

Obituary



Donald McOuat, 1915-1984. Courtesy: Archives of Ontario , 5-B-957.

DONALD FRASER McOUAT, 1915-1984

Former Archivist of Ontario, Donald McOuat, died in Liverpool, Nova Scotia on 1 January 1984 after an illness of six months. Born in Ottawa in 1915, he received his B.A. at Bishop's University in 1939, joined the Army in that year and went overseas in the following year with the Royal Canadian Artillery. After serving in the 1st and 5th Canadian Divisions in the U.K., Sicily, Italy, Holland, and Germany, he was discharged in 1945 with the permanent rank of Captain.

Don then entered McGill University in Montreal where he received his M.A. in 1948 for a thesis on military policy in New France. A doctoral thesis undertaken in 1949 remained incomplete owing to what he once described as "the need to seek gainful employment." He joined the Archives of Ontario in 1950 as an archivist.

In 1957, Don was appointed Executive Secretary of the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario and, in the following year, Director of the Historical and Museums Branch. In the latter capacity, he oversaw the erection of several hundred historical plaques as well as the administration of grants and other forms of assistance to local museums throughout the province.

He was appointed Archivist of Ontario in 1963. The Archives developed significantly over the succeeding fifteen years. Most notable among his accomplishments, perhaps, was the establishment of a Records Management Branch within the Archives.

Don retired in 1978 to become busier than ever as Vice-Chairman of the Ontario Geographic Names Board, a member of the Board of the Ontario Historical Studies Series, and a Council member of the Champlain Society. He was awarded the Centennial Medal in 1967 and the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977.

Don's abiding love was the wilderness life. A keen canoeist and fisherman, he was also a connoisseur of good cigars and scotch whiskey. Though rather a shy man, he had a talent for making friends; they will miss him very much indeed.

Ken MacPherson
Archives of Ontario