

# **INVENTORY DESCRIPTION**

**Upper Canada. Lieutenant Governor.**

**Despatches from the Colonial Office : 1784-1842.**

RG 7 CANADA: Governor General's Office

G 1 QUEBEC, LOWER CANADA, UPPER CANADA and CANADA:  
Despatches from the Colonial Office

Originals, 1786-1867. 11.6 m Finding Aids 178, 690, 985;  
*Public Archives of Canada Reports*, 1930-1937

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, despatches formed the official channel of communication between the governors in British North America and the Colonial Office in London. By custom, two copies of each despatch were signed and sent out; the text was also recorded in entrybooks. Filing practices varied over time, such that circular and secret or confidential despatches may be filed with or apart from the primary series. Personal correspondence supplemented the formal channel, but was not recorded officially.

Microfilming of the despatches was completed in 1952, but filming of the registers and indexes (volumes 402-408) was not completed until 1991.

**RESEARCHERS MUST USE THE MICROFILM.** The complete series has been withdrawn from circulation as a protective conservation measure.

This series contains the surviving despatches received from the Colonial Office by the Governors and Administrators of Quebec, Lower Canada, Upper Canada and the united Province of Canada, 1786-1867, relating to all aspects of colonial administration. While this is the principal series of despatches, it is not complete. Certain despatches were filed separately (see RG 7, series G 2 and G 3) or referred to the Executive Council (see RG 1, E 4). The enclosures received with the despatches have not in all cases been preserved with them. The series includes circular and military despatches, as well as duplicates and contemporary copies.

The post-Confederation despatches in this series (volumes 167-276) are in the custody of Government Archives Division and are described elsewhere.

Despatches received before 1786 were not preserved as an official series. From the earliest days of colonial administration, texts of outgoing despatches (but not of their enclosures) were recorded in entrybooks (see MG 11, Colonial Office 43 for the primary series), with separate volumes for secret and circular despatches. Until 1855, it was also the custom to keep entrybooks of despatches received in the colony (see RG 7, G 5). For the replies sent to London, see MG 11, Colonial Office 42 or the drafts and entrybooks retained by the governor in RG 7, series G 9, G 10 and G 12.

..... page 2

The arrangement of the despatches is chronological within three sub-series: Quebec and Lower Canada, 1786-1841 (volumes 1-51); Upper Canada, 1796-1841 (volumes 53-95) and Canada, 1841-1867 (volumes 96-166). This order was set when the despatches were first received at the Archives in 1904 and organized as the G Series. After these despatches were bound up, several volumes of supplementary despatches could not be incorporated into the series but were shelved separately and became RG 7, G 2.

Several finding aids provide varying levels of access to the despatches. The *Shelf List* which follows this inventory entry provides the microfilm reel numbers and a summary description at the volume title level. David W. Parker's *Guide to the Materials for United States History in Canadian Archives* (Washington, 1913) and his *Guide to the Documents in the Manuscript Room at the Public Archives of Canada* (Ottawa, 1914) provide a volume-by-volume content analysis according to the arrangement of the original G Series. *Finding Aid 690* provides a correlation between G Series references from Parker's two Guides and the modern volume numbers. *Finding Aid 178* provides a chronological listing of the despatches for Quebec and Lower Canada 1784-1841 and Upper Canada 1792-1833, as found in the original G Series as well as in the C and Q Series or among the private papers of governors (Haldimand, Simcoe and Durham).

A calendar of the despatches for Quebec and Lower Canada (volumes 1-51) was published in the *Reports* of the Public Archives of Canada [as it was then known] for 1930-1932 and 1938. A calendar for the Upper Canada despatches (volumes 53-96 of this series and the supplementary despatches now in series G 2) was published in the *Reports* for 1933-1937. These calendars and their accompanying indexes are available in both English and French. Both quality and quantity of index entries are such that researchers should not rely on them as a means of access. The location of the calendar and indexes in the *Reports* is as follows:

Quebec and Lower Canada		
1-21	1786-1830	PACR 1930
21-40	1830-1838	PACR 1931
41-51	1838-1841	PACR 1932 (with index for volumes 1-51)
Supplementary,	1784-1841	PACR 1938 (with index for this material)
Upper Canada		
53-59	1796-1820	PACR 1933
60-75	1821-1835	PACR 1934
76-86	1836-1838	PACR 1935
87-95	1838-1841	PACR 1937 (with an index for volumes 53-95)
Supplementary,	1794-1841	PACR 1937 (indexed with volumes 1-95)

Access to the despatches received in 1841-1867 is provided by several contemporaneous listings. Various schedules or lists were compiled by the governor's secretaries before and after 1841; most are now found in RG 7, series G 5. Those for 1841-1855 are found within the entrybooks of despatches received in volumes 31-38 of that series. The secretaries also compiled Registers and Indexes to serve as a means of access for both despatches received and despatches sent. Until 1985, the original registers and indexes numbered as volumes 405-408 of RG 7, G 1 were designated as *Finding Aid 985*. The finding aid number is now used only for the microfilm copy. Notes on their use as a means of access to the despatches preface the microfilm of these volumes. The coverage and structure of these registers is as follows:

volume			
402	incoming	November 1786-August 1839	indexed
405 part 1	incoming	September 1839-December 1850	indexed
	outgoing	October 1839-May 1849	indexed
405 part 2	incoming	January 1851-June 1852	indexed
	outgoing	January 1851-July 1852	---
		(for 1852-1854, see RG 7, G 20, volume 383)	
406 part 1	incoming	September 1854-October 1857	indexed
	outgoing	December 1854-October 1857	indexed
406 part 2	incoming	October 1857-October 1861	indexed
	outgoing	November 1857-October 1861	---
407 part 2	incoming	October 1861-September 1865	indexed
	outgoing	October 1861-September 1865	---
408	incoming	September 1865-July 1867	indexed

Style for citations should follow the principles set forth in *Archival Citations*. If the date of a despatch is cited without mention of the page numbers, it may be necessary to include the despatch number to avoid confusion with other despatches of the same date. Requests for photocopies should follow the recommended style. Note that the calendar in the *PAC Reports* identifies only the initial page of a despatch or enclosure; the words "to end of document" should be included when requesting copies based on references taken from the calendars.

examples:

1. RG 7, G 1, vol. 39, page 3.
  2. RG 7, G 1, vol. 39, pages 5-6.
- or
1. RG 7, G 1, vol. 39, Glenelg to Durham, 2 June 1838 (# 54).
  2. RG 7, G 1, vol. 39, Glenelg to Durham, 2 June 1838 (# 55).

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State & Military Archives  
February 1991

**How to locate despatches using the contemporary Registers and Indexes in RG 7, G 1 (volumes 402 and 405-408) and related series**

Note that incoming despatches may be found in series G 1, G 2 or G 3; the texts of despatches received before 1855 may also be found in the entrybooks in series G 5. Despatches referred to the Executive Council should be found in RG 1, E 4. Despatches identified from the registers but not found in proper sequence within series G 1 may be traced in those locations. Texts of despatches were also recorded in the Colonial Office entrybooks (see MG 11, CO 43). Texts of outgoing despatches may be found as drafts in series G 9 and G 10 or in the letterbooks in G 12.

The contemporary Registers and Indexes in series G 1 serve to identify the despatches. They must be used in conjunction with the Shelf List in order to locate specific despatches. Each register within this series contains an index. In several cases, the register records both incoming and outgoing despatches, but the index serves only the incoming, as noted in the following table.

402	incoming	November 1786-August 1839	indexed
405 part 1	incoming	September 1839-December 1850	indexed
	outgoing	October 1839-May 1849	indexed
405 part 2	incoming	January 1851-June 1852	indexed
	outgoing	January 1851-July 1852 [for 1852-1854, see RG 7, G 20, volume 383]	---
406 part 1	incoming	September 1854-October 1857	indexed
	outgoing	December 1854-October 1857	indexed
406 part 2	incoming	October 1857-October 1861	indexed
	outgoing	November 1857-October 1861	---
407 part 2	incoming	October 1861-September 1865	indexed
	outgoing	October 1861-September 1865	---
408	incoming	September 1865-July 1867	indexed

The Shelf List identifies the microfilm reels on which the despatches appear. The microfilm is available on Self Service in the main Reading Room and through the inter-library loan arrangement.

**A** To search by *author* of despatches, the date and recipient should also be known.

To determine the period during which a particular Colonial Secretary held office, consult the list in Francis J. Audet's *Canadian Historical Dates*. Then consult the Shelf List for series G 1 under the appropriate time frame and province to determine the volumes in which despatches he wrote were preserved and the corresponding microfilm reels.

**B** To search by *recipient* of despatches, the province he governed and the approximate date should also be known.

To determine the term of office for a governor, consult the list which prefaces the inventory for RG 7 or the lists in Audet's *Canadian Historical Dates*. Then consult the Shelf List for series G 1 under the appropriate time frame and province to determine the volumes in which the despatches he received were preserved and the corresponding microfilm reels.

C To search by the *date* of a despatch, the recipient should also be known.

1 To search for a despatch of a specific (known) date:

Go directly to the Shelf List for series G 1 (or G 2 and G 3 if appropriate) to identify the volume in which it should be located and the microfilm reel on which that volume will appear. Remember that Upper Canada and Lower Canada form separate sub-series.

2 To search generally for despatches of a particular period:

For dates before 1855, consult the schedules and lists in series G 5 (volumes 31-38) to determine the specific dates of despatches and their subjects. For dates after 1855, use the registers in G 1, volumes 405 part 2-408 or series G 20, volumes 383-384 and 386-387. Use the "Date" column in the appropriate register to determine the specific date of a despatch and the "Subject" column to confirm its relevance. Then consult the Shelf List as noted above.

D To search for despatches relating to a *subject* -- a specific case or a general theme:

1 Use the table above to determine the relevant Register and Index. Consult the Index under appropriate terms for an abstract subject and the names of any specific individuals or institutions involved (such as the Chief Emigrant Agent for immigration or McGill College for education); note the numeric reference and/or date recorded there.

2 Consult the Register portion of the volume under that reference:

index entries in the style 16/74 or 158/23 identify the page and the despatch number; index entries in the style 9. 4 Dec. 61 or Circ. 11 Nov. 63 indicate the despatch number or type [circulars were not numbered] and date.

The description in the "Subject" column will clarify the relevance of the despatch. Note the information provided in the "Remarks" column to determine whether the despatch may have been referred to the Law Officers of the Crown or other officials (amongst whose records it must then be sought). Note the date of the despatch.

3 Consult the Shelf List to identify the volume in which the despatch should be located and the microfilm reel on which it should appear.

\*\* Whether investigating a broad subject or a specific case, it is best to begin actual examination of the documents with those of most recent date. Conventions in the composition of despatches ensures that each identifies any preceding item to which it replies; such references to dates not only provide a link between incoming and outgoing despatches, but also serve to overcome the deficiencies (omissions, errors and bizarre subject categories) of contemporary indexes.

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February 1991