
Sources of Family History

299 Research GuideMost Recent Update:
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This research guide lists resources at the Archives of Ontario that may help you in researching your family's history. Please keep in mind that:

- This guide only refers to records that are available at the Archives.
- This is not an exhaustive list of resources available at the Archives
- Our reference staff may be able to help you identify additional outside sources

All guides mentioned in this guide are available in the “Accessing our Collection/Research Guides and Tools” section of our website.

GETTING STARTED

Doing research on your family history can involve using a wide variety of records and sources of information in various institutions (such as archives and libraries), starting with information that you and your family already have.

The Archives of Ontario has prepared an information brochure with tips on doing your research, called *Digging for Roots*, which can be sent to you on request (see our contact information at the end of this research guide).

THE RECORDS

Birth, Marriage and Death Records

We hold government registrations of births (ca. 1830-1917, predominantly 1869-1917), marriages (ca. 1801-1936, predominantly 1869-1936) and deaths (1869-1946), registrations of death of Ontarians overseas (1939-1947), as well as cemetery transcriptions and various church, court and municipal records. For more information :

- [Click here to access Research Guide 202: Vital Statistics Records](#)
- [Click here to access Research Guide 203: Understanding the Vital Statistics Indexes](#)
- [Click here to access Research Guide 204: Sources for Birth, Marriage and Death Records](#)
- [Click here to access a pathfinder to birth registrations](#)
- [Click here to access a pathfinder to marriage registrations](#)
- [Click here to access a pathfinder to pre-1874 marriage registrations](#)
- [Click here to access a pathfinder to death registrations](#)

Cartographic records

Maps, plans and atlases can provide useful information about land ownership, occupancy and use. For more information:

- [Click here to access Research Guide 215: From Grant to Patent- Early Land Settlement Records, ca. 1790 to ca. 1850](#)
- [Click here to access a description of the Historical County Atlases.](#) (visit the Microfilm Interloan catalogue, in the “Accessing our Collection” section of our website)

Census records

We have microfilmed copies of census records from 1851 to 1901, and some pre-1851 municipal census and militia muster rolls. [Click here to access Research Guide 220: Census Records for more information.](#)

Change of name records

We have records documenting changes of names, up to 1979. [Click here to access Research Guide 229: Finding change of name files in Ontario for more information.](#)

Criminal justice system records

We have some records created from the start of the police investigation to the end of a sentence, probation or parole. [Click here to access Research Guide 233: Criminal justice records at the Archives of Ontario for more information.](#)

Directories and telephone books

These records may help you find the location where an individual lived. [Click here to access Research Guide 221: Directories, Telephone Books and Voters' Lists for more information.](#)

Divorce records

We have divorce records from 1930 to 1981 (1985 for some counties). For more information, consult:

- [Click here to access Research Guide 210 - Finding Divorce Files in Ontario](#)
- [Click here to access Research Guide 211 - Finding York County divorce files](#)

Education records

We have various records pertaining to students and teachers. [Click here to access Research Guide 216: Student and Teacher Records for more information.](#)

Genealogy collections and published genealogies

We have a small number of published and unpublished genealogies, as well as genealogical files and indexes. [Click here to access Research Guide 222: Genealogy Collections and Published Genealogies for more information.](#)

Guardianship and adoption records

We have records documenting guardianships, mostly pre-1921. The Archives of Ontario *does not* have adoption records. [Click here to access Research Guide: 223: Guardianship and Adoption Records for more information.](#)

Health Records

We have records from psychiatric hospitals, from centres for people with developmental and emotional disability conditions and from a very limited number of doctors and other hospitals. For more information, see [Research Guide 224: Patient and Health Practitioner Records.](#)

Immigration, Citizenship and Naturalization Records

We have provincial immigration records, microfilmed copies of federal immigration records (including passenger lists) and some naturalization records. [Click here to access Research Guide 228: Immigration, Citizenship and Naturalization Records for more information.](#)

Land Records

Our holdings document sales and grants of Crown lands, as well private transactions, from the late 1700's to the early 1900's. For more information on our holdings:

- [Click here to access Research Guide 215: From Grant to Patent- Early Land Settlement Records, ca. 1790 to ca. 1850](#)
- [Click here to access Research Guide 225: Researching Crown Land Records.](#)
- [Click here to access Research Guide 231: Finding Land Registration Records.](#)

Library Material

The Archives has a library reference collection. It includes periodicals and books on Ontario, local history and family history research. [Click here to search our library holdings and consult our BiBLION Library Catalogue](#) (you will find BiBLION in the “Accessing Our Collection” section of our website).

Militia and Military Records

Our holdings include microfilmed copies of British military records, as well as miscellaneous records regarding militia and army units, mostly from the 1800’s. [Click here to access Research Guide 226: Militia and Military Records for more information.](#)

Municipal Records

We hold records from various municipalities in Ontario. These may contain assessment rolls, census, voters’ lists, and birth, marriage and death records. For more information:

- [Click here to access Research Guide 204: Sources for Birth, Marriage and Death Records](#)
- [Click here to access Research Guide 209: Municipal Records at the Archives of Ontario](#)
- [Click here to access Research Guide 220: Census Records.](#)

Newspapers

Newspapers may include birth, marriage and death, sale notices and information about local events. For more information, consult:

- [Click here to access Research Guide 212: Newspaper Holdings of the Archives of Ontario](#)
- [Click here to access Finding aid L 23: Original and microfilmed newspaper collections in the Archives of Ontario.](#)

United Empire Loyalist Records

We have registers and lists of Loyalists, records of claims for compensation and

land records. [Click here to access Research Guide 227: United Empire Loyalist Records for more information.](#)

Voters' Lists

These records have the residence of people entitled to vote in local, provincial or federal elections and, sometimes, their occupation. [Click here to access Research Guide 221: Directories, Telephone Books and Voters' Lists for more information.](#)

Wills

We have estate files (which contain wills) from the courts for the 1780's to the 1970's. [Click here to access Research Guide 206: How to Find a Will in Court Records for more information.](#)

MAKING CONTACT

Ready and Willing

Although unable to do your family history 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 "About the Archives" on the home page of the Archives 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.

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