

ADDITIONAL INPUT FROM THE ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

The Archives of Ontario: A Response

The Spring edition of the Bulletin carried an essay critical of archival policy regarding the preservation of Land Registry Office records. What follows is a response by the Archives of Ontario.

Preservation of Land Registry Office records has been a complex and difficult issue for both the Archives of Ontario and the heritage community in the province stretching back some two decades. The cooperation shown by all parties has led to a positive environment which will ensure the preservation of all key information at land registry offices.

The Archives of Ontario has committed itself to the preservation of all LRO information up to 1955 in two formats: one paper and one microfilm format for each record series. The paper formats selected will be those offering the most intensive informational content in the best physical condition (usually the copybooks of registrations prepared and authenticated at the time instruments and deeds were registered). Preservation of microfilm, as the document of record under current legislation, has been undertaken by the Real Property Registration Branch of the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, with the ongoing technical input of both the Archives of Ontario and the Genealogical Society of Utah.

To ensure preservation of all key information, the Archives of Ontario has taken the following steps:

- It has received into its holdings all pre-1868 instruments and deeds (some 1,000 cubic feet of records);
- It will be preserving all copybooks of registrations (1790-1955) either at the Archives of Ontario or in suitable local repositories on long-term loan. Currently, there are more than 15,000 volumes of such copybooks;
- In the few instances where copybooks have not survived, it will be taking all registered individual instruments and deeds from 1868 to 1955;
- Through a placement plan negotiated with APOLROD (Association for the Preservation of Ontario Land Registry Office documents), the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations and the Archives of Ontario, the Archives will receive for preservation all non-standard paper registrations not required by the land registry offices for operational purposes. It will also microfilm these where resources allow and will place microfilm copies of the documents locally;

- All parties involved have agreed to preservation at land registry offices of any instrument or deed with attached maps and plans;
- The Archives of Ontario has reviewed and inspected all pre-confederation maps and survey plans at land registry offices, and has begun a process by which to receive those considered of historical value;
- The Archives of Ontario, under the APOLROD inventory process, will also take into its custody for preservation all regular series of post-1867 instruments and deeds where significant quantities of non-standard registrations have been noted as intermixed throughout such series.

The Archives of Ontario has begun reviewing completed APOLROD inventories in order to identify and designate those records of provincial significance for long-term preservation by the archives of Ontario. Provincial heritage organizations have been asked to provide input on this process to the Archives of Ontario, and to assist in the local placement of records deemed non-operational by land registry offices and not of provincial significance by the Archives of Ontario. Copies of inventories completed by APOLROD are available in the Archives of Ontario main reading room for public review and examination.

Copies of the document entitled "A Plan for Ontario's Pre-1955 Land Registration Records: Joint Approach to Preservation and Placement By Archives of Ontario and Real Property Registration Branch, Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations" (June 1997) are available by writing: Richard Ramsey, Archives of Ontario, 77 Grenville Street, Unit 300, M5S 1B3, or by telephoning (416) 327-1539.