

Inventory Description

RG 7 CANADA: Governor General's Office

G 20 CANADA, Province of: Civil Secretary's office, correspondence received

Originals, 1841-1867. 9.75 m (volumes 1-117, 380-384, 386-387, 410-416, and 470-473). Finding Aid 985.

The primary function of the Civil Secretary to the Governor was to support the civil administration of the province through the management of correspondence. This included receipt and acknowledgement of petitions, memorials and applications for office; preparation and recording of replies; transmission of messages and documents to and from the Legislature; referral of petitions to the appropriate public departments; and preparation of those licences to which the governor's Privy Seal was affixed. At the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841, the division of responsibilities between the Civil Secretary and the Provincial Secretary was refined; further clarification occurred with the evolution of responsible government, shifting authority to the Provincial Secretary. Records relating to the superintendence of Indian Affairs -- a responsibility assigned at various times to the Civil or the Military Secretary -- were maintained separately (see RG 10). Despatches exchanged by the Governor and the Colonial Office were maintained as distinct series (see RG 7, G 1); despatches exchanged with fellow governors and other senior officials might be formed into distinct series (see for example RG 7, G 6) or included with the letters handled by the Civil Secretary on behalf of the governor (see RG 4, A 1 and RG 5, A 1 for the predecessors to RG 7, G 20). The various and complex responsibilities of the Civil Secretary and the evolution of his functions are reflected in the records of which he was custodian.

Microfilming of the numbered correspondence files was completed in 1983, but filming of the registers and indexes (volumes 380-384 and 386-387) was not completed until 1991.

RESEARCHERS MUST USE THE MICROFILM. The complete series has been withdrawn from circulation as a protective conservation measure.

Correspondence received and letterbooks created in the Civil Secretary's office came to the Archives in 1904 and 1906 with records transferred from the Governor General's Office, initially designated the G Series, and the Secretary of State's department, initially designed the S Series. In 1950, these records were reorganized as RGs 4, 5 and 7.

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RG 7, series G 20 contains the Civil Secretary's numbered correspondence files for 1841-1867. Petitions, memoranda, reports, letters and other documents, with their associated enclosures, were assigned a file number on receipt by the Civil Secretary. This numbered correspondence includes despatches from governors of other provinces, the British Minister at Washington and the widest range of officials as well as letters from individuals. A single numbering sequence was used throughout the period 1841 to 1867 (see volumes 1-117). For a brief period, 1844-1846 and 1854, a second numbering sequence was in use (see files 1-1041 in volumes 410-416), apparently for matters relating to "pecuniary assistance", patronage and pensions.

A new file sequence was begun in July 1867. The post-Confederation files in series G 20 (from volume 118) are in the custody of Government Archives Division and are described elsewhere.

Replies to the correspondence received were recorded in entrybooks. Despatches from the governor to colleagues may be found in RG 7, G 17 A; letters addressed by the Civil Secretary to individuals on behalf of the governor should be found in RG 7, G 17 C. Drafts of replies may be found endorsed on the incoming items.

The arrangement of the correspondence files in this series is chronological. Each item was assigned a file number in the order of its receipt. [Occasional duplication of numbers has been noted; the secretarial staff customarily added "½" to the file numbers when such errors were observed.] Gaps in the file sequence have not been specifically so identified. Such gaps were created when numbered files were referred to other offices and retained there (as for Indian affairs -- see RG 10; or the Provincial Secretaries of Canada East and Canada West -- see RG 4, C 1 and RG 5, C 1). The registers and indexes described below identify the destination and thus permit tracing of these files in other series. A set of registers, shelved in RG 7 G 20 under the designation volumes 471-473, were created in the Civil Secretary's office as a record of correspondence received there but referred to other departments without having been entered in the numbered system. These registers may interest only students of administrative history.

The file number was endorsed on each incoming item (but not its enclosures), together with an identification of the author and subject, notes on action taken, and the date of a reply. This endorsement usually duplicates the information recorded in the registers. Documents referred from other government offices may bear file numbers from other sequences, such as the Provincial Secretary's Office, Canada East and Canada West.

Finding aids provide several levels of access to the numbered correspondence files. The *Shelf List* which follows this inventory entry provides the reel numbers for the microfilm on which each volume will be found, plus the range of file numbers contained with each volume. The series of **Registers** and **Indexes** compiled by the Civil Secretary to provide both control over and access to the despatches and general correspondence has been shelved in RG 7, G 20 as volumes 380-384 and 386-387. A companion series of registers in RG 7, G 1 are generally to be preferred as a means of access to the governor's despatches, but for the period 1852-1854, the despatches are identified only in volume 383 of RG 7, G 20.

Prior to 1985, the Registers and Indexes were shelved as *Finding Aid 985*. Notes on their use as a means of access preface the microfilm of them. Volumes 380-381, 383-384 and 386-387 provide access to volumes 1-117; volume 382 serves volumes 410-416.

<i>Volume</i>		<i>files</i>	<i>index</i>
380	register of correspondence received, 1841-1852 with some "historical" files of 1839-1841	1-5851½	internal
381	index to the correspondence received, 1841-1848 [partially duplicating the index in volume 380]	1-4989	*
383	register of correspondence received, 1853-1858 and register of despatches received, 1851-1858	5852-7745½ *	internal 1851-1853 only
384	register of correspondence received, 1859-1863 and register of despatches received, 1859-1863	7746-11018 *	internal ---
386	register of correspondence received, 1864-1866	11019-12686	internal
387	register of correspondence received, 1866-1867	12687-12940	internal
382	register for the second series of correspondence received, 1844-1846, 1854	1-1041	internal

Style for citations should follow the principles set forth in *Archival Citations*. Requests for photocopies should follow the recommended style. Conventional practice is to identify the whole file (incoming letter, enclosures and attachments, drafts of replies) by its year and file number, and to specify parts of the file through appropriate description of the items. To distinguish the second series of file numbers, it is essential that the year and the volume number be included in the citation.

examples:

RG 7, G 20, vol. 29, file 3347 of 1844;

RG 7, G 20, vol. 411, file 378 of 1844

RG 7, G 20, vol. 53, appendix 27 to file 5732 of 1852.

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February 1991

How to locate correspondence files using the contemporary Registers and Indexes in RG 7, G 20 (volumes 380-384 and 386-387)

Note that the incoming numbered correspondence files in RG 7, G 20 are complemented by the texts of outgoing correspondence recorded in entrybooks forming RG 7, series G 17 A to G 17 C. A table of contents or index (of recipients) within each entrybook provides access. Record-keeping customs of the period ensured that dates of replies are noted on incoming items and vice versa. The term *correspondence* is used here in a generic sense for all written communications: addresses, despatches and letters, memoranda, petitions, and reports. The term *despatch* is used in reference to formal communications between the highest level of government officials.

The contemporary Registers and Indexes in RG 7, G 20 serve to identify the correspondence received. They must be used in conjunction with the Shelf List in order to locate specific files. The Shelf List identifies the microfilm reels on which the correspondence files will appear. The microfilm may be consulted in the Reading Rooms or through the loan arrangement.

Despatches from the Colonial Office (located in RG 7, G 1) were for the period 1851-1864 included in the registration of correspondence received, as noted in the table below. The registers in RG 7, G 1 are the preferred guide to those despatches, except for the period July 1852-September 1854, to which only volume 383 of RG 7, G 20 provides access.

Despatches from the British Minister at Washington and from fellow governors were numbered and filed with other correspondence received. The clarification of responsibilities between the Civil Secretary and the Provincial Secretary and the proliferation of government departments over time resulted in much correspondence being entered in a registry system, then re-directed. Consequently, not all items identified within the Civil Secretary's registers will have been preserved with the numbered files in the series RG 7, G 20. The register column titled "How disposed of" or "Remarks" provides clues as to the redirection: "to B[oard] of Works" [see RG 11], "with No 124 Corr. Military Sec[retary]" [see RG 7, G 19]. Indian affairs correspondence may be traced in RG 10 and the Provincial Secretary's files in RG 4, C 1 or RG 5, C 1.

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Specific data for each numbered file are entered in the Register in columns under certain headings: file number, date [of writing and of receipt], author [by name and/or title], subject and disposition or "remarks". Column headings vary somewhat; style of entries varies considerably over time. Abbreviations were commonly used to identify both activities (eg. "ackd" = acknowledged) and government agencies (eg. PSO/CE for Provincial Secretary of Canada East).

- A To search by **author** for despatches and letters:
Consult the Index portion of the Registers for the appropriate years and note the *file number*. Individuals may be indexed by name or by title; corporate bodies may be indexed by names of their representatives.
Consult the Register entry under that file number to determine the nature and disposition of the file. Consult the Shelf List to determine the volume in which that correspondence file should be located and the microfilm reel on which it should appear.
- B To search by **subject** for files relating to a specific case or a general theme:
- 1 Consult the Index portion of the Register for the appropriate year(s) under the names of and titles of persons known to be involved in a specific case and note the *file number*. Consult the Register entry under that file number to determine the nature and disposition of the file. Consult the Shelf List to determine the volume in which that file should be located and the microfilm reel on which it should appear.
 - 2 Use secondary sources to learn the titles of officials and names of individuals who might have written about a subject, then consult the Index portion of the Registers under their names and titles, and note the *file numbers*. Certain entries in volume 380, the Register for 1841-1852, grouped roughly by subject, provide a degree of access by broad themes. Consult the Register entries under those file numbers to determine their relevance and the disposition of the files. Consult the Shelf List for series G 20 to determine the volume in which that correspondence file should be located and the microfilm reel on which it should appear.
- * Alternatively, consult the "Subject" column in the appropriate Registers, watching for promising key words in the entries there.
- C To search by **date**, whether for a specific item or for activities of a particular period:
Consult the Register, keeping in mind that its sequence is set by date of receipt.
- * Whether investigating a broad subject or a specific case, it is best to begin the actual examination of the documents with those of most recent date. Correspondence might have been brought forward and filed with the last item on a case. The custom of mentioning dates of previous correspondence also facilitates tracing related documents, linking incoming and outgoing correspondence. The numbered files in G 20 should never be consulted in isolation from the entrybooks in G 17 C.

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February 1991