

## The Archives of the Christian Brothers in Toronto

by Brother Prudent MACDONALD

From the time of their arrival in Toronto, 1851, the Christian Brothers have had the story of their work recorded with varying degrees of completeness. It appears that either the pioneers were too much concerned with day-to-day problems, or their accounts disappeared; 1851 to 1879 is a blank. From this point there is considerable coverage, and Brother Tobias Josephus (1849-1899), the first historian, was able to reach back and give at least a sketch of the early days.

The archives of the Brothers have never been organized by a professional archivist, but the present writer has made a start on arranging in order the considerable quantity of material that has been accumulated so as to make it available to those interested in the period. It will be my endeavour to indicate the general nature of our archives, keeping in mind the probable interests of members of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association.

The archives are located at the Provincial's residence, 5 Avonwick Gate, Don Mills, Ontario M3A 2M5. The archivist is the present writer, and the various letters and documents relate to the work of the English-speaking Brothers in Canada and in the missionary schools located in Nigeria (3) and in St. Vincent, West Indies. All these Brothers belong to the District of Toronto, first established as a separate entity in 1888, annexed to the District of Montreal in 1896, and reestablished as a separate district in 1914.

At this point I should give credit to three members of the community who were most active in the work of promoting interest in historical studies. One was Brother Alfred Dooner (1874-1949), who was a founding member of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association and President-General in 1944-45. Brother Memorian Sheehy (1885-1967) was a professional historian and a linguist of considerable range; for several years he held the post of Secretary of the Association. Some time later the same position was held by Brother Bonaventure Miner; who is now on the staff of the History Department of the University of Windsor; he was also editor of the Study Sessions of the Association.

To begin, I divide the texts (such as community histories, personnel books, bound copies of school papers, etc.) and papers into *historical* and *current*. The last division, current, consists mainly of the annual historical supplements of the communities, and such material as recent newspaper clippings, year books, graduation lists, etc. And under the heading

of historical I place all the rest, making the year 1920 the cutoff point. The broad assumption is that the historical seeker will be most interested in what happened between 1851 and 1920.

What follows will be a description meant to indicate the nature of the chief texts covering the limited period mentioned above:

A-9 *History of Hamilton, 1892-1896.*

184 pages, white paper, 352 x 222 mm. Bound in boards, covered with black linen. Spine bound by white adhesive tape. Pages used, 1-9.

A-10 *History of the District of Toronto, 1880-1954.*

432 pages, white paper, 320 x 198 mm., with red double marginal lines on the left. Bound in boards, covered in brown leather. Spine has 4 reinforcing ridges. Pages used, 3-197.

A-11 *History of Kingston, 1853-1893.*

188 pages, white paper, 295 x 193 mm. Bound in boards, covered by green cloth. Pages used, 2-88.

A-13 *History of Ottawa, St. Patrick's Lyceum, 1877-1891.*

196 pages, white paper, 351 x 223 mm. Bound in boards. Spine reinforced by white adhesive tape. Pages used, 1-13.

A-15 *Historical Journal, Brothers of the Christian Schools, St. Catherines, Ont., 1878-1896.*

250 pages, blue paper, 330 x 225 mm. Bound in boards, covered by brown linen; spine and corners in darker brown. Pages used: 30, detached, for History of Halifax, 1865-75; 59 for History of St. Catherines. Some pages of the latter have newspaper clippings.

A-18 *Personnel Register, Kingston, 1859-1893.*

160 pages, white paper, 345 x 220 mm. Bound in boards, covered by dark green leather. Pages used, 1-32.

A-22 *Personnel Register, Province of Ontario (latter part, De La Salle Community, Toronto), 1888-1952.*

200 pages, white paper, 345 x 215 mm. Bound in boards, covered in green cloth, spine and corners of darker green (recently rebound). Pages used, 1-84.

A-24 *Personnel Register, St. Ann's, Montreal (latter part, Cardinal Newman High School), 1859-1954.*

100 pages, white paper, 228 x 178 mm Bound in boards, covered with dark green paper. Spine reinforced by white adhesive tape. Pages used, 1-83.

A-26 *History of St. Patrick's School, Montreal, 1904-1940 and September, 1950 to February, 1954.*

280 pages, white paper, 228 x 178 mm Bound in boards, covered by black linen. Spine bound in brown linen. Pages used, 1-73.

A-27 *Scholasticate Personnel Register, Toronto, 1892-1894.*

200 pages, white paper, 345 x 225 mm. Bound in boards, covered in black linen. Pages used, 2-12.

A-30 *Twenty Years After (Archbishop's Academy, Montreal) (1873-1920)* by Brother Mactalius.

74 pages, heavy white paper, 260 x 173 mm Bound in heavy brown paper. Pages used, 1-74.

Recently arrived and not yet given a number:

*History of the Novitiate of Toronto, 1890-1896, 1908-1964.*

184 pages, white paper, 347 x 250 mm Bound in boards, covered with black linen. Spine in brown linen. Pages used, 1-132.

*Postulants' Register, 1913-1965.*

500 pages, white paper, 330 x 250 mm. Bound in boards, covered by black linen. Spine and corners of brown leather. Pages used, 1-58.

*Minute Book, Taking of the Habit, 1914-1956.*

300 pages, white paper, 315 x 223 mm. Bound in boards, covered by black linen. Spine and corners of brown leather. Pages used, 1-56.

*Register of Changes and Employments, 1908-1968.*

588 pages, white paper, 435 x 288 mm. Bound in boards, covered by black cloth. Spine and corners of brown leather. Pages used, 1-224.

*Register of Vows, District of Toronto, 1915-1937.*

240 pages, white paper with gold edging, 277 x 198 mm. Bound in heavy paper covered by black imitation leather. Pages used, 1-240.

*History of the House, St. Patrick's School, Quebec, 1884-1962.*

120 pages, white paper, 340 x 200 mm Bounds in boards, covered by dark green linen (rebound, 1971, courtesy of Old Boys Association).

*Personnel Register "de Cap aux Diamants" (St. Patrick's, Quebec), 1851-1967.*

120 pages, white paper, 340 x 212 mm Bound in boards, covered by dark green linen. Pages used, 1-115.