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## 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): see Guide 205, *How to use the Ontario Land Records Index* for information on how to access and use this index
- City and county directories: some directories are available at the Archives of Ontario; see Guide 221, *Directories, Telephone Books and Voters' Lists* for more information
- Municipal assessment rolls: the Archives holds assessment rolls for some municipalities; see Guide 208, *Municipal Records at the Archives of Ontario* for more information
- Fire insurance plans (for city properties): the Archives holds some plans [Click here to access the series description for C 234-1 for more information.](#)
- 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.

**Family History Centres:** The microfilm produced by FamilySearch is available through their worldwide network of Family History Centres. It includes some reels not available at the Archives of Ontario. [Click here to access the FamilySearch website for more information.](#)

**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.

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

- County/District/Regional Municipality
- Address
- Notes

### **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