

Archives of Ontario Pathfinder to: ESTATE FILES

Estate files contain wills probated with the Courts, or letters of administrations for estates without a will. They may also contain records related to the probate or administration. More information and research tips can be found in Research Guide no. 206, *How to Find a Will in Court Records*.

Note: If you do not find an estate file, the will may have been filed with the local Land Registry Office; see *Inventory 61* (Private Property Registrations) or contact a reference archivist for further details.

How to Find an Estate File

TIPS:

- If the will was probated before 1793, between 1793 and 1858, between 1859 and 1930, between 1931 and 1982, or 1983 or after, search a few years after the death.

Before 1793

RECORDS

We hold records for the following districts/counties:

- Hesse District:
 - See the Archives Descriptive Database description for series RG 22-6
- Lunenburg District:
 - See the Archives Descriptive Database description for series RG 22-7
- Lunenburg District:
 - See the Archives Descriptive Database description for series RG 22-7
- Essex County and Leeds and Grenville County:
 - Follow the path below

Follow the steps below to find an estate file

STEPS

1. **Go to the Archives Descriptive Database and enter the person's name in the keyword field (Note: there may be unrelated hits).**
2. Results:
 - a. **If name is there:**
 - i. Write down the name, location, file number (if any), microfilm reel number, and whether the file is from the Probate or Surrogate Court (the series title contains that information)
 - b. **If the name is not there:**
 - i. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* and follow the instructions on how to find and use the indexes (or registers) for the County. Write down the microfilm reel number for the index (or register) you need
 - ii. Retrieve the reel from the self-service cabinet, find the name and write down the estate file number and year.
 - iii. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* to find the number of the microfilm reel corresponding to the county, year and file number
3. **Retrieve the Self-service microfilm reel (note: files from the court of Probate and some Surrogate Courts are arranged alphabetically; files for other Surrogate Courts are arranged by file number)**

Between 1793 and 1858

Follow the steps below to find an estate file

STEPS

1. **Go to the Archives Descriptive Database and enter the person's name in the keyword field (Note: there may be unrelated hits).**
2. Results:

- a. **If name is there:**
 - i. Write down the name, location, file number (if any), microfilm reel number, and whether the file is from the Probate or Surrogate Court (the series title contains that information)
 - b. **If the name is not there:**
 - i. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* and follow the instructions on how to find and use the indexes (or registers) for the County. Write down the microfilm reel number for the index (or register) you need
 - ii. Retrieve the reel from the self-service cabinet, find the name and write down the estate file number and year.
 - iii. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* to find the number of the microfilm reel corresponding to the county, year and file number
3. **Retrieve the Self-service microfilm reel (note: files from the court of Probate and some Surrogate Courts are arranged alphabetically; files for other Surrogate Courts are arranged by file number)**

Between 1859 and 1930

Follow the steps below to find an estate file

STEPS

1. **If the county is York County (to 1862) and Norfolk County (to 1869):**
 - a. Go to the Archives Descriptive Database and enter the person's name in the keyword field (Note: there may be unrelated hits).
 - i. **If name is there:**
 1. Write down the name, location, file number (if any), microfilm reel number, and whether the file is from the Probate or Surrogate Court (the series title contains that information)
 - ii. **If the name is not there:**
 1. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* and follow the instructions on how to find and use the indexes (or registers) for the County. Write down the microfilm reel number for the index (or register) you need
 2. Retrieve the reel from the self-service cabinet, find the name and write down the estate file number and year.
 3. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* to find the number of the microfilm reel corresponding to the county, year and file number
 - b. Retrieve the Self-service microfilm reel (note: files from the court of Probate and some Surrogate Courts are arranged alphabetically; files for other Surrogate Courts are arranged by file number)
2. **If it is other counties and years:**
 - a. You can either:
 - i. Check Guide 206, *How to find a will in court records* for a list of counties we have printed indexes for. Then retrieve the printed index for that county from the Genealogy area, and write down the year and estate file number...OR
 - ii. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* to find the number of the microfilm reel corresponding to the county, year and file number
 - b. Retrieve the Self-service microfilm reel (note: files from the court of Probate and some Surrogate Courts are arranged alphabetically; files for other Surrogate Courts are arranged by file number)
3. **If you don't know the county:**
 - a. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* and follow the instructions on how to find and use the *Surrogate Clerk for Ontario applications for probate books and indexes*. If you find the name you are looking for, write down the county, year and

name, and follow the instruction above (for 1859-1930) or the other side of this pathfinder (after 1930).

Between 1931 and 1982

Follow the steps below to find an estate file

STEPS

1. **If you don't know the County:**
 - a. Follow the instructions for the 1859-1930 files in this pathfinder, then proceed to with Step 2 once you have the county and year.
2. **If you know the County, and:**
 - a. ***The will was probated between 1931 and 1970:***
 - i. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* and follow the instructions on how to find and use the indexes (or registers) for the County.
 - b. ***The will was probated between 1971 and 1982:***
 - i. Check the list of counties for which we have post-1967 indexes, in Guide no 206, *How to find a will in court records*. For the counties and years listed, follow the instructions for 1930-1970 *indexes*. When you have the estate file number and year, *contact the local courthouse to access the estate file itself*. For other counties and years, contact the local courthouse directly.
 - ii. Go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* and follow the instructions on how to find and use the indexes (or registers) for the County.
3. **Does the Archives have the index or register you are looking for?**
 - a. ***If we have the index or register you are looking for:***
 - i. Write down the microfilm number for the index or register you need, and retrieve the reel from the self-service cabinet, search the reel to find the name and write down the given estate file number and year.
 1. For York County *to 1967 only*, go to the *User's Guide to Surrogate Courts and Surrogate Clerk Microfilm Reels* to find the number of the microfilm reel corresponding to the county, year and file number
 - a. Retrieve the reel from the self-service cabinet. Estate files are arranged by file number.
 2. For Prince Edward County: Contact the Prince Edward County Historical Society, in Picton
 3. For other counties: Contact the Reference staff with the name, county, year and file number. These estate files are located off site; usual retrieval time is 1-2 working days (copying will take longer)
 - b. ***If we don't have the index or register you are looking for:***
 - i. Contact the local courthouse to obtain the file number and year, then:
 - ii. For other counties: Contact the Reference staff with the name, county, year and file number. These estate files are located off site; usual retrieval time is 1-2 working days (copying will take longer)

1983 or After

Follow the steps below to find an estate file

STEPS

1. Parry Sound (to 1986):
 - a. Follow the instructions for the 1930-1968 *indexes*. When you have the estate file number and year, *contact the local courthouse to access the estate file itself*.
2. For other counties:
 - a. Contact the local courthouse.