

## Vaughan Township Police Department Fonds

**TITLE:** Vaughan Township Police Department fonds

**DATES:** 1937-1965

**EXTENT:** 40 cm of textual material

**BIO & ADMIN HIST:** When the first settlers began arriving in Vaughan during the late 1700's, a constabulary was already in place. As of 1785, justice in Upper Canada was administered by four Justices of the Peace, appointed to hear cases at the Court of the Quarter Session of the Queen's Peace.

Before the establishment of an official Vaughan Township police force and reflecting ever-changing local government administrative structures and boundaries, a number of constabulary jurisdictions were responsible for police in the area: Home District, United Counties of York, Peel and Ontario and the County of York Constabulary. Generally, one of three officers were tasked with policing Vaughan Township. In 1924, the Vaughan Township Municipal Police Department was established. This was in response to a decision brought down by the York County Council in the same year (?) to reduce the county Police Force and shift the onus for policing on to the county's constituent municipalities. Most municipalities responded favourable to this measure as it was considered prestigious and a mark of autonomy. Notwithstanding the Department's official inception, municipally-appointed officers had long since augmented the efforts of the higher jurisdiction. Although records for the period are highly ambiguous, there is evidence of constables being appointed as early as 1850 to maintain order at local elections. Moreover, during the early-20th century, many individuals performed policing duties on behalf of the community. The majority served on a part-time, on-call basis, with little or no remuneration, no uniforms, and, later no police vehicles.

In 1957, the administration of police and fire protection in Vaughan Township was combined, with single individual acting as both Fire Chief and Chief Constable. This arrangement soon proved impractical as it overburdened the incumbent and was thus abrogated in 1965, with separate administrations being re-instituted.

The size of the Vaughan Township Police Department was ever on the rise, a direct reflection of the increasing demands placed upon it. At the time of combined administration, 13 personnel served 14 800 residents. By 1970, twenty-nine officers provided police services to 15 878 locals.

The Vaughan Township Police Department was not only the largest in York County, but was also reputed to have been one of the County's most efficient and professional forces.

Notwithstanding the efficacy of Vaughan's police operation, many smaller departments in the County were characterized by an almost chronic lack of personnel and resources. This fact, coupled with the economy and efficiency of one central county-level administration entailed, prompted essentially universal advocacy of the concept of municipal police force amalgamation at the county level.

With the formation of the Region of York on January 1, 1971, an amalgamated police force became a reality and policing a regional responsibility. Members of the former municipal police departments were incorporated into the regional force.

**CUSTODIAL HIST:**

The records of the Vaughan Township Police Department were generated by and held in custody of the aforementioned agency between 1937 and 1965. They were subsequently maintained by the Town/City of Vaughan Clerk's Dept. until 1991, whereupon the fonds was transferred by the Records Management Section of said department to the City of Vaughan Archives.

**SCOPE & CONTENT:**

Fonds consists of the records of the Vaughan Township Police and reflect the organization, functions and principal activities of this agency. However, the fonds is fragmentary and as such may at best be considered a somewhat representative or, perhaps, more accurately, a random sample of the series that were originally generated by the agency in question. While the specific extent and composition of these series is not possible to determine, in light of the nature of the surviving records, it may be surmised with a relative degree of accuracy that the original series were more than five in number. Moreover, the ultimate size of the force, 29 officers by 1970, would have ensured a relatively large series.

Rather than attempt to reconstitute former series in this minute fonds, the latter has been treated as a single unified aggregate of records. Record types represented include correspondence, reports, returns of fines from the County Magistrate's Court, surveys, by-laws, personnel records, financial documents, legal and judicial records as well as technical documentation concerning communications, equipment, weapons and so forth.

**RESTRICTIONS:**

Access to certain portions of this record group is restricted under the FOI Act. If applicable, restrictions on specific records are noted in the description preceding the file list. In order to obtain access to restricted material, a research agreement must be entered by the researcher. Certain limitations to the latter apply.

**COPYRIGHT:**

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**RELATED RECORDS:**

Related material may be found in RG1, the records of the Vaughan Township Council and RG2, the records of the Vaughan Township Clerk-Treasurer. Records concerning policing in the Village of Woodbridge may be located in RG4, the records of the Village of Woodbridge.

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**

RG9

**REPOSITORY:**

City of Vaughan Archives