Starting in 1793, private land transactions in Ontario (land transactions between individuals, groups, or companies) were recorded through a land registration system. Sales contracts and other documents transferring or affecting ownership of land were deposited and registered through local Land Registry Offices (one for each county and northern District, sometimes two).

Until the early 1900’s, a large number of wills (more than half for some counties) were registered with the Land Registry Offices instead of being probated (homologated) in the Courts. Those wills were treated as land records and are covered in this Guide. The land registration system has now been replaced with a land title system, where title to the land is registered. Land title records are held by the Land Registry Offices; a list of these offices can be found at the end of this Guide.

For more information about the Land Registry system, consult *A Guide to Ontario Land Registry records* (Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, 1993). *Note:* Registration of private land transactions was not mandatory until 1846. As a result, many transactions were not registered, or were registered later.

**GETTING STARTED**

**What information you need, and how to obtain it:**

To find land registration records, you need to know the following:
- The county (or northern district) and township (or town) where the piece of land is located.
- The name of one (or both) parties to the transaction, and/or the lot and concession (or subdivision, if the piece of land was located in Toronto or another large town).
- When the transaction occurred (Note: some transactions were recorded only years, even decades after they have occurred).
You can find the county or district where a township is located by consulting a Gazetteer; copies can be found in the Archives of Ontario’s reading room and some public libraries.

If the township no longer exists, has changed name or is now part of a larger municipality, you can also consult Fraser Dunford, *Municipal records in Ontario: history and guide* (Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, 2005). This book is available at the Archives and a number of public libraries, and it provides information such as when a township existed and what county (or counties) or district(s) it has been part of.

You can use the following records to find a lot and concession (or a subdivision):
- The Ontario Land Records Index (if the person you are researching was the first owner): *for information on how to access and use this index, see Guide 205, How to use the Ontario Land Records Index*
- City and county directories: some directories are available at the Archives of Ontario; *for more information, see Guide 221, Directories, Telephone Books and Voters’ Lists*
- Municipal assessment rolls: the Archives holds assessment rolls for some municipalities; *for more information, see Guide 209, Finding Municipal Records*
- Fire insurance plans (for city properties): the Archives holds some plans; *for more information, click here to access the series description for C 234-1.*
- Subdivision plans, held by Land Registry Offices (for urban subdivisions)
- Maps and plans that include lots and concessions and names of owners

**THE RECORDS**

The main land records created or received by the Land Registry Offices include:

**Instruments and deeds** – these are the original documents filed by the parties. They include sales, bankruptcies, liens, wills, and other documents transferring or affecting ownership.

**Copybooks of instruments and deeds** – transcriptions made by Land Registry Office staff of instruments and deeds registered with them.

**General Registers** – transcriptions of wills filed at the Land Registry Offices, beginning in 1865; wills registered prior to 1865 would be found in the copybooks of instruments and deeds.

**Abstract Indexes** – indexes to the instruments and deeds for a given township or town, arranged by lot and concession (or subdivision) number.

**Alphabetical Indexes** – indexes to the instruments and deeds for a given township or town, arranged by name of the parties.

**Where to access the records**

At the Archives of Ontario: The Archives hold microfilm copies produced by FamilySearch of the following, mostly for southern and Central Ontario:
- copybooks of instruments and deeds (ca. 1795-1880’s)
- general registers (1865-1880’s)
- abstract and alphabetical indexes (beginning ca. 1795; some include entries up to the 1950’s)
- other records (vary depending on the county or district)

This microfilm, and a finding aid listing it, are located in the Archives of Ontario’s reading room. Clients can make their own copies from the reels. The Archives cannot research these records, make or certify copies, or provide access to them through inter-library loan. The Archives also holds originals of early instruments and deeds, copybooks and indexes. These records are closed for preservation.

**Local repositories:** Some local public libraries, historical societies and genealogical societies have acquired copies of microfilm produced by FamilySearch. Please contact these institutions directly for more information, or visit their website.

**Land Registry Offices:** All Land Registry Office records for each county and district (including records not available on microfilm through the Archives of Ontario or other repositories) can be accessed through local Land Registry Offices. *Only they* can certify copies of Land Registry Office records for legal or other official purposes. See table 1 at the end of this guide for a list of Land Registry Offices.

**Using the records at the Archives of Ontario**

**Note:** You can also follow the steps below when using the records at Family History Centres or local repositories. The inventory mentioned in this section is not available at other repositories or online; other repositories may have their own finding aids or tools for finding out what reels to consult.

**Step 1: Consulting the indexes**

Check inventory 61, *Land Registry Office records*, to find what microfilm reel has the index you need. The inventory is arranged by county or district, then by type of records (abstract and alphabetical indexes first), then by township or town. Please note that some counties had two Land Registry Offices, and their records are listed separately. Additionally, the records for Toronto and York County are listed separately. Look at the table at the end of this Guide for more information.

The *abstract index* is arranged by concession and lot, or by subdivision number (for cities). Each page is arranged chronologically by the date transactions were registered (**Note:** some transactions were registered years, or even decades, after they had occurred). Entries include the following information for each transaction:
- instrument number
- names of both parties
- type of transaction (“B and S” stands for bargain and sale)
- size of the property (number of acres)
- date of transaction
- date of registration
- amount of money involved.

To find the instrument, write down the instrument number, the name of the parties and the registration date, and go to step 2. If the instrument is a will, go to step 3.

If you do not find a transaction in the abstract indexes, it may be for one of two reasons: (1) before 1847, registration of land transactions was not mandatory, so the deed may not have been registered; (2) abstract indexes were created starting in 1857; land registrars went back and included previous deeds in the indexes, but did not do so if the deed did not include enough information to identify the lot and concession.

The alphabetical indexes should include all registered deeds, including those not found in the abstract indexes. It is also possible to search through the copybooks of deeds.

The *alphabetical index* is arranged by name of the parties, and most often only gives the instrument number. Write down the instrument number and go to step 2. If the instrument is a will, go to step 3.

**Step 2: Finding the instrument in the copybooks**

Check inventory 61, *Land Registry Office records*, to match the instrument number and year with the copybook it is recorded in, and the copybook with the microfilm reel it is on. The inventory is arranged by county (or district), then by type of records (indexes first, then copybooks), then by township or town. Within each copybook, the instruments are arranged numerically.

**Notes: (1)** Until the mid-1840’s, most Land Registry Offices had one set of copybooks for the whole area they covered, instead of one for each township; these are listed in the inventory under the name of the county. These copybooks may cover areas that were part of a county at one time and later become separate counties (for example: copybooks for York County also covered townships that later became part of Halton and Peel Counties). (2) In most cases, the microfilmed copybooks go only to the late 1800’s. If the date the instrument was registered is after the range of years listed for the township or town, contact the Land Registry Office (a list can be found at the end of this guide).

**Step 3: Finding a will**

*Before 1865:* wills were copied in the same copybooks as other instruments. Follow the instructions in Step 2 above. *1865 and after:* wills were copied separately in General Registers, Microfilm is listed in Inventory 61, *Land Registry Office records*, by county or district, and after the indexes and copybooks.
Note: The microfilmed General Registers go only to the late 1800’s. If the date the will was registered is after the range of years listed for the county or district, contact the Land Registry Office (a list can be found at the end of this guide).

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
Fax: 416-327-1999
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.

Customer Service and Research Guides
The Archives of Ontario has published a series of in-depth research guides on a variety of specific topics. For more information, please see “Customer Service and Research Guides” under “Accessing Our Collection” on the home page of the Archives website.

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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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County, district or Regional Municipality</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addington</td>
<td>See Lennox et Addington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algoma</td>
<td>420 Queen Street East Sault Ste. Marie ON P6A 1Z7 Phone: 705 253-8887 Fax: 705 253-9245</td>
<td>Fort St. Joseph Island, see Manitoulin District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brant</td>
<td>Court House 80 Wellington Street Brantford ON N3T 2L9 Phone: 519 752-8321 Fax: 519 752-0273</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>203 Cayley Street P.O. BOX 1690 Walkerton ON N0G 2V0 Phone: 519 881-2259 Fax: 519 881-2322</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carleton</td>
<td>Court House 161 Elgin Street, 4th floor Ottawa ON K2P 2K1 Phone: 613 239-1230 Fax: 613 239-1422</td>
<td>Land Registry Office now known as Ottawa-Carleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cochrane</td>
<td>143 4th Avenue (Court House) P.O. BOX 580 Cochrane ON P0L 1C0 Phone: 705 272-5791 Fax: 705 272-2951</td>
<td>No records on microfilm. Records available only through the Land Registry Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County, district or Regional Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dufferin</td>
<td>41 Broadway Avenue, Suite 7 Orangeville ON L9W 1J7 Phone: 519 941-1481 Fax: 519 941-6444</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundas</td>
<td>8, 4th Street West P.O. BOX 645 Morrisburg ON K0C 1X0 Phone: 613 543-2583 Fax: 613 543-4541</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>590 Rossland Road East Whitby ON L1N 9G5 Phone: 905 665-4007 Fax: 905 665-5247</td>
<td>Separate Land Registry Offices previously existed for Durham County East (Port Hope), Durham County West (Newcastle) and Ontario County (Whitby). Microfilmed records from all three Land Registry Offices are listed under Ontario/Durham County in Inventory 61.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elgin</td>
<td>1010 Talbot Street, Suite 36 St. Thomas ON N5P 4N2 Phone: 519 631-3015 Fax: 519 631-8182</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>949 McDougall Street, Suite 100 Windsor ON N9A 1L9 Phone: 519 971-9980 Fax: 519 971-9937</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frontenac</td>
<td>1 Court Street Kingston ON K7L 2N4 Phone: 613 548-6767 Fax: 613 548-6766</td>
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<td>County, district or Regional Municipality</td>
<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glengarry</td>
<td>63 Kenyon Street West P.O. BOX 668 Alexandria ON K0C 1A0 Phone: 613 525-1315 Fax: 613 525-0509</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenville</td>
<td>499 Centre Street P.O. BOX 1660 Prescott ON K0E 1T0 Phone: 613 925-3177 Fax: 613 925-0302</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey</td>
<td>1555 16th Street East, Suites 1 and 2 Owen Sound ON N4K 5N3 Phone: 519 376-1637 Fax: 519 376 1639</td>
<td>Separate Land Registry Offices previously existed for Grey County North (Owen Sound) and Grey County South (Durham). Microfilmed records from both Land Registry Offices are listed separately in Inventory 61.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haldimand</td>
<td>10 Echo Street West P.O. BOX 310 Cayuga ON N0A 1E0 Phone: 905 772-3531 Fax: 905 772-0105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haliburton</td>
<td>12 Newcastle Street P.O. BOX 270 Minden ON K0M 2K0 Phone: 705 286-1391 Fax: 705 286-4324</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halton</td>
<td>2800 Highpoint Drive, 2nd Floor Milton ON L9T 6P4 Phone: 905 864-3500 Fax: 905 864-3549</td>
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<tr>
<td>County, district or Regional Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>199 Front Street, Suite 109 Century Place</td>
<td>Records from the Kenora District Land Registry Office held by the Archives of Ontario are listed under Rainy River District in Inventory 61.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huron</td>
<td>38 North Street Goderich ON N7A 2T4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenora</td>
<td>220 Main Street Kenora ON P9N 1T2</td>
<td>Records from the Kenora District Land Registry Office held by the Archives of Ontario are listed under Rainy River District in Inventory 61.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>40 William Street North Chatham ON N7M 4L2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambton</td>
<td>Court House 700 Christina Street North, Suite 102 Sarnia ON N7V 3C2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanark</td>
<td>2 Industrial Drive P.O. Box 1180 Almonte ON K0A 1A0</td>
<td>Separate Land Registry Offices previously existed for Lanark County North (Almonte) and Lanark County South (Perth). Microfilmed records from both Land Registry Offices are listed separately in Inventory 61.</td>
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<tr>
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</table>
| Leeds                                    | 7 King Street  
Brockville ON K6V 3P7  
Phone: 613 345-5751  
Fax: 613 345-7390 | |
| Lennox and Addington                     | 7 Snow Road, Unit #2  
Napanee ON K7R OA2  
Phone: 613 354-3751  
Fax: 613 354-1474 | The Land Registry Offices for Lincoln and Welland Counties have been merged into the Niagara North and South Land Registry Office. Microfilmed records from both former Land Registry Offices are listed separately in Inventory 61. |
| Lincoln                                  |                                   | Abstract Indexes are not available at the Archives of Ontario. |
| Manitoulin                                | 27 Phipps Street  
P.O. BOX 619  
Gore Bay ON P0P 1H0  
Phone: 705 282-2442  
Fax: 705 282-2131 | Abstract and alphabetical indexes are not available on microfilm at the Archives of Ontario. Records include St. Joseph Island, Algoma District. |
| Middlesex                                 | 100 Dundas Street,  
Main floor,  
London ON N6A 5B6  
Phone: 519 675-7600  
Fax: 519 675-7611 | Separate Land Registry Offices previously existed for Middlesex County East (London) and Middlesex County West (Glencoe). Microfilmed records from both Land Registry Offices are listed separately in Inventory 61. |
| Muskoka                                   | 15 Dominion Street  
Bracebridge ON P1L 2E7  
Phone: 705 645-4415  
Fax: 705 645-7826 | Abstract Indexes are not available at the Archives of Ontario. |
<table>
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<tr>
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</table>
| **Niagara North and South** | 59 Church Street  
St. Catharines ON  
L2R 3C3  
Phone: 905 684-6351  
Fax: 905 684-5874 | Separate Land Registry Offices previously existed for Lincoln County (in St. Catharines) and Welland County (in Welland). Microfilmed records from both former Land Registry Offices are listed separately in Inventory 61. |
| **Nipissing** | Court House  
360 Plouffe Street  
North Bay ON  P1B 9L5  
Phone: 705 474-2270  
Fax: 705 495-8511 | |
| **Norfolk** | Court House  
50 Frederick Hobson VC Drive, Suite 201  
Simcoe ON  N3Y 4K8  
Phone: 519 426-2216  
Fax: 519 426-9627 | |
| **Northumberland** | 1005 Elgin Street West,  
Suite 105  
Cobourg ON  K9A 5J4  
Phone: 905 372-3813  
Fax: 905 372-4758 | Separate Land Registry Offices previously existed for Northumberland County East (Colborne) and Northumberland County West (Cobourg). Microfilmed records from both Land Registry Offices are listed separately in Inventory 61. |
<p>| <strong>Ontario</strong> |  | Separate Land Registry Offices previously existed for Durham County East (Port Hope), Durham County West (Newcastle) and Ontario County (Whitby). Microfilmed records from all three Land Registry Offices are listed under Ontario/Durham County in Inventory 61. |
| <strong>Ottawa-Carleton</strong> | See Carleton | |</p>
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<th>Remarks</th>
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</table>
| Oxford                                   | 75 Graham Street  
Woodstock ON N4S 6J8  
Phone: 519 537-6287  
Fax: 519 537-3107 |         |
| Parry Sound                              | 28 Miller Street  
Parry Sound ON P2A 1T1  
Phone: 705 746-5816  
Fax: 705 746-6517 |         |
| Peel                                     | 7765 Hurontario Street  
Brampton ON L6W 4S8  
Phone: 905 874-4008  
Fax: 905 874-4012 |         |
| Perth                                    | 5 Huron  
Stratford ON N5A 5S4  
Phone: 519 271-3343  
Fax: 519 271-2550 |         |
| Peterborough                             | 300 Water Street, 2th Floor  
P.O. BOX 7000  
Peterborough ON K9J 8M5  
Phone: 705 755-1342  
Fax: 705 755 1343 |         |
| Prescott                                 | 179 Main Street East  
Hawkesbury ON K6A 1A1  
Phone: 613 636-0314  
Fax: 613 636-0772 |         |
| Prince Edward                            | 1 Pitt Street  
P.O. BOX 1310  
Picton ON K0K 2T0  
Phone: 613 476-3219  
Fax: 613 476-7908 |         |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>County, district or Regional Municipality</th>
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<th>Remarks</th>
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</table>
| Rainy River                              | 353 Church Street  
Fort Frances ON  P9A 1C9  
Phone: 807 274-5451  
Fax: 807 274-1704 | Abstract indexes are not available on microfilm at the Archives of Ontario. Records from the Kenora District Land Registry Office held by the Archives of Ontario are listed under Rainy River District in Inventory 61. |
| Renfrew                                  | 400 Pembroke Street East  
Pembroke ON  K8A 3K8  
Phone: 613 732-8331  
Fax: 613 732-0297 | |
| Russell                                  | 1122 Concession Street  
P.O. BOX 10  
Russell ON  K4R 1C8  
Phone: 613 445-2138  
Fax: 613 445-0614 | |
| Simcoe                                   | Court House  
114 Worsley Street  
Barrie ON  L4M 1M1  
Phone: 705 725-7232  
Fax: 705 725-7246 | |
| Stormont                                 | 127 Sydney Street  
Cornwall ON  K6H 3H1  
Phone: 613 932-4522  
Fax: 613 932-4524 | |
| Sudbury                                  | 199 Larch Street, Suite 301  
Sudbury ON  P3E 5P9  
Phone: 705 564-4300  
Fax: 705 564-4148 | Abstract and alphabetical indexes are not available on microfilm at the Archives of Ontario. |
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<tr>
<th>County, district or Regional Municipality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timiskaming</td>
<td>375 Main Suite P.O. BOX 159 Haileybury ON P0J 1K0 Phone: 705 672-3332 Fax: 705 672-3906</td>
<td>No records on microfilm. Records available only though the Land Registry Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunder Bay</td>
<td>189 Red River Road, Suite 201 Thunder Bay ON P7B 1A2 Phone: 807 343-7436 Fax: 807 343-7439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>20 Dundas Street West, Suite 420 Toronto ON M5G 2C2 Phone: 416 314-4430 Fax: 416 314-4453</td>
<td>Separate Land Registry Offices exist for York Region and the City of Toronto. Three Land Registry Offices previously existed: (former) City of Toronto, Toronto Boroughs and York South, and York Region. In Inventory 61, records from the City of Toronto and Toronto Borough and York South Land Registry Offices are listed together, separately from those for the York Region Office; See the Inventory for details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Provincial Court Building 440 Kent Street West Lindsay ON K9V 6G8 Phone: 705 324-4912 Fax: 705 324-6290</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>30 Duke Street West, 2th Floor Kitchener ON N2H 3W5 Phone: 519 571-6043 Fax: 519 571-6067</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County, district or Regional Municipality</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welland</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Land Registry Offices for Lincoln and Welland Counties have been merged into the Niagara North and South Land Registry Office. Microfilmed records from both former Land Registry Offices are listed separately in Inventory 61.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>1 Stone Road West, Guelph ON N1G 4Y2, Phone: 519 826-3372, Fax: 519 826-3373</td>
<td>Separate Land Registry Offices previously existed for Wellington County North (Arthur) and Wellington County South (Guelph). Microfilmed records from both Land Registry Offices are listed separately in Inventory 61.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentworth</td>
<td>119 King Street West, 4th Floor, Hamilton ON L8P 4Y7, Phone: 905 521-7561, Fax: 905 521-7505</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Region</td>
<td>50 Bloomington Road, 3rd Floor Aurora, ON L4G 0L8, Phone: 905 713-7798, Fax: 905 713-7799</td>
<td>Separate Land Registry Offices exist for York Region and the City of Toronto. Three Land Registry Offices previously existed: (former) City of Toronto, Toronto Boroughs and York South, and York Region. In Inventory 61, records from the City of Toronto and Toronto Borough and York South Land Registry Offices are listed together, separately from those for the York Region Office; see the Inventory for details</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>