
Finding Divorce Files in Ontario

210 Research
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Divorce files are typically filed at the county courthouse where the divorce hearing took place. They may include the petition for divorce, affidavits, the degree nisi and the decree absolute (also referred to as the judgement absolute). Some files may also include examinations, documents relating to child custody, copies of marriage certificates and photographs of the people involved. For divorces occurring in York County, see *Research Guide 211: Finding York County Divorce Files*.

GETTING STARTED

STEP 1: When did the divorce take place?

In order to find a divorce file, you need to know when the divorce took place. There are three sources of records for divorces in Ontario. They cover the periods 1867 to 1930, 1931 to 1979, and 1980 to the present.

For divorces that were granted between 1867 and 1930:

Until 1930, only the Federal Parliament could grant a divorce in Ontario through a Resolution or an Act of Parliament. Couples had to have a private member's bill (a bill that a Member of Parliament presented to the House of Commons) requesting that their divorce be granted.

All divorces granted by the Federal Parliament are indexed on the [Library and Archives Canada's website](#). Divorces granted between 1867 and 1930 are also indexed in a book titled *Index to Canadian Parliamentary Divorces, 1867-1930*, by J. Brian Gilchrist and Nancy J. Duffy. This book is available in the Archives of Ontario's Reading Room and in major public libraries.

Resolutions and Acts of the Federal Parliament have been published, and most major libraries should hold a copy of them; see the [Library and Archives Canada's website](#) for further information. For a certified copy of the Resolution or Act of Parliament for a divorce (needed for legal purposes), you must contact:

Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel
Senate of Canada
1310-40 Elgin Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A4
613-992-2416

For divorces that were granted between 1931 and 1979:

Since 1930, the Supreme Court of Ontario has had the power to grant a divorce. The Archives of Ontario holds all 1931–1979 Ontario divorce files.

- **If the divorce occurred in York County (Toronto)**, please see *Research Guide 211: Finding York County Divorce Files*.
- **If you know only the approximate year of the divorce or the location** where the divorce occurred, you will need to use an index either at the Archives or at the courthouse where the divorce was filed. (See Step 2 of this guide for more information.)
- **If you know the county/district, the file number, and the year** of the divorce, you have the information that you need to obtain the divorce file. (See Step 3 of this guide for more information.)
- **If you do not find a reference to the divorce you are researching in the records mentioned under Steps 2 and 3 below**, there is a small possibility that the divorce was granted through a resolution or act of Parliament (only up to July 1968). See the section on pre-1930 divorces above for more information.

For divorces that were granted from 1980 to the present:

These divorce files are available only through the local courthouse of the Superior Court of Justice where the divorce was filed. Table 2 in the Records section of this research guide lists the courthouse addresses and telephone numbers. You will need to find the **file number** and **year** of the divorce case. (See Step 2 of this guide.)

STEP 2: Use Indexes to Find the Divorce File:

To find a divorce file, you need the **file number**, the **year** of the divorce and the name of the **county or district** where the divorce took place. Depending on when the divorce occurred, you will need to use either an Archives of Ontario index or an index at a county or district courthouse.

For divorces that were granted between 1931 and May 1949:

Go to the Archives or to the appropriate courthouse for the Index.

The divorce files for these years are available only through the Archives. Unfortunately, the Archives does not have a province-wide index for these files. Each county or district courthouse created its own local procedure/judgement books of **Supreme Court Actions**. The Archives of Ontario has some of these books, but **most are still at the local courthouse where the divorce was filed**. To find the location of these index books for specific years, see Table 1 in the Records section of this research guide.

For divorces that were granted between June 1949 and 1969:

Go to the Archives for the Index. The Archives has **Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute** (Series RG 22-5816) listing all the Decrees Absolute (or Judgements Absolute) applied for in Ontario. The indexes contain the **names** of the spouse seeking the divorce and the defendant(s), the **application date** for the Decree Absolute, the **city** where the application was filed and the **application number** that the court issued. These indexes are available on microfilm in the Archives' Reading Room.

Use Table 1 in the Records section of this research guide to find the microfilm reel that has the index for the year that the Decree Absolute was applied for (usually the same year that the divorce was granted). Look up the married surname.

For divorces that were granted between June 1949 and October 1964: Write down the **application date** of the Decree Absolute and the **city** where the divorce was granted. Before you order the Divorce File, you will need to consult a second index in order to obtain the **file number** assigned to the divorce proceedings. Consult Table 2 at the end of this guide in order to determine whether the index for the year that you need is at the Archives or still at the courthouse.

For divorces granted between November 1964 and 1969: Write down the **file number** (generally the number on the first line), the **year**, and the **city** from the "Place-Writ No." column. Then, go to Step 3.

For divorces granted from July 1968 to the present:

Contact the Central Registry of Divorce Proceedings (CRDP). This is a Canada-wide index of divorces. It began in July 1968. If you provide it with your full name and birth date as well as the name of your former spouse and the approximate date of your divorce, the CDRP can supply the **number** of the courthouse where the divorce took place, and the **file number** and **year** that you need to get your divorce file. Contact the CDRP at:

**Department of Justice
Central Registry of Divorce Proceedings
339 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0H8
613-957-4519**

If you are looking for another person's divorce file, you must use the indexes produced by the Supreme Court of Ontario in order to obtain the file number. See Table #2 at the end of this research guide to find out if the index for the year of the divorce you are researching is with the Archives or the Courthouse.

Divorce files **prior to 1980** (as well as 1980 files for **Wellington County**) are available only through the Archives of Ontario. Divorce files **for 1980 and after** are available only through the local courthouse where the divorce was filed. Table 2 also contains a list of courthouse numbers, addresses and telephone numbers.

STEP 3: Ordering a 1931–1979 Divorce File at the Archives of Ontario.

Once you have the **file number**, the **year** when the divorce case began, the **date** it was granted and the **county or district** where the divorce took place, you have the information to order the divorce file. At this point, you should decide what documents you need from the Archives.

Do you need a certified copy of the Decree Absolute (or Judgement Absolute) granting the divorce?

The Archives' divorce files are stored at an off-site location. It may take up to **10 business days** to retrieve, copy and certify a Decree Absolute. There is a \$25.00 fee (plus HST) for certification. The certified copy can be mailed to you or picked up in person.

OR

Do you need to see the entire file?

The Archives' divorce files are stored at an off-site location. It takes a **minimum of one business day** to retrieve them. Please note that original files can be viewed only in the Archives' Reading Room in Toronto. Copies can be ordered by telephone if you know which documents are required. There may be a charge for photocopying.

To request a divorce file, contact the Archives of Ontario; contact information appears at the end

THE RECORDS

Tables 1 and 2 provide detailed information on finding divorce files in Ontario.

Table 1: Locating Decrees Absolute (or Judgements Absolute)

TABLE 1: Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute (available on microfilm in the Archives' Reading Room)			
Year(s) Indexed	Microfilm Reel	Year(s) Indexed	Microfilm Reel
1949–1951	MS 5077	1962	MS 5086
1951–1952	MS 5078	1963	MS 5087
1953–1954	MS 5079	1964	MS 5088
1955–1956	MS 5080	1965	MS 5089
1957	MS 5081	1966	MS 5090
1958	MS 5082	1967	MS 5091
1959	MS 5083	1968	MS 5092
1960	MS 5084	1969	MS 5093
1961	MS 5085	1970-1979*	MS 5094
* The index for these years lists divorces begun before June 1968, but in which the application for the Decree Absolute was not completed until between 1970 and 1979.			

Table 2: Locating Ontario Courthouses and Supreme Court Indexes		
County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
Algoma Court #3539	Superior Court of Justice 426 Queen Street East Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario P6A 1Z7 705-945-8000, ext. 450	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Brant Court #3505	Superior Court of Justice 70 Wellington Street Brantford, Ontario N3T 2L9 519-752-7828	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 1117 <i>Judgement Books, 1931–1954</i> After 1954, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Bruce Court #3544	Superior Court of Justice 207 Cayley Street PO Box 39 Walkerton, Ontario N0G 2V0 519-881-1052	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 1204 <i>Procedure Book, 1932–1954</i> After 1954, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Carleton Court #3528	Superior Court of Justice 161 Elgin Street, 2 nd Floor Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2K1 613-239-1560	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 1304 <i>Procedure Books, 1927–1971</i> After 1971, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Cochrane Court #3510	Superior Court of Justice 149 Fourth Avenue Cochrane, Ontario P0L 1C0 705-272-4256	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 1404 <i>Procedure Book, 1921–1938</i> After 1938, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Dufferin Court #3527	Superior Court of Justice 10 Louisa Street, 1 st Floor Orangeville, Ontario L9W 3P9 519-941-5802	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Durham (pre 1974) — See Northumberland & Durham		

Table 2: Locating Ontario Courthouses and Supreme Court Indexes		
County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
Durham Court #3546	Superior Court of Justice 605 Rossland Road East Whitby , Ontario L1N 9G7 905-430-5800	At the Archives: series RG 22 –3804 <i>Procedure Books</i> , 1931-1970 series RG 22 – 3803 <i>Divorce Procedure Book</i> , 1971-1972 série RG 22 – 1603 <i>Divorce Procedure Booksm</i> , 1973-1976 After 1976, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Elgin Court #3537	Superior Court of Justice 145 Curtis Street PO Box 310, Station Main St. Thomas , Ontario N5P 3T9 519-633-1720	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Essex Court #3547	Superior Court of Justice 245 Windsor Avenue Windsor , Ontario N9A 1J2 519-973-6620	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 1804 <i>Procedure Books/Indexes</i> , 1931–1979
Frontenac Court #3519	Unified Family Court 469 Montreal Street Kingston , Ontario K7K 3H9 613-548-6789	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Glengarry — See Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry		
Grenville — See Leeds		
Grey Court #3529	Superior Court of Justice 611 9 th Avenue East Owen Sound , Ontario N4K 6Z4 519-370-2430	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Haldimand Court #3507	Superior Court of Justice 55 Munsee Street Cayuga , Ontario N0A 1E0 905-772-3335	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 2104 <i>Procedure Book</i> , 1931–1967 After 1967, consult the <i>Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute</i> (Step 2 in this <i>Research Guide</i>).
Haliburton — See Victoria		

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County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
Halton Court #3524	Superior Court of Justice 491 Steeles Avenue East Milton , Ontario L9T 1Y7 905-878-4165	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Hamilton-Wentworth — See <i>Wentworth</i>		
Hastings Court #3502	Superior Court of Justice 235 Pinnacle Street Belleville , Ontario K8N 3A9 613-962-9106	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Huron Court #3513	Superior Court of Justice 1 Courthouse Square PO Box 400 Goderich , Ontario N7A 1M2 519-524-2519	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Kenora Court #3518	Superior Court of Justice 216 Water Street, Room 211 Kenora , Ontario P9N 1S4 807-468-2842	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 2504 <i>Procedure Books, 1931–1959</i> After 1959, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Kent Court #3508	Superior Court of Justice 425 Grand Ave. West Chatham , Ontario N7M 6M8 519-355-2200	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 2604 <i>Procedure Books, 1931–1959</i> After 1959, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Lambton Court #3538	Superior Court of Justice 700 Christina Street North Sarnia , Ontario N7V 3C2 519-333-2950	Contact the reference archivist for further information.
Lanark Court #3532	Superior Court of Justice 43 Drummond Street East Perth , Ontario K7H 1G1 613-267-2021	Contact the reference archivist for further information.

Table 2: Locating Ontario Courthouses and Supreme Court Indexes		
County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
Leeds & Grenville Court #3506	Superior Court of Justice 41 Court House Square Brockville , Ontario K6V 7N3 613-341-2800 #2266	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Lennox & Addington Court #3525	Unified Family Court 41 Dundas Street West Napanee , Ontario K7R 1Z5 For Files Dated: 1980–1995: 613-354-3845 1995–Present: 613-354-3850	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Lincoln Court #3536	Superior Court of Justice 59 Church Street, 1 st Floor St. Catharines , Ontario L2R 7N8 905-988-6200	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Manitoulin Court #3514	Superior Court of Justice 27 Phipps Street Gore Bay , Ontario P0P 1H0 705-282-2461	Contact the reference archivist for further information.
Middlesex Court #3522	Unified Family Court 80 Dundas Street Ground Floor, Unit A London , Ontario N6A 6A3 519-660-3044	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 3304 <i>Procedure Books, 1931–1975</i> Series RG 22 – 3308 <i>Divorce Procedure Book, 1976</i> After 1976, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Muskoka Court #3503	Superior Court of Justice 3 Dominion Street North Bracebridge , Ontario P1L 2E6 705-645-8793	Contact the reference archivist for further information.
Niagara North — See Lincoln		
Niagara South — See Welland		

Table 2: Locating Ontario Courthouses and Supreme Court Indexes		
County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
Nipissing Court #3526	Superior Court of Justice 360 Plouffe Street North Bay , Ontario P1B 9L5 705-495-8309	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Norfolk Court #3540	Superior Court of Justice 530 Queensway West Level 3 Simcoe , Ontario N3Y 4L2 519-426-6550	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 3604 <i>Procedure Books, 1931–1965</i> After 1965, consult the Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute (Step 2 in this <i>Research Guide</i>).
Northumberland & Durham Court #3509	Superior Court of Justice 860 William Street Cobourg , Ontario K9A 3A9 905-372-3751	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 3723 <i>Procedure Books, 1931–1969</i>
Ontario — See Durham		
Ottawa-Carleton — See Carleton		
Oxford Court #3548	Superior Court of Justice 415 Hunter Street, PO Box 70 Woodstock , Ontario N4S 7W5 519-539-6187	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Parry Sound Court #3530	Superior Court of Justice 89 James Street Parry Sound , Ontario P2A 1T7 705-746-4251	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Peel Court #3504	Superior Court of Justice 7755 Hurontario Street Brampton , Ontario L6W 4T6 905-456-4744	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 4104 <i>Procedure Books, 1931–1966</i> After 1966, consult the Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute (Step 2 in this <i>Research Guide</i>).
Perth Court #3541	Superior Court of Justice 17 George Street West Stratford , Ontario N5A 1A6 519-271-1850	Contact the courthouse for indexes.

Table 2: Locating Ontario Courthouses and Supreme Court Indexes		
County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
Peterborough Court #3533	Superior Court of Justice 470 Water Street Peterborough , Ontario K9H 3M3 705-876-3816	All files are arranged alphabetically by defendant name.
Prescott & Russell Court #3523	Superior Court of Justice 59 Court Street, 2 nd Floor L'Orignal , Ontario K0B 1K0 613-675-4567	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Prince Edward Court #3534	Superior Court of Justice 44 Union Street Picton , Ontario K0K 2T0 613-476-6236	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Rainy River Court #3512	Superior Court of Justice 333 Church Street Fort Frances , Ontario P9A 1C9 807-274-5961	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 4604 <i>Procedure Book, 1931–1934</i> After 1934, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Renfrew Court #3531	Superior Court of Justice 31 Riverside Drive Pembroke , Ontario K8A 8R6 613-732-8581	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 4704 <i>Procedure Books, 1934–1969</i>
Simcoe Court #3501	Unified Family Court 114 Worsley Street Barrie , Ontario L4M 1M1 705-739-6111	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Court #3511	Superior Court of Justice 29 Second Street West Cornwall , Ontario K6J 1G3 613-933-7500	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Sudbury Court #3542	Superior Court of Justice 155 Elm Street Sudbury , Ontario P3C 1T9 705-564-7600	Contact the courthouse for indexes.

Table 2: Locating Ontario Courthouses and Supreme Court Indexes		
County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
Thunder Bay Court #3535	Superior Court of Justice 277 Camelot Street Main Floor Thunder Bay , Ontario P7A 4B3 807-343-2700	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Timiskaming Court #3516	Superior Court of Justice 393 Main Street PO Box 609 Haileybury , Ontario P0J 1K0 705-672-3321	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
United Counties of Northumberland & Durham — See Northumberland & Durham		
Victoria Court #3521	Superior Court of Justice 440 Kent Street West Lindsay , Ontario K9V 6G8 705-324-1400	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Waterloo Court #3520	Superior Court of Justice 20 Weber Street East Kitchener , Ontario N2H 1C3 519-741-3200	At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 5405 <i>Judgement Books, 1929–1949</i> Series RG 22 – 5404 <i>Procedure Books, 1949–1968</i> After 1968, contact the courthouse for indexes.
Welland Court #3545	Superior Court of Justice 102 East Main Street Welland , Ontario L3D 3W6 905-735-0010	Contact the courthouse for indexes.
Wellington Court #3515	Superior Court of Justice 74 Woolwich Street Guelph , Ontario N1H 3T9 519-824-4100	Contact the courthouse for indexes.

Table 2: Locating Ontario Courthouses and Supreme Court Indexes		
County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
<p>Wentworth</p> <p>Court #3517 (Supreme Court of Ontario)</p> <p>Court #3549 (United Family Court)</p>	<p>Filed before July 1980: Superior Court of Justice 45 Main Street East Hamilton, Ontario L8N 2B7 905-645-5252</p> <p>Filed after June 1980: Unified Family Court 55 Main Street West Hamilton, Ontario L8P 1H4 905-645-6250</p>	<p>At the Archives: Series RG 22 – 5704 <i>Procedure Books, 1927–1970</i></p> <p>After 1970, contact the relevant courthouse at left for indexes.</p>
<p>York</p> <p>Court #3543</p> <p>Court #3550</p>	<p>On June 1, 1980, York County was divided into two judicial districts, as follows. Prior to this date, all York cases were heard in Toronto.</p> <p>City of Toronto Family Law Office 393 University Avenue 10th Floor Toronto, Ontario M5G 1E6 416-327-2064</p> <p>Regional Municipality of York Civil Office Superior Court of Justice 50 Eagle Street West Room 2025 Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 6B1 905-853-4809</p>	<p>Consult Archives of Ontario <i>Research Guide No. 211: Finding York County Divorce Files</i> for more information.</p>

MAKING CONTACT

Ready and Willing

Although unable to do your divorce 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: 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 <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 "Research Guides and Tools" under "Start Your Research" on the home page of the Archives website.

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