

History comes back to Brooklin in form of archives

History



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In March, the Whitby Archives received a large transfer of records from the Archives of Ontario.

When the courier van arrived, I thought I was prepared for the amount of material but it seemed like the movers had a never-ending supply of boxes and packages. I was expecting 104 boxes and 185 ledgers and volumes but when it's all piled up in the storage room, 29 linear metres of archival material becomes very overwhelming.

Of the material I received, seven metres make up the Township of Whitby fonds, consisting of the official historical records for the Township between 1837 and 1968. There are bylaws, council minutes, committee minutes, collector's and assessment rolls, voters lists, school files, and even a register for births, deaths and marriages for 1895 to 1908.

The records were transferred to the AO in 1985 by the Town of Whitby. This was a very common practice for municipalities that did not have the resources to preserve and provide access to historical documents. Pickering, Oshawa, Scugog, Port Hope and other surrounding municipalities all transferred their material to the AO in the 1970s and 1980s. Currently, Whitby is the only community to have its records repatriated in Durham Region.

This material will open new doors when researching the history of Brooklin and the former Township. The collector's and assessment rolls will be especially helpful to anyone interested in the history of their house or property as they contain information on building size and features, property size, owners' names, renters' names, and more. Council minutes can shed light on past decisions and bylaws help to determine the val-



SHAWNNA PETERSEN / METROLAND

WHITBY-- The Whitby Archives displayed the first council minute book for the Town and Township (1855 and 1842, respectively) and the bylaws in the Central Branch of the Whitby Public Library on April 7.

ues affecting the community since the Township was incorporated in 1852.

First on my list is digging out the minutes for the Board of Health and the communicable diseases register because they should provide some interesting material for next month's column. The minutes of the Brooklin Park and Arena Board might fill in some of the gaps I came across when researching the history of the Brook-

lin Spring Fair and the Memorial Arena.

This repatriation of records is a momentous occasion for the archives and the community. No longer will researchers and citizens be required to visit the AO, located in Toronto, to find out about their own community. These records also increase the amount of Brooklin and Township material in the Whitby Archives collections.

It will be a little while yet before the records are processed and available for researchers because I have to make sense of the AO's filing system. In the meantime, send me an e-mail if you're looking for something specific and I'll do my best to find it for you.

Sarah Ferencz is the archivist at the Whitby Public Library. Contact her at archives@whitbylibrary.on.ca

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