief daily entries record his health, social engagements and matters relating to his working life, both as a parliamentarian and a pros-

ecutor. Among the associates frequently mentioned are Governor Simcoe and Chief Justice Osgoode.

After obtaining his legal education in England and being called to the bar in 1785, White practised law unsuccessfully in Jamaica before returning to Britain. Thanks to the influence of his brother-in-law, Samuel Shepherd, he was offered the post of Attorney General of Upper Canada. The appointment took effect on 31 December 1791, and White sailed for Canada in 1792.

As was common with early office-holders, White also carried on a private law practice to supplement his income. His duties as Attorney General included the adaptation of British law to conditions in the new colony, and the prosecution of criminal cases. A 12 July 1794 entry in his diary reflects his frustration: "Nothing but irregularity, prejudice and confusion in the Court."

In addition, White was the first elected representative for Leeds and Frontenac in the House of Assembly, and he was personally involved with the legislation that established the Court of King's Bench and the district courts in 1794. Once the courts had been established, White was troubled by the number of non-licensed practitioners of law appearing as advocates, and a measure was passed enabling the Lieutenant Governor to issue licences. White had a large say in the choice of those who received them. In

1797, though not a member of the Second Parliament, he promoted the bill that founded the Law Society of Upper Canada, thus establishing both legal education and the self-regulation of the profession in the province. As the Law Society's first treasurer, White was also automatically its first president.

White was paid £300 per year as Attorney General, supplemented by fees for particular duties, the most important of which was drawing up land deeds. A number of other officers shared these fees, and there was much bitterness and inefficiency because of it. White, already in debt when he arrived in Upper Canada, continued to spend freely. A reconciliation with his estranged wife in 1797 failed, and she returned to Britain in 1799.

Although this fascinating verbal snapshot of the province's first days was published from transcripts in 1955 in *Ontario History* (vol. XLVII), the whereabouts of the original notebook had been unknown for many years. The Archives of Ontario is delighted to have received it, and it is now available on microfilm in our Main Reading Room on microfilm reel MS 8350 and via the Archives Microfilm Interloan Service.

Thomas Ridout family fonds

(Archives of Ontario F 43)

In November 2004 Peter Ridout donated twenty three original

letters written by his ancestor, Thomas Gibbs Ridout (1792-1862), to his family in York while visiting and touring England for the first time in 1811-12. The letters provide a fascinating glimpse into British society at a time when London was the hub of an empire that spanned the globe. Whatever the many attractions of cosmopolitan London, the young Thomas Gibbs' Ridout still preferred his hometown, and indeed returned home to defend Upper Canada in the War of 1812. Thomas wrote to his brother, George, 18 December 1811: "I prefer [York] far above this most rich & magnificent city on the earth with all its gold & splendor, Palaces, Princes & People & anything that is wonderful. York in my eyes is a jewel."

This superb donation has been added to the Thomas Ridout family fonds. Thomas Ridout (1754-1829) was a politician and public servant in Upper Canada while his son, Thomas Gibbs Ridout, was a public servant and cashier of the Bank of Upper Canada.

The records provide insight into the life of the Ridouts and their ancestors as well as early life in Upper Canada. Subjects include: the American Revolution, Native Indians, John Strachan, local politics in York, Mr. Wyatt (who had been appointed Surveyor-General in 1806), Joseph Willcocks, John Mills Jackson, Francis Gore, the War of 1812, and the Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada.



*...more
than just
pictures:
William*

Kennedy and Sons Collection

by Robert Baillargeon
Grey County Archives

A very important collection, which chronicles the growth of a manufacturer in Canada over a 140-year period, is preserved, catalogued and available to the public for research and viewing at the Grey County Archives near Owen Sound, Ontario. The collection features over 10,000 black and white photographs documenting the development, growth

and production of a company that played a vital role in the growth of almost every sector of Canadian industry. Also, in the collection are negatives, blueprints, advertising materials, newspaper clippings and ledgers diligently collected since 1857.

William Kennedy was born in Dumfries, Scotland, became a millwright after serving an apprenticeship in Glasgow, and immigrated to Canada in 1831. He arrived to find a primitive economy, geographical problems of immeasurable complexity and a climate of such severity where only the heartiest or almost desperate of adventurers could be attracted to settle. He also saw men and women scattered in small agricultural settlements who faced the challenge with

Grey County Archives

Grey Roots: Your Heritage and
Visitor Centre

102599 Grey Road 18, R. R. #4,
Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5N6
(519) 376-3960 ext x111 or Toll
Free (877) 473-9766

<www.greyroots.com>

The archival holdings at
Grey Roots are an extensive
assemblage of municipal and
private collections covering the
history of Grey County.

outstanding fortitude, courage
and dedication.

William Kennedy had witnessed the effects of the industrial revolution in Glasgow and could see his hand being put to it in Canada. The timber industry was booming – saw mills sprang up all over Upper Canada – and shipbuilding

also grew at a spectacular rate. William Kennedy went to Sydenham (currently known as Owen Sound) in 1856 to install machinery in the Harrison Woollen and Grist Mill at the “Mill Dam” on the Sydenham River. At that time the town had a population of 2,000 and William decided to remain there after the installation was completed. In 1857 he opened a modest-sized planing and matching



William Kennedy & Sons Co. Foundry at the corner of Stephens St. and Beech St. (now 1st Ave. West and 11th St. West). Notice the wooden patterns located along side the building. Also of note is the wooden boardwalk used as a sidewalk. This photograph dates c.1900. The Grey Roots Archival Collection, 1973.010.019

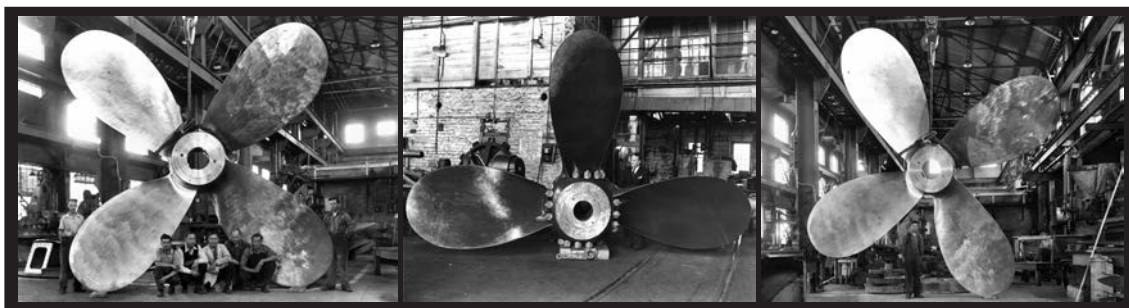
mill, which operated out of a small wooden shack, and in 1860, Thomas and Matthew, two of his sons, joined him. Benefiting from the timber industry and the market for trade, William Kennedy and Sons expanded three years later, building a new two-storey building to house a sash and door factory and a machine shop. Owen Sound grew into one of the busiest ports in the country, and Kennedy's factory built equipment for the fishing, passenger, freight and pleasure crafts that frequented

they also built water-wheel hydraulic turbines, which drove machinery before electricity. Kennedy always took a leading part in the development of new industries including the pulp and paper business, mining, the railway and later the development of hydro-electric projects. Each project, installation or production was documented using the photographic technologies of the day.

William Kennedy and Sons, Ltd., may be best known for its contribution to

war. A Kennedy propeller drove the lead boat in the D-Day invasion. The company's contributions during the war have been recognized by the crown and duly noted, and the National Film Board documented their wartime production.

William Kennedy and Sons remained a family-owned business until 1951, when it was sold to a British interest, Had-Mils, but it retained its name and family management. Later it was sold to an American company and became known as Black Clawson-Kennedy. It



Left: Workers posed with a large propeller. Black Clawson-Kennedy Ltd. 1950s? L-R: Whitey Struthers, Herb Seamon, Eric Knudson, Jim Peacock, _____, Bill Inglis, George Pepperell. The Grey Roots Archival Collection, 1997.008.023

Centre: Sectional ship propeller blades (3) and hub for a wheel 19'0" dia. x 15'8" P for the S.S. Selje (customer was the Halifax Shipyards Ltd.,

Halifax N.S. William Kennedy & Sons ref. no. 1276. Mr. C.A. "Spot" Eberle is posed with the propeller. 7 Dec 1939. The Grey Roots Archival Collection, 1997.008.029

Right: Black Clawson-Kennedy Ltd. Employee Maurice Nicholls posed with a large ship propeller. 1950s? The Grey Roots Archival Collection, 1997.008.026

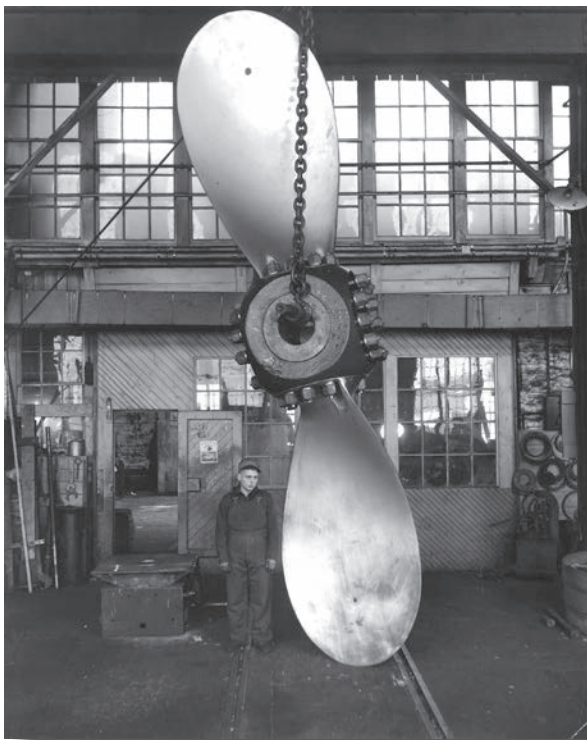
the harbour. They also did marine repairs during the winter months.

The collection at the Archives is a record of the growth of this company, which parallels the growth of manufacturing in Canada. Kennedy's machine shop and foundry advertised "Castings of every design." Indeed, they built farm implements and equipment for every type of saw, grist, flour and cement mill. In the foundry

shipbuilding. The company was the leading manufacturer of propellers for all types of marine craft. At one time, it supplied propellers for about ninety-five percent of marine traffic on the Great Lakes. During both World Wars, production was geared almost exclusively to the war effort. Kennedy and Sons built propellers, wind-less drive shafts and other integral equipment for every boat committed to

grew to immense proportions, occupying large tracts of land within Owen Sound with sales bureaus all over Canada. The larger the company became the more sensitive it was to market fluctuations. Production and staffing levels went up and down erratically until 1996 when it closed its doors forever. Today the empire the Kennedys built is no longer – its buildings demolished.

What is documented in



Norm Sutton beside a semi-steel propeller hub with two manganese bronze blades assembled to make a 19'0" dia. wheel for the S.S. Selje. Customer: Halifax Shipwards Ltd. William Kennedy & Sons Ltd. ref. no. 1284. 8 Jan 1940. The Grey Roots Archival Collection, 1997.008.021

this collection is more than just pictures of machinery and propellers. People are posed with products in many of the works. Their presence gives

Each photo was an event. Everyone involved in the making of each propeller took time out from their work to pose with the fruit of their labour. On

an idea of scale, but the pictures are caring portraits of workers who built the company by careful dedication to their craft. During the war every propeller was photographed before it left the plant.

the occasion of the completion of the "One Hundredth" propeller, there was a celebration for the entire staff. This event was marked by a dance held for family and friends. Looking at the collection is like looking at a giant family album. Not only are the days at work seen, but also the days at play. There was a full schedule of company sporting events, picnics and parties on the social calendar. All these are documented along with the award ceremonies, and each apprentice is shown getting his shingle. Local charities were supported and welcomed as members of the Kennedy family, and the benefits of their contributions were recorded for posterity. The collection is a time capsule of almost a century and a half.

Alma College, St. Thomas

Elgin County Archives

Almost fifteen meters of textual records and 2,500 images make up the records of one of Ontario's earliest girls' schools. Here is a treasure-trove of primary source material for the social historian and genealogist alike. Alma College was established as St. Thomas Ladies College by the Gen-

eral Council of the Methodist Church in 1877. That same year, responsibility for naming the school was bestowed upon Sheriff Colin Munroe who named it Alma after his daughter and recently-deceased wife.

The college officially opened its doors as a liberal arts school for young women in 1881, choosing its colours to represent the three original departments: red for music, gold for art, and

blue for literature. Throughout its lengthy history, the school was widely recognized

The Elgin County Archives

450 Sunset Drive, St. Thomas, Ontario
(519) 631-1460

<<http://www.elgin.ca/>>

The Archives is the official repository of records of the County of Elgin since its incorporation in 1852 as well as those of its current and former constituent municipalities. The Archives also houses a number of private collections documenting the County's history and its citizens.

for the training it provided in all three disciplines as well as for its strong contingent of international students. Right from the start, university-matriculation level subjects such as algebra, Euclidian geometry, Latin grammar, French and chemistry were taught and the words “high school” first appeared in the school prospectus for 1899-1900. Between 1881 and ca. 1930 the College’s post-elementary level

curriculum gradually evolved from that of a traditional liberal arts finishing school to private university prep school, and finally to Ontario Department of Education-sanctioned secondary school.

Day students were welcomed as early as 1907 and a junior school for girls under thirteen was formally opened the same year though, as early as 1899, the College was enrolling students in its “Preparatory Department,” whose course of study included “Public School” grammar, arithmetic and geography. By 1920, the Junior School curriculum had been brought essentially in line with the standard course of study taught in the province’s



Alma College in 1891. Scott Studio fonds, B 519, # 98099. Courtesy of Elgin County Archives.

public schools. Enrolment in the junior school was usually limited to about twenty pupils. The College believed that smaller class sizes would both benefit students and appeal to parents.

Major changes occurred in 1975 when a co-educational elementary day school was established and a portion of the new residence was opened as Valleyview Satellite Home, a residence for female seniors. Alma College was designated as a provincial historic site in October 1976 in commemoration of the school’s centennial.

In 1989, a labour dispute forced the closure of the secondary school, leaving the

primary and music school to continue alone. Substantial changes in ownership followed the closure. For most of its existence, the college was owned and operated by the Methodist Church and, after 1925, the United Church of Canada. That came to an end when Alma separated from the church in 1991.

Alma’s music school, junior school and kindergarten failed to re-open in 1994 as scheduled, as did the secondary school, citing low enrolment as the cause. Alma College finally closed in September 1994. For the next four years, the college’s fate was in the hand of receivers and the courts before finally being sold



to a London development company.

The college's records, purchased with the permission of the courts by the Alma College International Alumnae Association in 1997, have been split, with the business and personal documents transferred to the United Church of Canada Archives and the student transcripts sent to the Ontario Ministry of Education. After being moved to at least three different

locations, the remaining records were finally deposited with the Elgin County Archives in 2002. These consist of the records of the Alma College board of management, council, senate and student councils, and include correspondence, accounts, minutes, photographs, scrapbooks, newspa-

pers, yearbooks, programs, blueprints, plans and prospectuses along with personal scrapbooks, photo albums and memorabilia kept by students and staff.

The fonds will be of particular interest to historians

the social history and commercial development of the city of St. Thomas and Elgin County, as the records provide voluminous information about local events, institutions, businesses and individuals through their interaction



Alma College Art Class. Scott Studio fonds, B 153, # 95749. Courtesy of Elgin County Archives.

seeking information about Alma College in particular and about the administration, staffing, curriculum, academic standards and student life of Canadian and international women's private boarding schools in general. Historians will also find the fonds useful for investigating

Canada, particularly those administered by the Methodist/United Church.

A seventy-three-page finding aid for the fonds is available online at <www.elgin.ca/imges/almainventory.pdf> while images of life at Alma College can be seen as <www.elgin.ca/alma.htm>.

with Alma College and its students and staff. Genealogists will find the student records and staff registers invaluable. Finally, the fonds will interest students of denominational educational institutions in