

Elgin County House of Industry/ Elgin Manor fonds

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MUSEUM / ARCHIVE	Elgin County Archives
PART OF	Elgin County House of Industry/ Elgin Manor fonds
CREATOR	Elgin County House of Industry Elgin Manor
DESCRIPTION LEVEL	Fonds
ACCESSION NUMBER	2001-04 2003-27
STORAGE ROOM	Archives Storage Rm. 107 Archives Storage Rm. 110
STORAGE LOCATION	R4 S1 Sh2 R4 S1 Sh3 B1 W6 B2
GMD	textual records graphic material moving images cartographic material
DATE RANGE	1876-2004
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	1.2 m of textual records 174 photographs : b&w and col. 33 photographs : col. slides 2 maps 1 videocassette

In accordance with the provisions of By-Law Number 269 enacted June 18, 1875, Elgin County Council authorized the purchase for \$3,000 of fifty acres of land in Lot 39 North on Talbot Road East, two miles west of St. Thomas in the Township of Southwold from John Cole for the purpose of establishing an "industrial farm" and "House of Industry and Refuge." By-Law Number 276, enacted December 30, 1875, appointed the following officers to administer the House of Industry and Refuge: William McKay, County Clerk, Inspector; Michael Hunsberger and his wife Sarah Ann Hunsberger, respectively Keeper and Matron; Leonard Luton, Physician. By-Law Number 276 also established rules for inmates, including provisions forbidding passage "beyond the limits of the Industrial Farm unless by the permission of the Keeper" and authorizing "punishment", including "solitary confinement" for rules violations. Attendance by inmates at Sunday religious services was compulsory: those absent without permission were subject to "prompt and severe punishment."

The House of Industry and Refuge for the County of Elgin opened in February, 1876, making Elgin one of the first counties in Ontario to establish such a facility. The original building was enlarged in 1891 with the construction of a third wing, which was used to house the female inmates. Initially the facility housed 32 inmates, increasing to 50 by 1903 when an additional 50 acres of adjoining land were purchased at a cost of \$4,250. Residence in the County of Elgin was usually required for admission, but "transients requiring immediate attention" were occasionally committed as well. Admissions were subject to the approval of the Inspector and a committee of three appointed annually by County Council. Inmates were committed for various reasons, including "idiocy", destitution, sickness, old age, physical disabilities such as paralysis and blindness, "intemperance" (drunkenness), homelessness (vagrancy), and pregnancy out of wedlock. Orphans and children whose parents were in jail or had abandoned them were also admitted. Inmates participated in maintaining the building, working the land, and making most of their own clothing and bedding. Expenses were partially offset by the sale of farm produce. In 1903, the farm produced, among other crops, 24 bushels of wheat, 50 tons of hay, 510 bushels of oats, 266 bushels of barley, 70 barrels of apples, 40 hogs, 22 turkeys, 100 chickens and 1,249 pounds of butter.

In 1946 the facility was renamed the Elgin County Home. By 1954 the facility was a provincially certified home for the aged known as Elgin Manor. In 1962, it became apparent that the 86-year-old building was obsolete. In January 1963, Elgin County Council approved plans to build a new 90-bed facility on the same site, at an estimated cost of \$650,000. Following the demolition of the original building, construction began on July 17th, 1963, and residents were transferred to the new 90-bed capacity Elgin Manor on May 26, 1964. Elgin Manor was enlarged by the construction of a 60-bed addition, which opened in October 1969. The 1964 building was replaced by a new facility, also on the same site, in August 2003.

Most of the fonds was transferred directly from Elgin Manor.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Fonds consists of records relating to the operation of the Elgin County House of Industry and Elgin Manor Home for the Aged.

Elgin County House of Industry records include visitors' registers, 1876-1964; registers of inmates, 1876-1947; time books, 1894-1945; physician's books, 1890-1953; photographs of the building; and miscellaneous documents including a commitment certificate.

Elgin Manor records include visitors' registers, 1964-1989; daily journals, 1984; records of staff and committee meetings, 1980-1989; 25th Anniversary material, 1989; photographs and slides of the building and staff; and copies of the facility's newsletter.

Fonds is organized into the following series:

1. Elgin County House of Industry
2. Elgin Manor

NAME ACCESS

Elgin County House of Industry
Elgin Manor

SUBJECT ACCESS

Homes for the Aged

ACCESS RESTRICTION

Access to records identifying patients/inmates is restricted subject to provisions of the Ontario Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act.