



# The Law Society of Upper Canada and Ontario's Lawyers, 1797-1997

*Christopher Moore*

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At the end of the eighteenth century, when ten lawyers gathered in what is now Niagara-on-the-Lake to form the Law Society of Upper Canada, they were creating something new in the world: a professional organization with statutory authority to control its membership and govern its own affairs. Today's Law Society of Upper Canada, with more than 25,000 members, still wields these powers. Marking the bicentennial of the society's foundation, Christopher Moore's history begins by exploring the unprecedented step taken in 1797 and follows the evolution of lawyers' work and the idea of professional autonomy through two hundred years of growth and change.

*The Law Society of Upper Canada and Ontario's Lawyers* is a broad-ranging story of the growth and development of the Law Society and the legal profession, from the days when horseback barristers travelled the backwoods by horseback, through the reforms of the late nineteenth century to the period of reaction between the two world wars and the long struggle of women and minorities for access to and equity in the legal profession. Writing in a style that is scholarly as well as entertaining, Moore traces to the present a story rich in personalities, and shows how, after a period of tremendous growth and change, questions of governance, legal aid, and practice insurance triggered a series of crises that rocked the society to its foundations.

This is the first study to be based on full access to the society's two hundred years of historical records. Moore, who has organized his research into themes and periods to illuminate the story, also includes new material on the lives and careers of Ontario lawyers and on the place of the Law Society in professional and public life. Readable and extensively illustrated, *The Law Society of Upper Canada and Ontario's Lawyers* shows that such issues as professional autonomy and the internal organization, at the forefront of debate at the society's inception, continue to dominate discussions today.

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