
The Records We Do and Don't Have

201 Research Guide

Most Recent Update:
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This research guide provides:

- an overview of our collections and how to get more information about them
- a list of records in the Archives of Ontario collection and related records that are accessible at other Ontario government offices.

The Archives of Ontario has four groups of records. They are:

- Ontario government records
- Private sector records (records of individuals, business and organisations)
- Photographs, documentary art, maps and plans, and architectural drawings
- Sound and moving images.

GETTING STARTED

For up-to-date information about our collections and services, [click here to access the Archives of Ontario's website](#). Our website has the following databases and resources:

In the "Access our Collection" section:

The Archives Descriptive Database (ADD) includes descriptions of Ontario Government Records and Private Sector Records. [Click here to access the Archives Descriptive Database](#).

BiBLION, the Library Catalogue, includes library materials. [Click here to access the BiBLION Library catalogue](#).

The Visual Database includes images of selected items from our collections (photographs, documentary art, maps and architectural records). [Click here to access the Visual Database](#).

The Government of Ontario Arts Collection Database includes images of works of art owned by the Government of Ontario, most of them on display in various government buildings. [Click here to access the Government of Ontario Art Collection Database](#).

The Research Guides and Tools page includes various resources to help you access the Archives' services and search our records. [click here to access the Research Guides and Tools page](#).

Table 1, at the end of this guide, has information on where to look for the following commonly requested records:

- Corporations Files
- Crown Land Records
- Divorce Files
- Estate Files, including Wills
- Land Registry Records
- Partnership / Sole Proprietorship Registrations
- Vital Statistics.

THE RECORDS

Ontario Government Records

The Archives' Ontario government records date from the 18th to the 21st century. Current and past Ontario governments and their predecessors created most of these records. These records provide:

- a description of the evolution of provincial administration
- a record of the interaction between the government and its citizens
- documentation on political and legal decisions
- key evidence of the rights and responsibilities of Ontarians.

You can view and use them in the Archives' Reading Room. Many records are on microfilm and you can ask your local library to arrange an interlibrary loan.

Private Sector Records

The Archives has the records of over 2600 private individuals, businesses, clubs and associations, and labour and political organizations.

You can view and use them in the Archives' Reading Room. Many records are on microfilm and you can ask your local library to arrange an interlibrary loan.

Special Collections

The Archives' special collections include photographs, documentary art, architectural drawings and maps. Both private individuals and the government of Ontario created and collected these documents. They date from the 16th to the 21st century.

You can view and use them in the Archives' Reading Room. [Click here to access some special collections that are accessible online using our Visual Database](#). Please see the "Getting Started" section, above.

Sound and Moving Images

The sound and moving images collection includes audio and video recordings and motion picture film material. Both private individuals and the government of Ontario created this material. The collection dates from the 1920s to the 21st century.

Archives of Ontario Library

The Archives of Ontario Library is a non-circulating research and reference collection of approximately 70,000 items, relating primarily to the history of Ontario.

You can view and use the library collection in the Archives' Reading Room.

Government of Ontario Arts Collection

The Archives of Ontario is responsible for the Government of Ontario Arts Collection. The Collection was established in 1855 as an educational resource. It now includes more than 2500 works of arts of all types, most of which are on display at the Legislative Building (Queen's Park, Toronto) and at government buildings across the province.

Making Contact

Ready and Willing

Although unable to do your research for you, our reference archivists are waiting to assist you. You may telephone or write to them by mail or email or — best of all — visit the Archives of Ontario.

Contact us

Telephone: 416-327-1600 Toll free (Ontario): 1-800-668-9933

Email: [Click here to email the Archives of Ontario](#)

Address: Archives of Ontario, 134 Ian Macdonald Blvd., Toronto, ON M7A 2C5

Website

For information about the Archives' holdings, as well as access to research guides and other customer service materials available through the Archives of Ontario. [Click here to visit our website.](#)

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This document may contain references to electronic links that can be activated only by using the PDF version found on the Archives of Ontario website.

This information is provided as a public service. Although we endeavour to ensure that the information is as current and accurate as possible, errors do occasionally occur.

Therefore, we cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information. Readers should where possible verify the information before acting on it.

Table 1 Locations of Commonly-Requested Records

Type of Record	Available at the Archives of Ontario	Available Only at Other Government Offices
<p>Vital Statistics</p>	<p>The Archives holds indexes and registrations of: Births, ca. 1830-1917 (predominantly 1869-1917, also, a small number of delayed registrations for pre-1869 births) Marriages, ca. 1801-1942 (predominantly 1869-1939) Deaths, 1869-1952</p>	<p>The Office of the Registrar General holds indexes and registrations of: Births, 1918-present Marriages, 1943-present Deaths, 1953-present</p> <p>For more information, including how to contact the Office of the Registrar General, click here to access our Vital Statistics Webpage (on our Website, this page is located under “Tracing Your Family History”).</p>
<p>Divorce Files</p>	<p>The Archives holds: Divorce Files for all of Ontario, 1930-1981, and most counties and districts, 1982-1986. In addition: microfilm copies of Decrees Absolute and Nisi from York County (including Toronto), 1959-1979.</p>	<p>The local Courthouses of the Superior Court of Justice hold: Divorce Files, 1987-present (1982-present for some counties and districts).</p> <p>The Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel holds: Resolutions or Acts of Parliament re: divorces granted by the federal parliament, 1867-1968</p> <p>For more information, including how to contact local Courthouses and the Office of the Law Clerk, click here to access Research Guide 210: Finding Divorce Files in Ontario and click here to access Research Guide 211: Finding York County Divorce Files.</p>

Type of Record	Available at the Archives of Ontario	Available Only at Other Government Offices
<p>Estate Files (including Wills)</p>	<p>The Archives holds: Estate Files for most of Ontario, ca.1793-1976 (except Prince Edward County for which we only have up to 1930, and some other counties).</p>	<p>The local Courthouses hold: Estate Files, 1977-present</p> <p>Note: The Prince Edward County Archives in Picton holds original estate files for Prince Edward County up to 1969.</p> <p>Click here to access Research Guide 206: How To Find A Will in Court Records for more information, including how to contact local Courthouses</p>
<p>Partnership/ Sole-Proprietorship Registrations</p>	<p>The Archives holds: Registrations for all of Ontario, 1855-1991 (predominantly 1870-1991), except for Thunder Bay District, pre1973</p> <p>For details, click here to search the Archives Descriptive Database for series RG 55-17 (for pre-1973 records) or RG 55-16 (for 1973-1991 records), or click here to access Research Guide 218: Partnership and Benevolent Society Register Records.</p>	<p>The Companies and Personal Property Security Branch, Ministry of Government Services (Service Ontario) holds: Registrations, 1992-present</p> <p>Contact: Companies and Personal Property Security Branch, Ministry of Government Services (Service Ontario) 393 University Ave., 2nd Floor, Suite 200 Toronto, ON, M5G 2M2 Phone: 416-314-8880</p> <p>The Thunder Bay Land Registry Office holds Registrations, pre-1973</p> <p>Contact: Thunder Bay Land Registry Office 189 Red River Road, Suite 201 Thunder Bay ON P7B 1A2 Tel: (807) 343-7436 Fax: (807) 343-7439</p>

Type of Record	Available at the Archives of Ontario	Available Only at Other Government Offices
Corporations Files	<p>The Archives holds: Corporations Files and Charter Books for companies which were defunct as of 1907. Corporation files of companies that went defunct between 1907 and 1978, with Corporations File Numbers TC1 to TC3155. TC3221, and TC21293 to TC 23885 <u>Part</u> of <u>some</u> corporation files for corporations that were created between 1907 and the early 1970's and were still active as of 1978. Charter Books, 1907-1971. (Note: Use the more complete corporation files from the Companies and Personal Property Security Branch, Ministry of Government Services, rather than the Charter Books).</p> <p>For details, click here to access Research Guide 217: Corporation Records of the Government of Ontario.</p>	<p>The Companies and Personal Property Security Branch, Ministry of Government Services (Service Ontario) holds: Corporations Files of companies existing in or created after 1978 (exception for parts of some files for companies created between 1907 and the early 1970's) Corporations Files of companies that went defunct between 1907 and 1978 with file number TC3156 to TC3220, TC3222 to TC21292, and above TC23885.</p> <p>Contact: Companies and Personal Property Security Branch, Ministry of Government Services (Service Ontario) 393 University Ave., 2nd Floor, Suite 200 Toronto, ON, M5G 2M2 Phone: 416-314-8880</p>
Bankruptcy files	<p>The Archives holds bankruptcy files for bankruptcies up to 1989, and some bankruptcies, 1989-1995. For more information, click here to access Research Guide 229, Finding Bankruptcy Records.</p>	<p>The courts hold records for some bankruptcies for 1990-1995, and all bankruptcies from 1996 to present. For information on how to access these records, click here to access the Website of the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcies.</p>
Crown Land Records	<p>The Archives holds extensive Crown land records, including those relating to the granting of Crown land to private citizens. Commonly requested records include:</p>	<p>The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources: issues copies of patents has a large quantity of Crown land survey diaries, field notes and reports, in addition to the ones at the Archives.</p>

Type of Record	Available at the Archives of Ontario	Available Only at Other Government Offices
	<p>Ontario Land Records Index, ca.1780-ca.1920 Land petitions Land patent indexes Patent plans, [178-]-1977 Township papers, ca.1783-ca.1870</p> <p>For more information on using these and other Crown land records for genealogical research, click here to access Research Guide 215: From Grant to Patent: A Guide to Early Land Settlement Records, ca.1790 to ca.1850.</p>	<p>For copies of patents, contact:</p> <p>Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry Regional Operations Division Integration Branch Program Services Section Lands Business Unit 5th Floor, South Tower 300 Water Street Peterborough, ON K9J 3C7 Phone: 1-888-551-5552 Fax: 705-755-2181 Click here to access the Website of the Land Business Unit Click here to e-mail the Land Business Unit</p> <p>For information on survey diaries, field notes and reports, contact:</p> <p>Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry Corporate Management and Information Division Mapping and Information Resources Branch Office of the Surveyor General Crown Land Surveys 2nd Floor, North Tower 300 Water Street Peterborough, ON K9J 3C7 Phone: 705-755-2100 Fax: 705-755-2149 Click here to e-mail Crown Land Surveys</p>

Type of Record	Available at the Archives of Ontario	Available Only at Other Government Offices
Land Registry Offices Records	<p>The records of Land Registry Offices (LROs) document transactions relating to privately owned land. The Archives holds the following LRO records:</p> <p>Original Records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -instruments and deeds up to 1867 -copybooks up to 1955 (many have been placed on long- term loan with local repositories) -some post-1867 instruments and deeds, where the copybooks are missing <p>Microfilm Copies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -copybooks, abstract indexes, and alphabetical indexes, ca.1795-ca.1960, predominantly to ca.1880 <p>Original records are closed for conservation reasons. Microfilm only can be used. For more information, click here to access Research Guide 231: Finding land registration records.</p>	<p>ONLand: Instruments and deeds or copybooks, and indexes, for all land registration transactions, are available at www.onland.ca.</p> <p>Note: The Archives and LROs have placed some original copybooks, abstract indexes, and other documents in local archives, museums, and other repositories.</p>