
Finding Land Registration Records

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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.

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 land registration records 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 "Research Guides and Tools" 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.

LAND REGISTRY OFFICES IN ONTARIO

Addington

See Lennox and Addington

Algoma

420 Queen Street East
Sault Ste. Marie ON P6A 1Z7
Tel: (705) 253-8887
Fax: (705) 253-9245

- For St. Joseph Island, see Manitoulin District

Brant

Court House, 80 Wellington Street
Brantford ON N3T 2L9
Tel: (519) 752-8321
Fax: (519) 752-0273

Bruce

203 Cayley Street
PO Box 1690
Walkerton ON N0G 2V0
Tel: (519) 881-2259
Fax: (519) 881-2322

Carleton

Court House, 161 Elgin Street
4th Floor
Ottawa ON K2P 2K1
Tel: (613) 239-1230
Fax: (613) 239-1422
- Land Registry Office now known as Ottawa-Carleton

Cochrane

Court House, 143-4th Avenue
PO Box 580
Cochrane ON P0L 1C0
Tel: (705) 272-5791
Fax: (705) 272-2951

- No records on microfilm. Records available only through the Land Registry Office.

Dufferin

41 Broadway Avenue,
Unit #7
Orangeville ON L9W 1J7
Tel: (519) 941-1481
Fax: (519) 941-6444

Dundas

8 - 5th Street West,
PO Box 645
Morrisburg ON K0C 1X0
Tel: (613) 543-2583
Fax: (613) 543-4541

Durham

590 Rossland Road East
Whitby ON L1N 9G5
Tel: (905) 665-4007
Fax: (905) 665-5247

- 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.

Elgin

1010 Talbot Street,
Unit 36
St. Thomas, ON N5P 4N2
Tel: (519) 631-3015
Fax: (519) 631-8182

Essex

949 McDougall St.,
Suite 100
Windsor ON N9A 1L9
Tel: (519) 971-9980
Fax: (519) 971-9937

Frontenac

1 Court Street
Kingston ON K7L 2N4
Tel: (613) 548-6767
Fax: (613) 548-6766

Glengarry

63 Kenyon Street West
PO Box 668
Alexandria ON K0C 1A0
Tel: (613) 525-1315
Fax: (613) 525-0509

Grenville

499 Centre Street
P.O. Box 1660
Prescott ON K0E 1T0
Tel: (613) 925-3177
Fax: (613) 925-0302

Grey

1555 - 16th Street East,
Suites 1 and 2
Owen Sound ON N4K 5N3
Tel: (519) 376-1637
Fax: (519) 376 1639

- 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.

Haldimand

10 Echo Street West
PO Box 310
Cayuga ON N0A 1E0
Tel: (905) 772-3531
Fax: (905) 772-0105

Haliburton

12 Newcastle Street
Box 270
Minden ON K0M 2K0
Tel: (705) 286-1391
Fax: (705) 286-4324

Halton

2800 Highpoint Drive,
2nd Floor
Milton ON L9T 6P4
Tel: (905) 864-3500
Fax: (905) 864-3549

Hastings

199 Front Street,
Suite 109
Century Place
Belleville ON K8N 5H5
Tel: (613) 968-4597
Fax: (613) 968-3606

Huron

38 North Street
Goderich ON N7A 2T4
Tel: (519) 524-9562
Fax: (519) 524-2482

Kenora

220 Main Street South
Kenora ON P9N 1T2
Tel: (807) 468-2794
Fax: (807) 468-2796

- Records from the Kenora District Land Registry Office held by the Archives of Ontario are listed under Rainy River District in Inventory 61.

Kent

40 William Street North
Chatham ON N7M 4L2
Tel: (519) 352-5520
Fax: (519) 352-3222

Lambton

Court House
700 Christina Street North
Suite 102
Sarnia ON N7V 3C2
Tel: (519) 337-2393
Fax: (519) 337-8371

Lanark

2 Industrial Drive
P.O. Box 1180
Almonte ON K0A 1A0
Tel: (613) 256-1577
Fax: (613) 256-0940

- 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.

Leeds

7 King St. West
Brockville ON K6V 3P7
Tel: (613) 345-5751
Fax: (613) 345-7390

Lennox and Addington

7 Snow Road,
Unit #2
Napanee ON K7R OA2
Tel: (613) 354-3751
Fax: (613) 354-1474

Lincoln

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.

Niagara North & South

59 Church Street
St. Catharines ON L2R 3C3
Tel: (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.

Manitoulin

27 Phipps Street
P.O. Box 619
Gore Bay ON P0P 1H0
Tel: (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,
Ground Floor,
London ON N6A 5B6
Tel: (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

Tel: (705) 645-4415

Fax: (705) 645-7826

- Abstract indexes are not available on microfilm at the Archives of Ontario.

Nipissing

Court House, 360 Plouffe Street,
North Bay ON P1B 9L5

Tel: (705) 474-2270

Fax: (705) 495-8511

Norfolk

Court House, 50 Frederick Hobson VC Drive,
Suite 201

Simcoe ON N3Y 4K8

Tel: (519) 426-2216

Fax: (519) 426-9627

Northumberland

1005 Elgin St. West,
Suite 105

Cobourg ON K9A 5J4

Tel: (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.

Ontario

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.

Ottawa-Carleton

See Carleton

Oxford

75 Graham Street

Woodstock ON N4S 6J8

Tel: (519) 537-6287

Fax: (519) 537-3107

Parry Sound

28 Miller Street
Parry Sound ON P2A 1T1
Tel: (705) 746-5816
Fax: (705) 746-6517

Peel

7765 Hurontario Street
Brampton ON L6W 4S8
Tel: (905) 874-4008
Fax: (905) 874-4012

Perth

5 Huron Street
Stratford ON N5A 5S4
Tel: (519) 271-3343
Fax: (519) 271-2550

Peterborough

300 Water Street,
2nd Floor
P.O. Box 7000
Peterborough ON K9J 8M5
Tel: (705) 755-1342
Fax: (705) 755 1343

Prescott

179 Main Street East
Hawkesbury ON K6A 1A1
Tel: (613) 636-0314
Fax: (613) 636-0772

Prince Edward

1 Pitt Street
PO Box 1310
Picton ON K0K 2T0
Tel: (613) 476-3219
Fax: (613) 476-7908

Rainy River

353 Church Street
Fort Frances ON P9A 1C9
Tel: (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
Tel: (613) 732-8331
Fax: (613) 732-0297

Russell

1122 Concession Street
PO Box 10
Russell ON K4R 1C8
Tel: (613) 445-2138
Fax: (613) 445-0614

Simcoe

Court House, 114 Worsley Street
Barrie ON L4M 1M1
Tel: (705) 725-7232
Fax: (705) 725-7246

Stormont

127 Sydney Street
Cornwall ON K6H 3H1
Tel: (613) 932-4522
Fax: (613) 932-4524

Sudbury

199 Larch Street,
Suite 301
Sudbury ON P3E 5P9
Tel: (705) 564-4300
Fax: (705) 564-4148

- Abstract and alphabetical indexes are not available on microfilm at the Archives of Ontario.

Timiskaming

375 Main Street
PO Box 159
Haileybury ON P0J 1K0
Tel: (705) 672-3332
Fax: (705) 672-3906

- No records on microfilm. Records available only through the Land Registry Office

Thunder Bay

189 Red River Road,
Suite 201
Thunder Bay ON P7B 1A2
Tel: (807) 343-7436
Fax: (807) 343-7439

Toronto

20 Dundas Street West,
Suite 420
Toronto ON M5G 2C2
Tel: (416) 314-4430
Fax: (416)314-4453

- 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.

Victoria

Provincial Court Building, 440 Kent Street West
Lindsay ON K9V 6G8
Tel: (705) 324-4912
Fax: (705) 324-6290

Waterloo

30 Duke Street West,
2nd Floor
Kitchener ON N2H 3W5
Tel: (519) 571-6043
Fax: (519) 571-6067

Welland

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.

Wellington

1 Stone Road West
Guelph ON N1G 4Y2
Tel: (519) 826-3372
Fax: (519) 826-3373

- 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.

Wentworth

119 King Street West,
4th Floor
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y7
Tel: (905) 521-7561
Fax: (905) 521-7505

York Region

50 Bloomington Road,
3rd Floor
Aurora, ON L4G 0L8
Tel: 905-713-7798
Fax: 905-713-7799

- 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