

Committee to Establish a Middlesex County Archives

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MEMBERS

Ekfrid Community
Museum

Glencoe & District
Historical Society

Komoka Railway Museum

London & Middlesex
County Branch, Ontario
Genealogical Society

London & Middlesex
Historical Society

Lucan Area Heritage
Society

Middlesex Centre
Archives

Middlesex Centre
Historical Society

Mossley Post Heritage
& Citizenship Society

Strathroy Historical
Society

Wardsville Historical
Museum

Westminster Township
Historical Society

Representatives from all
Middlesex Communities

Total Archives and A Middlesex County Archives

The Canadian Government created the Public Archives of Canada in 1872. In Europe, archives retained government records only with personal papers going to libraries as manuscripts. The Dominion Archivist of Canada determined that all personal records of historical and cultural value should be collected as well as government records, with both being stored in the Public Archives. This **Total Archives** approach was a departure from other countries and is known as a Canadian contribution to archival theory and practice. Over time, multi-media records were added to collections in addition to traditional paper records. Many other national, regional archival programmes, as well as those in municipalities or universities, have adapted the total archives concept. The area municipal and university archives adopt this strategy as does the Provincial Archives of Ontario.

The benefit of this approach is that archives hold records for researchers about family history such as searching houses, land or any other item of interest. The government records also provide some of the information required in these searches. Having municipal records available – if they are open to the public – are advantageous to researchers and also to Municipal Clerks or staff, who sometimes are contacted by genealogists with family history requests. Municipal staff benefit by being able to transfer those questions to properly-trained staff who have access to, not only government records, but also personal papers and other resources. This removes the need for municipal staff to answer questions in an already busy day and provides researchers with a one-stop location. Genealogists account for over 40% of archives' users who travel to areas specifically to visit Archives. While there, their tourist dollars support restaurants, hotels, local merchants and other local amenities.

An Archives is a program, not a project. Continued funding and municipal support are required to ensure the success of the Middlesex County Archives.