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# The Records We Do and Don't Have

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## 201 Research Guide

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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)
- Picture images
- Sound and moving images.

## GETTING STARTED

For up-to-date information about our collections and services, please visit our website ([www.ontario.ca/archives](http://www.ontario.ca/archives)). Our website has the following databases:

In the “Start Your Research” section:

- [Archives Descriptive Database](#) (ADD): descriptions of Ontario Government Records and Private Sector Records
- [BiBLION Library Catalogue](#)

In the “Look for Images” section:

- [Visual Database](#): includes images of selected items from our collections (photographs, documentary art, maps and architectural records).
- [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.

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 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

You can view and use them in the Archives' Reading Room. Some are on our [Visual Database](#) on our website. 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 staff 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:** [reference@ontario.ca](mailto:reference@ontario.ca)

**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, please visit our website [www.ontario.ca/archives](http://www.ontario.ca/archives).

### *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 HTML 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
<b>Vital Statistics</b>	<p>The Archives holds indexes and registrations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Births, 1869-1914</li> <li>▪ Deaths, 1869-1939</li> <li>▪ Marriages, 1801-1929 (predominantly 1869-1929)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note:</i> Births, 1914; Marriages, 1929; and Deaths, 1939 are <b>closed</b> until they are available in 2011.</p>	<p>The Office of the Registrar General holds indexes and registrations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Births, 1915-present</li> <li>▪ Marriages, 1930-present</li> <li>▪ Deaths, 1940-present</li> </ul> <p>See <i>Research Guide 202: Vital Statistics Records</i> for more information, including how to contact the Office of the Registrar General</p>
<b>Divorce Files</b>	<p>The Archives holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Divorce Files for all of Ontario, 1930-1979.</li> <li>▪ In addition: microfilm copies of Decrees Absolute and Nisi from York County (including Toronto), 1959-1979.</li> </ul>	<p>The local Courthouses of the Superior Court of Justice hold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Divorce Files, 1980-present.</li> </ul> <p>The Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resolutions or Acts of Parliament re: divorces, 1867-1968</li> </ul> <p>See <i>Research Guide 210: Finding Divorce Files in Ontario</i> and <i>Research Guide 211: Finding York County Divorce Files</i> for more information, including how to contact local Courthouses and the Office of the Law Clerk</p>
<b>Estate Files (including Wills)</b>	<p>The Archives holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Estate Files for most of Ontario, ca.1793-1969 (except Prince Edward County for which we only have up to 1930, and some other counties).</li> </ul>	<p>The local Courthouses hold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Estate Files, 1970-present</li> </ul> <p><i>Note:</i> The Prince Edward County Archives in Picton holds original estate files for Prince Edward County up to 1969.</p> <p>See <i>Research Guide 206: How To Find A Will in Court Records</i> for more information, including how to contact local Courthouses</p>

Type of Record	Available at the Archives of Ontario	Available Only at Other Government Offices
<p><b>Partnership/ Sole- Proprietorship Registrations</b></p>	<p>The Archives holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Registrations for all of Ontario, 1855-1991 (predominantly 1870-1991), except for Thunder Bay District, pre1973</li> </ul> <p>For details, search the <a href="#">Archives Descriptive Database</a> for series RG 55-17 (for pre-1973 records) or RG 55-16 (for 1973-1991 records), or see <i>Research Guide 218: Partnership and Benevolent Society Register Records</i>.</p>	<p>The Companies and Personal Property Security Branch, Ministry of Government Services (Service Ontario) holds: Registrations, 1992-present</p> <p><i>Contact:</i> 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><i>Contact:</i> 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>
<p><b>Corporations Files</b></p>	<p>The Archives holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporations Files and Charter Books for companies which were defunct as of 1907.</li> <li>▪ Corporation files of companies that went defunct between 1907 and 1978, with Corporations File Numbers TC1 to TC3155. TC3221, and TC21293 to TC 23885</li> <li>▪ <u>Part of some</u> corporation files for corporations that were created between 1907 and the early 1970's and were still active as of 1978.</li> <li>▪ 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).</li> </ul> <p>For details, see <i>Research Guide 217: Corporation Records of the Government of Ontario</i>.</p>	<p>The Companies and Personal Property Security Branch, Ministry of Government Services (Service Ontario) holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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)</li> <li>▪ Corporations Files of companies that went defunct between 1907 and 1978 with file number TC3156 to TC3220, TC322 to TC21292, and above TC23885.</li> </ul> <p><i>Contact:</i> 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>

Type of Record	Available at the Archives of Ontario	Available Only at Other Government Offices
<b>Bankruptcy files</b>	The Archives holds bankruptcy files that are more than 20 years. See <i>Guide 230: Finding a bankruptcy file</i> , for more information.	The courts hold records of bankruptcies 20 years old and less. For information on how to access these records, visit the Website of the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcies, <a href="http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/bsf-osb.nsf/eng/home">http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/bsf-osb.nsf/eng/home</a> .
<b>Crown Land Records</b>	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ontario Land Records Index, ca.1780-ca.1920</li> <li>▪ Land petitions</li> <li>▪ Land patent indexes</li> <li>▪ Patent plans, [178-]-1977</li> <li>▪ Township papers, ca.1783-ca.1870</li> </ul> <p>See <i>Research Guide 215: From Grant to Patent: A Guide to Early Land Settlement Records, ca.1790 to ca.1850</i> for more information on using these and other Crown land records for genealogical research.</p>	<p>The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ issues copies of patents</li> <li>▪ has a large quantity of Crown land survey diaries, field notes and reports, in addition to the ones at the Archives.</li> </ul> <p><i>For copies of patents, contact:</i></p> <p>Ministry of Natural Resources Lands and Waters Branch Crown Land Registry 300 Water Street, P.O. Box 7000 Peterborough ON, K9J 8M5 Phone: 705-755-2104 Fax: 705-755-2181</p> <p><i>For information on survey diaries, field notes and reports, contact:</i></p> <p>Ministry of Natural Resources Information Resource and Management Branch Crown Land Surveys 300 Water Street, P.O. Box 7000 Peterborough ON, K9J 8M5 Phone: 705-755-2100 Fax: 705-755-2149</p>
<b>Land Registry Offices Records</b>	<p>The records of Land Registry Offices (LROs) document transactions relating to privately owned land. The Archives holds the following LRO records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Original Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-instruments and deeds up to 1867</li> <li>-copybooks up to 1955 (many have been placed on long- term loan with local repositories)</li> <li>-some post-1867 instruments and deeds, where the copybooks are missing</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Microfilm Copies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-copybooks, abstract indexes, and alphabetical indexes,</li> <li>ca.1795-ca.1960, predominantly to ca.1880</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Original records are <b>closed</b> for conservation reasons. Microfilm only can be used. See <i>Research Guide 231: Finding land registration records</i> for more information.</p>	<p>Land Registry Offices (LROs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ LROs are responsible for maintaining a complete set of land registry records.</li> <li>▪ In cases where the LRO has transferred original records to the Archives or to a local institution, the LRO should have copies of those records on microfilm.</li> <li>▪ LRO addresses and phone numbers can be found in the "Blue Pages" of <i>Telephone Directories</i>, the <i>Government of Ontario Telephone Directory</i>, or the Government of Ontario website <a href="http://www.gov.on.ca">www.gov.on.ca</a></li> </ul> <p><i>Note:</i> The Archives and LROs have placed some original copybooks, abstract indexes, and other documents in local archives, museums, and other repositories.</p>