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# What Records We Have... What Records We Don't Have

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**201** Research  
GuideMost Recent Update: Dec. 2007

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This document provides an overview of our collections and how to get more information about them. It also includes a list of some of the most commonly requested records in our custody, as well as those that are accessible at other government offices.

## Ontario Government Records

- Most of the records held by the Archives were created by the government of Ontario and its predecessors. They date from the 1700s to the present era.
- These records provide:
  - documentation on political and legal decisions
  - an account of the evolution of provincial administration
  - a record of the interaction between the government and its citizens
  - key evidence of the rights and responsibilities of Ontarians.
- Most of these records are accessed through the Archives' Main Reading Room.

## Private Sector Records

- The Archives holds the records of over 2600 private individuals, businesses, clubs and associations, labour and political organizations.
- Most of these records are accessed through the Archives' Main Reading Room.

## Special Collections

### (Photographs, Documentary Art, Architectural Drawings, and Maps)

- The Archives holds photographs, documentary art, and architectural and cartographic records that have been created and collected by both private individuals and the Government of Ontario documenting the people, places and events in the province from as early as the 1600s to the present era.
- Special Collections material is accessed through the Archives' Special Collections Reading Room. For more information, please see Customer Service Guide 103 *Special Collections Reading Room*.

## Sound and Moving Images

- The Archives holds audio and video recordings and motion picture film material created and collected by both private individuals and the Government of Ontario, dating from the 1920s to the present era.
- Sound and moving images material is accessed through the Archives' Sound and Moving Images Reading Room, which is open by appointment only. For details, please refer to Customer Service Guide 102 *Sound and Moving Images Reading Room*.

## 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.
- Library items are accessed through the Archives' Main Reading Room.

## How To Get More Information About These Records

You can get more information about these records from the following sources:

- The Archives' **website** at [www.archives.gov.on.ca](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca). The website contains up to date information about our collections and services, and includes the following databases:
  - **Archives Descriptive Database (ADD):** descriptions of Ontario Government Records, Private Sector Records, Special Collections, and Sound and Moving Images.
  - **BIBLiON:** our library catalogue.
  - **Visual Database:** includes images of selected items from our Special Collections (photographs, documentary art, maps and architectural records).
- **Paper Finding Aids, Inventories, and Card Catalogues** in our Reading Rooms.
- **Research and Customer Service Guides**, available on our website and in paper format in the Registration area and in our Reading Rooms.
- **Archives Staff**, who can be contacted by phone, fax, mail, e-mail, or in person (see contact information below).

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Archives of Ontario, 77 Grenville Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1B3  
Tel: (416) 327-1600 Toll free (Ontario): 1-800-668-9933 Fax: (416) 327-1999  
e-mail: [reference@archives.gov.on.ca](mailto:reference@archives.gov.on.ca) Website: [www.archives.gov.on.ca](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca)

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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.

## 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, 1869-1911</li> <li>▪ Deaths, 1869-1936</li> <li>▪ Marriages, 1801-1926 (predominantly 1869-1926)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note:</i> Births, 1911; Marriages, 1926; and Deaths, 1936 are <b>closed</b> until they are available on microfilm later in 2008.</p>	<p>The Office of the Registrar General holds indexes and registrations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Births, 1912-present</li> <li>▪ Marriages, 1927-present</li> <li>▪ Deaths, 1937-present</li> </ul>
	<p>For further details and contact information for the Office of the Registrar General, see: <i>Research Guide 202 Vital Statistics Bulletin</i></p>	
<b>Divorce Files</b>	<p>The Archives holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Divorce Files for all of Ontario, 1931-1978.</li> <li>▪ In addition: microfilm copies of Decrees Absolute and Nisi from York County (including Toronto), 1959-1978.</li> </ul>	<p>The local Courthouses of the Superior Court of Justice hold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Divorce Files, 1979-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, 1867-1930</li> </ul>
	<p>For further details and contact information for local Courthouses and the Office of the Law Clerk, see: <i>Research Guide 210 Finding Divorce Files in Ontario</i> <i>Research Guide 211 Finding York County Divorce Files</i></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.1793-1963 (except Prince Edward County, which we have up to 1930 only, and Manitoulin District, to 1961 only).</li> <li>▪ In addition: York County (including Toronto) Estate Files on microfilm up to 1967.</li> </ul>	<p>The County and District Surrogate Courthouses hold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Estate Files, 1964-present (except for York County which is available at the Archives on microfilm until 1967).</li> </ul> <p><i>Note:</i> The Prince Edward County Archives in Picton holds original estate files for Prince Edward County up to 1963.</p>
	<p>For further details and contact information for local Courthouses, see: <i>Research Guide 206 How To Find A Will</i></p>	
<b>Partnership/ Sole-Proprietorship Registrations</b>	<p>The Archives holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Registrations for all of Ontario, 1855-1991 (predominantly 1870-1991).</li> </ul> <p>For details, search the Archives Descriptive Database using the keyword “partnership” in the “Keyword in Title” field, or see <i>Inventory 55, vol. 1</i>, available in the Main Reading Room.</p>	<p>The Companies and Personal Property Security Branch, Ministry of Government Services (Service Ontario) holds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Registrations, 1992-present</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
<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 that were defunct as of 1907.</li> <li>▪ Post-1907 files: only files of defunct companies with Corporations File Numbers TC1 to TC3155.</li> <li>▪ Charter Books, 1907-1971. (Note: the more complete corporations files from Companies Branch should be used in preference to the Charter Books).</li> </ul> <p>For details, see <i>Inventary 55, vol. 2</i>, available in the Main Reading Room.</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, 1907-present</li> <li>▪ Corporations Files of defunct companies beginning with file number TC3156.</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>
<p><b>Crown Land Records</b></p>	<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> <li>▪ Survey diaries, field notes, reports [incomplete], 1780-1930</li> </ul> <p>For more information on using these and other Crown Land records for genealogical research, consult Research Guide 215, <i>From Grant to Patent: A Guide to Early Land Settlement Records, ca.1790 to ca.1850</i>.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Natural Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ issues copies of patents</li> <li>▪ has within its holdings a large quantity of Crown land survey diaries, field notes and reports, in addition to the ones held by the Archives</li> </ul> <p><i>For copies of patents, contact:</i> 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> 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>
<p><b>Land Registry Offices Records</b></p>	<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, 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. For details on our microfilm holdings, see <i>Inventary 61</i>, which is available in the Main Reading Room.</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> Some original copybooks, abstract indexes, and other documents have been placed by the Archives or by the LROs in local archives, museums, and other repositories.</p>

