

The Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill  
Thornhill Archives & Special Collections  
 2003 Annual Report

### Committee

In July of 2003, we were saddened by the loss of Laura Weaver. Laura, in addition to her dedication in so many other areas, had served on our committee since early in 2002. It was always such a pleasure to learn from Laura's extensive knowledge and love of Thornhill's history. Her joyful presence in our group will be greatly missed.

In November 2003 we were pleased to welcome Diane Berwick to the Archives Committee. Her enthusiasm and experience with the Imperial Oil Archives will surely prove to be an invaluable asset.

In November 2003 Vivian Wylie, who served as the chair of our committee for three years, decided to pass the position on to Adam Birrell.

#### Committee as of January 20, 2004

Adam Birrell (Chair), Diane Berwick, Jim Broughton, Kae Broughton, Bernice Edmunds, Lorna Rogers, Gwyn Wojna, and Vivian Wylie.

### Accessions 2003

Donations:.....	38
Transfers:.....	2
Loans:.....	1
Purchases:.....	1
Accessions of unknown origin or date of acquisition:.....	49
<u>Total accessions:</u> .....	91

In 2003, numerous items and groups of materials were accessioned. These were items that were present in the archives when the archives committee was formed in 2001. In some cases the origin of the material was known but not the date of acquisition. In other cases, both the origin and the date of acquisition was unknown.

### Preservation

On October 2, Iona McCraith, the Preservation Consultant for the Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) came to assess our facility and some items from

our collections. Her follow up report provides some helpful guidelines for how we can properly preserve items within our collections. Her report can be found in the 2003 Archives Committee files in the Archives.

The archives committee only uses archival quality supplies for the preservation of our collections. We have been using encapsulation, acid-free plastic photo sleeves, archival envelopes, tissue paper, and folders, and archival boxes for over a year.

In 2004, we hope to take advantage of the AAO Thermohygrograph Loan Program to monitor temperature and humidity levels in the archives room.

### **Archives Management:**

#### **Accessions list**

In an effort to have a fast way of recording new accessions when there is no time to fill out an accession record immediately, a spreadsheet was created early in 2003. This has six columns to quickly record the accession number, accession type, the name of the source, accession title, location, and date received. This by no means replaces the accession record, but allows for quick recording when time is limited.

#### **Forms**

In 2002, the archives committee began creating forms for the documentation of donations, and transfers (materials from SPOHT), etc. As with any archival repository, these forms must reflect the specific needs of the facility. In 2003 we were able to adapt our Archives Accession Record form and our Deed of Gift agreement. Prior to this year no deed of gift agreements had been signed by our donors. By the end of 2003 only five agreements had been signed. As of early January 2004, we are awaiting the return of several agreements which were mailed in late December 2003.

#### **Donor Contact Database**

In December a proper donor contact information database was compiled for quick reference.

#### **Thornhill Archives – on the web**

In December, the archives committee decided it was time to have a section on the SPOHT website devoted to the archives. This would include a description of the kinds of records we have; a list of the kinds of records we are interested on obtaining; and contact information for setting up appointments. Eventually, we would like to create an online exhibit of photographs and documents. SPOHT's webmaster, Michael Shalit, has kindly offered to assist us in this project.

#### **Exhibitions and Loans**

In March, subsequent to our discussions with the City of Vaughan regarding the Vaughan Cultural Interpretive Centre, we loaned three artifact collections/ items to the centre for display. These pieces were from the following accessions; (2002.12 - Sterling Bank of Canada/ Standard Bank of Canada/ Bank of Commerce – Construction Material), (2002.25 - Women's Auxiliary box – Holy Trinity Church, Thornhill), and (2002.31 - Reid Family Chamber Pot).

In light of the fact that we lack the facilities to store, let alone display, artifacts properly, we decided that the new Vellore Cultural Interpretive Centre would be a suitable place to have them displayed. These items are on loan for a non-specified period of time, but will likely be there for as long as we are unable to display them ourselves.

A selection of copied photographs of the Thornhill Festival, from the Weaver Photo Collection, (donated from the estate of Laura Weaver in 2003, Acc: 2003. 81), were put on display at the Alf and Laura Weaver – Thornhill Old Timers Reunion at the 2003 Thornhill Festival.

At the 2003 SPOHT Annual General Meeting held November 25<sup>th</sup>, the archives committee displayed two artifacts we recently acquired. These were the bell from the Thornhill School House (Acc: 2003. 86) donated by Jack and Ann Westerhoek, and the clapper from the bell from the Thornhill Hotel donated by Al Findlay (Acc: 2003. 82). The display board that accompanied these two artifacts was entitled "*The Bells of Thornhill*".

### **Visitors**

The Archives Committee has not kept formal records of visitors prior to January 2004. It was decided in December 2003 that all visitors, as of January 2004, must sign in when visiting the Archives. Aside from acting as a security measure, this will allow us to show the number of visitors each year, should we ever decide to apply for a grant.

### **Archives Facility**

The Thornhill Archives & Special Collections continues to be housed in the Thornhill Village Library, with no foreseeable possibility for relocation any time soon. Our reasons for leaving the library would only be to secure a larger storage space, and ideally display space, for our constantly growing collection. We enjoy many benefits in the Thornhill Village Library, not least of which, our close relationship with the library staff with whom we share common goals.

We are very fortunate to have such a place for our archives. While it is small, it is at the same time clean, dry, and secure. One year ago we knew that we were virtually out of space. One year later we sit with a far larger collection (aggregate statistics of acquisitions do not reflect the large size of some of these donations) with which it can be a struggle to cope. In some cases the ideal method of storage must be substituted, temporarily, by another storage method. The lack of flat storage space has to be one of the most significant challenges.

Our location in an historic building, while beneficial in so many ways, poses restrictions where archives are concerned. Concerns for the weight load on the second floor, where we are located, has placed restrictions on the type and weight of any office furniture. Currently we have the use of a large wooden table, two file cabinets (one with two drawers, the other with four) a book case with

glass doors, and a four-tiered wooden book shelf. These items belong to the library. The archives acquired another book case in 2001, and more recently, a five-level plastic shelving unit. The latter is used to hold our white document boxes. The top shelf of this unit has been adapted for flat storage.

In addition to our work table, located inside the archives room, we have the use of a larger table located in the larger room just outside the archives room. When not needed by the library staff, we are able to use it for overflow work, a place for researchers, and our committee meetings.

The need for a larger facility has prompted a larger SPOHT initiative to find a location that would suit our specific needs. Two possible locations are being investigated at the time of writing.