

OXFORD COUNTY ARCHIVES

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT 2025

Prepared by:

Liz Dommasch
Archivist / Coordinator
of Legislative Information

Natysha Rieger
Archival Technician /
Legislative Information

MARCH 2026

MANDATE

The Oxford County Archives acquires, preserves, and makes accessible inactive public records created by, for, and about Oxford County. This includes administrative records, legal records, fiscal records, and historical records of Oxford County (1850 to the present) and its processor, the District of Brock (1839-1849).



Mission

The Oxford County Archives endeavours to increase public awareness of the rich cultural heritage of Oxford County through the preservation of its archival records, providing public access to these records, and the implementation of a comprehensive outreach program.

Regulatory Framework

- Section 254 (1) Municipal Act, 2011 requires the municipality to “retain and preserve the records of the municipality and its local boards in a secure and accessible manner”.
- County Resolution dated 27 October 1999, creating the Oxford County Archives.
- County corporate policies, including the Archives Management Policy (revised 2022).
- The Canadian Copyright Act
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- Canadian Rules for Archival Description, collections management standards, reference practices, and community outreach principles.



1850-2025

OXFORD COUNTY 175TH
LIBRARY 60TH
ARCHIVES 25TH

2025 was an extremely busy year for Oxford County Archives as we celebrated the County's 175th anniversary since incorporation, its 50th anniversary since restructuring, the 60th anniversary of the County's Library system, as well as the 25th anniversary of the Archives since its inception. To commemorate these milestones, Oxford County Archives undertook a number of events, exhibits, videos, and a new publication promoting the County's rich history over the last 175 + years.

Over the year, Archives staff continued to concentrate on completing reference services for internal and external patrons, arranged and described countless archival transfers and donations, further expanded our online content, and participated in a variety of outreach initiatives related to such events as Black History Month and honouring the life of Percy Onabigon. In doing so, we continued to strive to provide exceptional services and programs while maintaining a strong presence in the community.

At the same time, staff also oversaw the day-to-day management of the County's records management program and was responsible for access and privacy administration across all County departments. This included completing all legislated Freedom of Information requests, the management of privacy breaches, and responding to and coordinating accessibility regulatory matters. This past year was exceptionally busy supporting the Clerk's office operationally by coordinating priorities related to with the renovations/flooding at the County Administration, which saw numerous departments tackling records retention and cleanup, as well as providing support for the County's cyber event.

OXFORD COUNTY ARCHIVES 2025



MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR OF LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION/ARCHIVIST CONTINUES

Within the Province, it is a bit of anomaly to have the Municipal Archivist undertake such additional roles and responsibilities and provide significant corporate operations support. As you will see over the next few pages, this past year was, once again, no exception to the quality and level of work we were able to accomplish to ensure that Oxford County's past was not only preserved, but celebrated, while also ensuring compliance with all applicable privacy, access-to-information, and records management legislation. Unfortunately, with only a staff complement of two, there are ongoing concerns about how this arrangement will impact not only the archives programs and services but the county's records management program and privacy requirements over time. The Clerk's office continues to share and shuffle responsibilities to help ease some of the workload and will allow for the Archives to focus more on archives programs and services.

As we look towards the rest of 2026, the Archives is excited to work towards a strategic long-term vision for how the Archives can manage its space requirements, through our planned archives collection and space needs study. In doing so, we are striving to enhance our services and space needs while supporting the long-term sustainability of the Archives.

Ultimately, I wish to thank County Council and staff as well as our numerous students, volunteers, donors, and community partners that have helped shape the Archives into what it is today. Without their continuous support, we would be unable to accomplish all that we do.

COORDINATOR OF LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION/ARCHIVIST'S RESPONSIBILITIES

ARCHIVIST

- Establish and administer policies and procedures for the County Archives Management program and manage the day-to-day operations of the Oxford County Archives;
- Foster and maintain relations with Area Municipalities related to the transfer, arrangement, storage, and retrieval of their corporate archival records, as well as township records prior to restructuring in 1975:
 - Blandford-Blenheim
 - East Zorra-Tavistock
 - Ingersoll
 - South-West Oxford
 - Zorra Township
- Identify, collect, and preserve records of archival value to the County and the community as a whole, and to make such archival records available to County officials and staff, as well as the general public;
- Classify, index, catalogue, and preserve all items deposited in the archives following archival standards:
- Oversee the management of electronic archives, including the digitization of records for conservation reasons and for public and stakeholder access purposes.
- Providing in-person and remote reference services to internal and external patrons.
- Stimulate public interest in the history of Oxford County by the dissemination of information through exhibitions, displays, publications, databases, Oxford County website, prevalent County social medial platforms, and public programming and outreach initiatives;
- Foster and build relationships with local heritage organizations and archives across the province.
- Ensure equity, diversity, and inclusivity in the collection of County, Area Municipalities, and community stakeholders' archival records and promote transparency in the access and use of those records to ensure that the entire history of the County is represented and interpreted appropriately.

COORDINATOR OF LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION/ARCHIVIST'S RESPONSIBILITIES

COORDINATOR OF LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

- Provide expertise, guidance, and coordination for department activities related to the development, implementation, maintenance, and administration, in collaboration with the County's Information Technology division, of the County's Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS), Information Governance (Records and Information Management), and Access and Privacy programs.
- Acts as the central point of contact for access to public records requests for both Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) legislation. This includes receiving and administering all requests, performing privacy audits, and assisting in investigating, documenting and reporting privacy related incidents and breaches, where required, and responsible for yearly statistical reporting to Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC).
- Maintains and administers the corporate records management, access and privacy policy and procedures.
- Responsible for coordinating response to privacy incidents or data breaches involving personal or sensitive information and leads and facilitates investigations to determine the scope, cause, and impact of breaches and data incidents and makes containment recommendations to prevent further unauthorized access or disclosure.
- Provides training to County employees on privacy practices and obligations based on legislative requirements and best practices as well as records management and EDRMS.
- Support the organization's programs and services by promoting the County's Strategic Plan, best practices, internal policies, and applicable legislation, to meet service excellence standards and uphold Oxford's vision, mission and values.



- Archives Management Policy
- 6.18 Records Management Policy
- 8.06 Electronic, E-mail and Data Storage and Security Policy
- 8.09 Access and Privacy Policy
- 8.11 Video Surveillance Policy
- 8.14 PHIPA Privacy Policy
- 8.15 Recording and Monitoring Devices in Long-Term Care
- 8.16 Artificial Intelligence Policy
- Privacy Breach Protocol
- FOI Procedures Manual

CORPORATE PROCEDURES/POLICIES

JANUARY



Archives staff started the year off by creating an anniversary display in the lobby at OCAB highlighting the County's history, as well as presenting a report to Council outlining the numerous anniversary projects planned through 2025.

Staff also welcomed a new co-op placement student from Confederation College who assisted with archival backlog and digitization and received a large transfer of records for East Zorra-Tavistock.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY



This is the third year in a row that Archives staff were invited to take part as an exhibitor at Museum London's Black History Month Opening Celebration. Joining staff from Norwich Museum and local historian, Heather Rennalls, our exhibit highlighted the life stories and history of historically significant Black individual, communities, and buildings in Oxford County.

In addition, staff collaborated with Woodstock Museum and Woodstock BIA on the Black History Month Shop Hop highlighting Woodstock's black history and celebrating African, Black, and Caribbean owned businesses throughout the month.

A poster for the Black History Month Shop Hop. The title "BLACK HISTORY MONTH" is in large, bold, colorful letters (red, yellow, green). Below it, "SHOP HOP" is written in white. A red box contains the text: "Celebrate local African, Black and Carribean-owned businesses and learn about Black Woodstonians of the past!". Below that, a white box lists businesses: "• Hanak Foods • Highlander Studios • • Lionessence Beauty Supply • • Urban Queens Beauty n AfroMart •". A yellow box says "Enter for a chance to win a \$100 gift card!". A green box says "Visit woodstockmuseum.ca for details". At the bottom are logos for Woodstock Museum, Oxford County (with the tagline "Growing stronger together"), and a "LOVE DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK ON" logo.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH
SHOP HOP

Celebrate local African, Black and Carribean-owned businesses and learn about Black Woodstonians of the past!

- Hanak Foods • Highlander Studios •
- Lionessence Beauty Supply •
- Urban Queens Beauty n AfroMart •

Enter for a chance to win a \$100 gift card!

Visit woodstockmuseum.ca for details

WOODSTOCK MUSEUM
OXFORD COUNTY
Growing stronger together
LOVE DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK ON



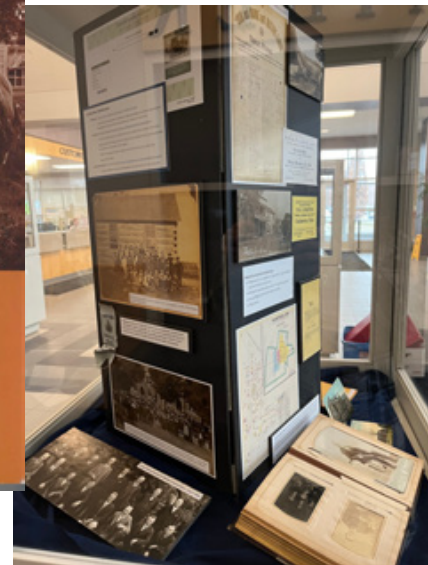
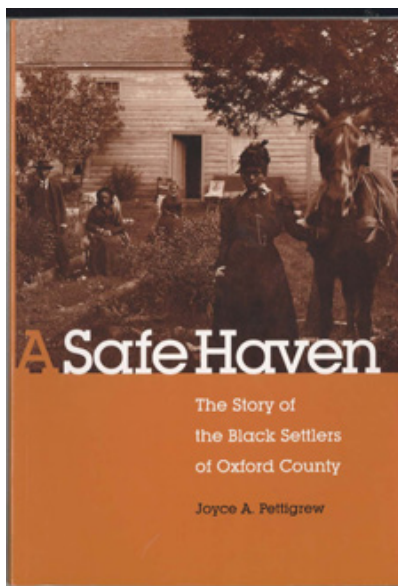
Staff also took part in each of the Black History Month flag raisings in Woodstock, Ingersoll, Norwich, and Tillsonburg by providing display materials and handouts related to Black History in the County, and once again, took part in Tillsonburg's Black History Month Celebration as an exhibitor.

MARCH

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Staff continued to promote Oxford County's Black History at a drop in reception at Woodingford Lodge in honour of resident and local historian Joyce Pettigrew who wrote "A safe haven: the story of the Black settlers of Oxford County".

In celebration of the Archives 25th anniversary, staff prepared a display in the lobby of the County administration building highlighting our collections, programs, and services.



APRIL

As part of Archives Awareness Week, the Archives once again took part in the Archives of Ontario's Social Media campaign "Archives A to Z" highlighting records from our large fonds collections (339 fonds, also known as collections, to date).

Staff also accepted the archival records of the Rotary Club of Woodstock-Oxford ensuring the continued preservation of their corporate records and set up a display at the Ontario Legislative Assembly on the County's anniversaries as part of their Community Exhibits Program.

County Archivist, Liz Dommasch, assisted with research, provided archival images, reviewed scripts, and took part in Bell Fibre TV series "Condemned Woodstock", Season 1.



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

MAY

Archives staff assisted Woodingford Lodge with their County anniversary celebrations by providing display panels, exhibit materials, and a slide show to be used at each location.

County Archivist, Liz Dommasch, gave a presentation at Ingersoll Public Library on the upcoming publication “Growing Stronger Together: A Celebration of Oxford County’s Past” as part of the Oxford County Library History Speakers Series.

Oxford County Library
connect. discover. share. become.
In partnership with Oxford County Archives

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER
A Celebration of Oxford County's Past

Local History Speaker Series

- 📅 Saturday, May 31, 2025
- 🕒 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
- 📍 Ingersoll Town Centre (Council Chambers on 2nd floor)

This is a drop-in event; no registration is required.
However, registration (with an email address) is necessary for the online format.
Please visit link for further details.

YOUNG MAN READ

THE DIARY OF **ELLA** YOUMANS

DIGITAL EXHIBITION

ELLAYOUMANS.CA

Oxford County | WOODSTOCK ART GALLERY

In collaboration with Woodstock Art Gallery, the Archives launched a new digital exhibit on Ella Youmans, later the mother of famed Woodstock artist Florence Carlyle. Entitled “The Diary of Ella Youmans”, the exhibit brings her 1860 diary to life of her time spent teaching in Wilson, North Carolina before the outbreak of the American Civil War.

JUNE

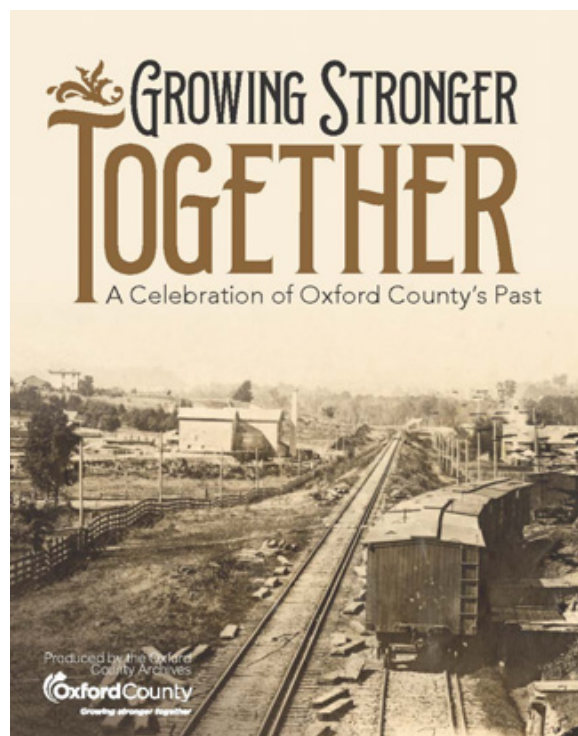
2025 HIGHLIGHTS

As part of our community donations, the Archives received the personal and family papers of Dr. Robert Montague, as well as the records of the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery Board.

JULY

July was an extremely busy month for the Archives as we had our historic display banners on display at the Drumbo & Heritage Society Canada Day Celebrations and took part in the Emancipation Day Celebrations at Fanshawe Pioneer Village as part of our ongoing outreach programming of Oxford's Black History.

Our Exhibit "Celebration Over 175 Years of Oxford County" opened at the Woodstock Art Gallery exploring the history of some of the County's iconic administrative buildings. The exhibit which ran until March 2026, included a variety of records such as architectural drawings, photographs and artwork maintained by the Archives.



We also saw the release of our new publication "Growing Stronger Together: A Celebration of Oxford County's Past", with an official book launch held at the archives, a corresponding exhibit at OCAB, and a radio interview with CBC Afternoon Drive Home.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

AUGUST

Archives staff provided a display and bookmarks for the Harrington Homecoming Centennial Celebrations.

We also received a transfer of records from the Town of Ingersoll and County Archivist, Liz Dommasch, was interviewed by local author, Elaine Cougler, regarding the Archives anniversary book as part of her blog.

SEPTEMBER



September saw the soft-launch of the Archives' exhibit "The long road back: Bringing Percy home" highlighting the story of Percy Onabigon as well as the broader history of residential schools, the importance of truth-telling in the face of denialism, and the central role of "home" in the ongoing journey of reconciliation. In doing so, our Archivist also joined the Warden on CBC Superior Morning to discuss the importance of the display.

Archives staff welcomed a new co-op student from St. Marys High School who created several new searchable databases for the Archives website.



OCTOBER

Archives staff saw another busy month in October with an archival transfer of Ingersoll town records from Archives of Ontario, a presentation on the anniversary book to Learning Unlimited, and hosting the Provincial Municipal Archives Interest Group (MAIG) Open House.



Archivist, Liz Dommasch, was asked to take part in the filming of “Condemned Woodstock”, Season 2, which she also assisted in providing research and images.

Staff also assisted Zero Waste Oxford’s Great Pumpkin Rescue by providing historic pumpkin images and recipes for social media and received a transfer of early township minutes and by-laws from South-West Oxford.



The Closing Ceremony was held for the Percy Exhibit, with members of his family, First Nations Community and other dignitaries in attendance.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER

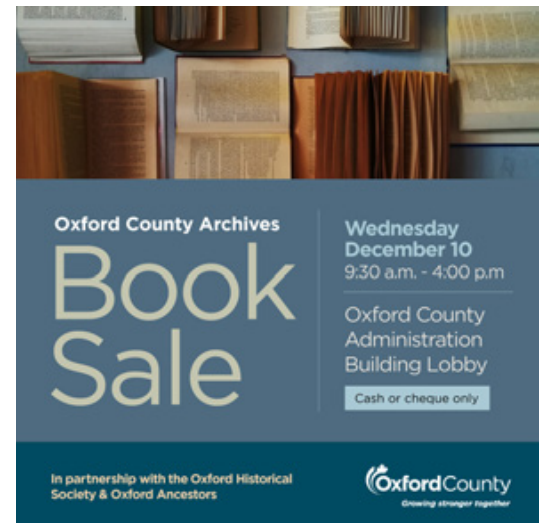
Archivist, Liz Dommasch, gave a presentation to Oxford Ancestors, sharing stories from “Growing Stronger Together”



Archives staff assisted Oxford County Library celebrate their 60th anniversary throughout the year and shared images for the new Anniversary transit van wrap that was unveiled, during the month of November, highlighting the history of the library’s mobile history.

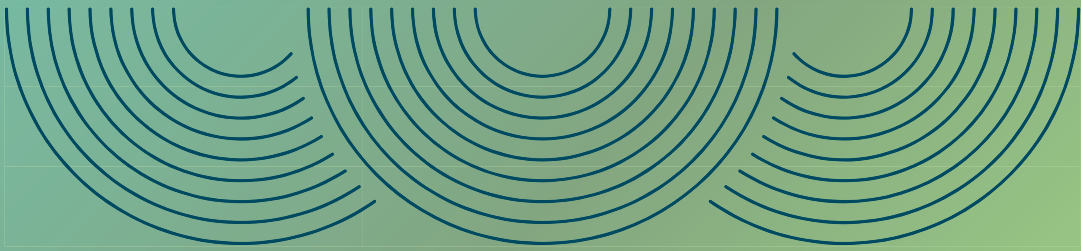
DECEMBER

Oxford Ancestors, Oxford Historical Society, and the Archives teamed up to host a holiday book sale inside the main lobby of the Oxford County Administration Building. The sale featured a wide selection of books on local history and genealogy and included the Archives new publication “Growing Stronger Together: A Celebration of Oxford County’s Past”.



Finally, although a bit delayed, the Archives completed filming for their last anniversary project: “Tracing Your Roots” that was released in February 2026. Archives staff unveiled interesting family histories located in the Archives to Warden Ryan, Councillor Palmer, and Councillor Petrie in this short video series.

2025 STATISTICS



Acquisitions and Transfers

29 total records and collection donations/transfers, consisting of approximately **60** sq. feet of records, from the following notable sources (including but not limited to):

East Zorra-Tavistock, South-West Oxford, and Ingersoll

Archives of Ontario (Town of Ingersoll records)

Ingersoll Rural Cemetery

Beachville District Museum

Dr. Robert Montague

Woodstock Public Library

Rotary Club of Woodstock-Oxford

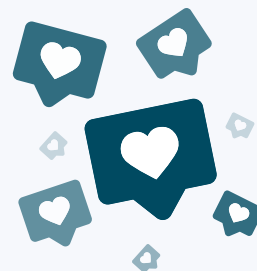
Collection Databases

32 fonds and collection descriptions submitted to ARCHEION for a total of **228** authority records available as of the beginning of 2026

803 postcards and photographs for a total of **1,061** to “Archived Oxford” via Vita Collections



1,381 Instagram followers (@Oxfordcountyarchives)



REFERENCE INQUIRIES AND VISITS

MFIPPA Requests

32

3rd Party MFIPPA Requests

5

PHIPA Requests

101

363.00

Internal County/Area Municipal Reference

144.00

Phone Requests

Email Requests 1419.00

14.00

Social Media/ Online Forms Requests

284.00

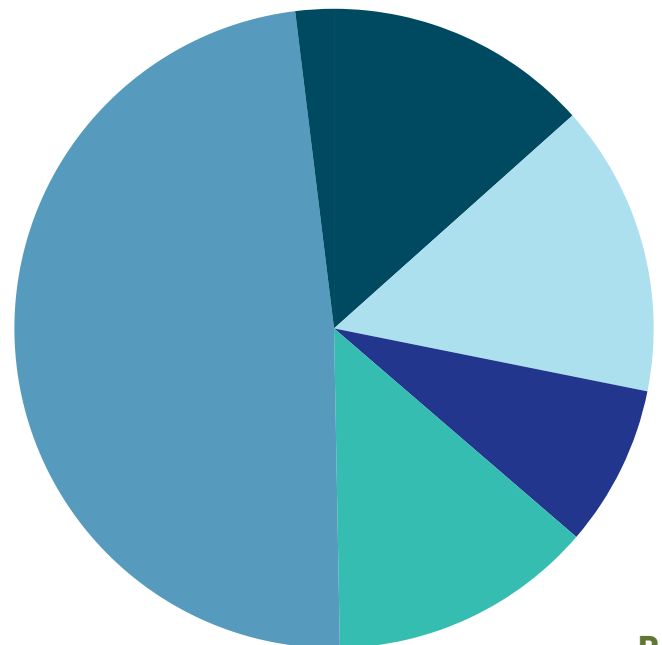
In-person Research appointment

227.00

Visits to the Archives (Tours, Students, Donation, Conversation Work, etc.)

RECORDS MANAGEMENT REQUESTS (638), INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- Laserfiche requests: **69**
- Records retention and destruction requests: **76**
- Shredding requests: **42**
- FOI General questions: **69**
- Records General questions: **249**



OUTREACH AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

OVER 29 TOTAL OUTREACH INITIATIVES, PUBLIC PROGRAMS, AND EVENTS INCLUDING:

- Archives tours
- Black History Month events, including Woodstock Black History Month Shop Hop and flag raisings
- Displays, Exhibits, and Social Media Campaign
- Speaker Series in partnership with Oxford County Library
- Speaking engagements
- New publication and book launch, “Growing Stronger Together: A Celebration of Oxford County’s Past”
- Promotional bookmarks
- “Condemned Woodstock”, Season 1 and Season 2
- Digitization projects
- “Tracing Your Roots”, video series
- Media interviews



“Celebration Over 175 Years of Oxford County”
Display at the Woodstock Art Gallery

STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Number of volunteers: 6

Number of Co-op/placement students: 2

Confederation College, in conjunction
with Mohawk College

St. Marys High School, Woodstock



St. Mary's
Catholic High School

MESSAGES OF THANKS AND SUPPORT

TOMMASINA CONTE, MANAGER, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT, OXFORD COUNTY

The Communications team works with Archives often, particularly during the 2025 Anniversary Year. This reinforced to us how dedicated the team is in telling our stories and drawing lines from the past to the present, helping to educate, engage, provoke thought, and instill community pride. Archives updates are a popular—and positive!—content feature on social media, showing public interest in learning about Oxford’s journey. We also recognize the vital role this team plays in managing the County’s many legal, legislative and procedural requirements.

JULIE MIDDLETON, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH-WEST OXFORD

The Township of South-West Oxford greatly values the services provided by Oxford County Archives. As a small municipality with limited space and climate-controlled facilities, having access to a professional archival service is essential to meeting our legislative record retention obligations — particularly for permanent historical records.

Their team provides an invaluable service in preserving, organizing, and making accessible historical municipal records, including those that pre-date amalgamation. We have greatly appreciated their support when responding to resident inquiries and researching historical matters, and their capacity to properly archive and retrieve records ensures our community’s history is preserved for future generations.

MESSAGES OF THANKS AND SUPPORT CONTINUE

DEBBIE JOHNSTON, CHAIRPERSON AND REPRESENTATIVE FOR ZORRA PLOT HOLDERS, INGERSOLL RURAL CEMETERY BOARD

“ ● ● —————
The dissolution of the Board of Directors of the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery was being planned during the last two years. On December 31, 2025, the Board, which was established in 1955, ceased to exist.

During our monthly board meetings, we discussed the preservation of these historical documents. We wondered about giving them to the Ingersoll Cheese Museum, but their space is very limited. The storage rooms at the municipal offices were not satisfactory either. As chairperson, I reached out to Liz at the Oxford County Archives for her assistance with these documents. [Staff] were very pleased to take the ledgers, minute books, and burial records and digitize them for us. They were very helpful and explained the process to me when I delivered several old books and 9 bankers boxes full of paper.

We, the members of the dissolved board, are very glad to know that this history has now been expertly preserved.” ● ● ”

“ ● ● ————— DAVE PARKER, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, LEARNING UNLIMITED AT SOUTH GATE CENTRE

In mid-October, Oxford County Archivist Liz Dommasch made a presentation to 'Learning Unlimited at the South Gate Centre', a group of 250+ seniors who love to learn. Liz talked to us about 'fascinating stories from a new book related to people, events, and communities within Oxford County over the last 150+ years.' The subject was fascinating and Liz's knowledge of the subject was vast. Liz is a very down to earth, engaging and humorous speaker and she kept our group spellbound with her stories. We are hoping that, at some time in the future, we can have Liz come to speak to us again. ● ● ”

MESSAGES OF THANKS AND SUPPORT CONTINUE

SAM COGHLAN, SECRETARY, ZORRA HERITAGE COMMITTEE/MEMBER OF THE HARRINGTON & AREA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

“ I spend a considerable amount of time researching the local history of Harrington, Zorra and Oxford as part of projects I am involved in or just out of personal interest and, at times, in response to requests from friends, neighbours and colleagues. The Oxford County Archives is a valuable resource. In fact, because I was peripherally involved at the genesis of the Archives, I am very aware of how the Archives has grown and continues to increase its relevance as an invaluable resource for local history. I am impressed by the commitment of Archives staff to continuous improvement. They have contributed meaningfully to several local history events I have helped with, sometimes at embarrassingly (for me) short notice. I am impressed with how willing they are to collaborate with other memory organizations in the area.

But the icing on the cake (remembering the anniversary celebration this year) is the very high level of service that staff provide. Accurate, friendly, prompt and always ready to refer to alternative resources if the Archives doesn't have what I'm looking for. The Archives is bursting at the seams in its hideaway location yet the increasing number of us who know of it, consider the Archives one of the County's most responsible and responsive services.

AHARON JINJIHASHVILI, CONDEMNED WOODSTOCK PRODUCTIONS

“ Working with the Oxford County Archives was an exceptional experience. The team provided not just access to materials but genuine insight and care that went far beyond our expectations. Liz, in particular, became an invaluable asset to our production of *Condemned: Woodstock*. Her expertise as a historian helped us navigate complex facts that we didn't even know we were missing.

It is rare to find a team that combines such professional knowledge with such visible passion for what they do. They don't just manage history, they care for it.

We felt we were in the best possible hands and are incredibly grateful for the 'above and beyond' support we received.

MESSAGES OF THANKS AND SUPPORT CONTINUE

KIM LOMBARD, WRITER, CONDEMNED WOODSTOCK

“ ● ●

“Condemned Woodstock is a reenactment program about a number of fascinating true crimes that occurred in Woodstock and surrounding area from the mid 1800's to about 2017.

There was a lot of research involved in writing the show. Thankfully I was able to confer with historian / archivist Liz Dommasch on a number of occasions. She was incredibly helpful to me.

Whenever I needed clarification Liz was there. She was so important to the accuracy of each story. In point of fact, her contributions were so significant she appeared in a number of episodes.

I can't thank Liz enough for her knowledge, guidance and input. She made the series much stronger. Really hoping to work with her again in the near future”.

” ● ●

LANDYN ST. JEAN, ST. MARYS HIGH SCHOOL CO-OP STUDENT

“ ● ●

My time at the Oxford County Archives was a very pleasant and enlightening experience. My tasks were to digitize Woodstock's business directories and compile the county's by-laws dating back to the 1850s. I learned a lot at my placement about how the county handles records, about historic by-laws and businesses, and in general a lot of interesting information about the county itself. I worked alongside very social and supportive people who couldn't have been better at helping me make sure I understood everything and completed my projects to the best of my abilities. I am very grateful to have had this amazing opportunity to work with such incredible people and in such a wonderful and interesting environment.

” ● ●

MESSAGES OF THANKS AND SUPPORT CONTINUE

PAULINE GRAF, RESEARCHER, OTTAWA

“ • •

“Numerous times I have reached out for assistance remotely (as I live in Ottawa) and you have come through. I found the spreadsheet you created summarizing interments in the Woodstock Gaol to be particularly memorable. Finding names and dates allowed me to find the related newspaper stories - something I could never have done without this information. The Archives team even did several searches for me on the post-1925 data that was not publicly available. I was so grateful for this.

In 2025, my husband and I made a trip to Woodstock and had an in-person appointment with Liz to follow up on the murder trial of one of my ancestors. I was thrilled with what Liz was able to show me: maps of the town in the years just before the event (showing me what the town would have been like then), photos of the jail before it was refurbished, and some amazing documents related to the investigation and the trial itself.

I would also like to thank the team for their many Instagram posts over the last few years. Before he passed, my father and I reviewed many of the photos posted on the Archives account. At age 93, his memory of Woodstock in the 1930s to 1950s was remarkable. He recognized several of the 1940s photos and was able to place them exactly.

I am so appreciative of the work the Archives team is doing. Keep it up!”

• • ”

MESSAGES OF THANKS AND SUPPORT CONTINUE

**DANIELLE HOEVENAARS,
HEAD OF COLLECTIONS, WOODSTOCK ART GALLERY**

“ • •

The Woodstock Art Gallery (WAG) had the opportunity to collaborate with the Oxford County Archives on two special projects in 2025.

May marked the launch of “The Diary of Ella Youmans,” a virtual exhibition that was the result of over a year of work, research, and creation. This project began when a donation of diaries was found to be the property of Emily (Ella) Youmans, the mother of famous Woodstock artist Florence Carlyle (1864-1923). After the Oxford County Archives digitized and transcribed the diaries, WAG’s Digital Projects Coordinator Stephan Cam brought the project to life online with an animated flipbook exploring selected excerpts.

WAG also worked with Oxford County Archives to produce an exhibition that celebrated the 175th anniversary of Oxford County. County Archivist Liz Dommasch collaborated with WAG Head of Collections Danielle Hoevenaars to design and mount an engaging exhibition of historical documents, architectural drawings, photographs, and objects which highlight Oxford County’s history through its county buildings.

Each of these projects presented an interesting connection between art and history, and an exciting starting point for collaboration between the Gallery and Archives. It was a pleasure to work with the Oxford County Archives to provide opportunities for residents to discover our region’s history in new ways. Thank you to the Liz and her team for their interest in collaboration, for engaging and enjoyable meetings along the way, and for working hard to bring each of these projects to life. We look forward to continued partnerships.

• • ”

MESSAGES OF THANKS AND SUPPORT CONTINUE

**CLAIRE ONABIGON, EDUCATION DIRECTOR, LONG LAKE
#58 EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

“ ● ●

While bringing Percy home began as a promise to my mother, it became something much larger for our family. As we gathered to make decisions together, we came to better understand what our aunties and uncles endured—living without answers about what had happened to their brother. All of Percy’s brothers and sisters attended residential school; therefore, we are all products of the Indian Residential School system.

The exhibit was thoughtfully curated and professionally presented. It was clear that it was created with great care and respect; a true reflection of Liz Dommasch’s commitment to the project and to Oxford County. I found it to be very informative, as it addressed many aspects of the residential school system in Canada, while also shedding light on the lived realities of Aboriginal children and families. I hope the people of Oxford County took the opportunity to visit the exhibit and learn about the Indian Residential School system in Canada.

● ● ”

MESSAGES OF THANKS AND SUPPORT CONTINUE

KERRIE GILL HEAD OF EDUCATION WOODSTOCK MUSEUM NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

“The Woodstock Museum staff and the Oxford County Archives team have been working in partnership in various ways for many years. A recent collaborative success has been supporting the local Black History Month committee. A small, dedicated group of citizens, initiated by Heather Rennalls have been working tirelessly to promote Oxford’s Black History. Their aim is to have the community, outside the world of Museums, Libraries and Archives, recognize the historic contributions made by the Black community locally. Liz had already worked with multiple historical resources to gather biographical and historic location information and photos for a Black History display that could easily travel. To highlight this wonderful display, we provided support to coordinate Pan-African Flag raisings in Woodstock as well as across Oxford in four communities for the first time for Black History Month in February of 2025. We had a handful of the display panels enlarged to showcase in Woodstock African, Black, and Caribbean owned businesses for the month to also tie in the Woodstock BIA. Not only did we have more people learning about local Black History across the County thanks to the Oxford Archives display, and more people into the Woodstock Museum to view our related artifacts, but the best bonus was that participating business owners received more foot traffic and sales thanks to this history-in-the-community collaboration. Overall, a great win and Liz and Natysha have been so easy to work with and generous.”



Oxford County Archives

82 Light Street, Woodstock, Ontario
P.O. Box 1614, Woodstock, Ontario N4S 7Y3

Archivist: (519) 539-9800 ext. 3071
Archives Technician: (519) 539-9800 ext. 3070
archives@oxfordcounty.ca
<https://archives.oxfordcounty.ca>