

The Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill  
Thornhill Archives & Special Collections  
2004 Annual Report

Archives Committee

2004 was another active year for the Archives Committee. There were many advances in the area of record series development which has become increasingly necessary for the management of our diverse and growing collection.

There were acquisitions of several larger collections such as the Jackson Papers and the Findlay Papers, along with the continued preservation and arrangement of the Weaver Collection. While enriching the scope and content of the Thornhill Archives, this has presented new challenges in the areas of preservation and records management.

**Committee members in 2004**

Adam Birrell (Chair)

Diane Berwick

Bernice Edmunds

Kae Broughton

Jim Broughton

Lorna Rogers

Gwyn Wojna

Vivian Wylie

SPOHT Education Co-ordinator Judith Dawson joined the Committee in 2004 for the production of the upcoming online Thornhill Heritage Database described below.

Accessions in 2004

Donations	31
Transfers	11
Loans for copying	3
Purchases	1
Accession of items previously in the archives	12
<b>Total accessions</b>	<b>58</b>

## Collection Development

This year saw the beginning of the development of three new file groups. These groups consist of newspaper articles and other materials on local topics and people, already maintained by SPOHT for many years. These collections have been rearranged into the file groups; Family Files, Subject Files, and House and Building Files. File names and numbers have been assigned and an index for each file group is being compiled.

## Preservation

### **Weaver Collection**

The Weaver Collection, a remarkable photographic and research collection created over the course of many years by Alf and Laura Weaver, is one of our most valuable documentary resources in the Archives. Its size and multiple formats have presented some preservation challenges which have required thoughtful solutions.

One of the most pressing tasks has been to replace the deteriorating vinyl binders, which contained the photographs and accompanying documents, with archival enclosures. The 32 upright binders were not providing the necessary support and protection for the collection.

Clamshell archival boxes with 3-ring inserts, which allow the pages to lie flat in the boxes while in storage and in use, have been chosen for much of the collection. The acidic page protectors are being replaced with new acid-free ones.

This method was chosen over the removal of the materials to file folders and document boxes because the collection is referred to so frequently. These boxes allow convenient access to the materials while still offering a high level of preservation.

By the end of 2004, roughly half the binders needed had been purchased.

### **Digitization**

The Thornhill Archives has been fortunate to be able to cooperate in the ongoing digitization project by the Markham Public Libraries. Since March, 2004 over two-thousand photographs and documents have been added to the Lunauweb Archival Database of Markham History. This project has provided greater accessibility to our archival holdings.

## Education

### **Thornhill Heritage Database**

SPOHT has began the development of a new web-based education program. This initiative, targeting grades 3 and 8 students, is being developed in consultation with history and social studies teachers, and will provide a local context to the wider study of Canadian history, based on the Ontario curriculum. We anticipate launching this program from our website in 2005. SPOHT is endeavouring to be very progressive in the era of developing technology to allow access to our extensive archival holdings.

## Displays

### **Thornhill Village Festival - Thornhill Old Timer's Reunion**

At this year's Thornhill Village Festival we set up our existing display of Alf Weaver photographs from the early years of the Festival.

### **SPOHT Annual General Meeting - Armstrong, Archives info.**

For the 2004 S.P.O.H.T. Annual General Meeting a display was created featuring information on the Archives and its varied collections and activities. Accompanying this display was one of our newest acquisitions; the oil painting by local artist William Walton Armstrong, donated by Robb Stitt, an active SPOHT member.

### Archives Storage Room

Each year we report on the state of the amount of storage space left in the archives room, and each year the prognosis is much the same; that there is not much left. The donation of a new shelving unit by Robb Stitt this year has been a wonderful asset.

### Website

In June the website for the Thornhill Archives & Special Collections was launched as part of the SPOHT website; [www.thornhillhistoric.org](http://www.thornhillhistoric.org).

Sections on the website have included an over view of the collection, information on the collections and how to access them, how to make donations of materials, information on our new acquisitions and the acknowledgment of our donors. Another successful component has been the online exhibits featuring such topics as "Aerial Photographs of Thornhill: 1930's to the 1960's"; "Thornhill Secondary School Turns 50"; and "Hurricane Hazel: The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Storm of the Century".

### Visitors and Research Requests

#### **Email Research Requests at [archives@thornhillhistoric.org](mailto:archives@thornhillhistoric.org)**

The [archives@thornhillhistoric.org](mailto:archives@thornhillhistoric.org) email address was created on May 15, 2004. From May 15, 2004 to December 31, 2004 we received roughly 40 email research requests.

#### **Visitors to the Archives**

There were 14 registered visitors to the archives in 2004. However, this number is deceptively low in terms of the number of people who expressed interest in the collection. Numerous people who contacted us over the phone and via email from around the province and as far away as England, were sent information.

Prepared by Adam Birrell and Vivian Wylie for the Thornhill Archives & Special Collections Committee, March 2005.