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# Finding Divorce Files in Ontario

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**210** Research  
GuideMost Recent Update: July 2007

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## STEP 1: When Did the Divorce Take Place?

**1867-1930:** Only the Federal Parliament could grant a divorce in Ontario. Couples had to have a private members' bill requesting their divorce passed, usually without debate, through the Legislature. For a copy of the Resolution or Act of Parliament, you must contact:

**Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel  
Senate of Canada  
1310-4 Elgin Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A4  
613-992-2416**

**1931-1978:** Since 1930, the Supreme Court of Ontario has had the power to grant a divorce. The Archives of Ontario holds all 1931-1978 divorce files (except for **Wentworth County** divorce files which are available from the Archives up to and including 1979).

- **If the divorce occurred in York County (Toronto)**, please consult Archives of Ontario *Research Guide No. 211, Finding York County Divorce Files*.
- **If you only know the approximate year or location** where the divorce occurred, go to Step 2.
- **If you know the County / District, the file number, and the year** of the divorce, go to Step 3.

**1979-Present:** You must go to the local Courthouse of the Superior Court of Justice where the divorce was filed. The divorce files are only available through that Courthouse. See Table #2 at the end of this Research Guide for a list of Courthouse addresses and telephone numbers. However, to first find the file number and year of the divorce case, go to Step 2.

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## STEP 2: Use the Indexes to Find the Divorce File

To locate 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, use the appropriate index below.

### **1931-May 1949: Go to the Archives or to the appropriate Courthouse for the Index.**

While divorce files for these years are only available through the Archives, we do not have a province-wide index for them. The only indexes that were created were the local procedure/judgement books of **Supreme Court Actions** in each County or District Courthouse. While some of these books are at the Archives of Ontario, most are still at the local Courthouse where the divorce was filed. For the location of these index books for specific years, see Table #2 at the end of this Research Guide.

**June 1949-1969: Go to the Archives for the Index.** For these years, there are **Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute** (Series RG 22-5816) listing all the Decrees 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 issued by the court. This Index is available on microfilm in the Archives' Main Reading Room, weekdays 8:15 am-10:30 pm and Saturday 10:00 am-8:00 pm. To use the Index, follow the instructions below.

**NOTE:** Before 1985, the **Decree Absolute** (or **Final Judgement**) is the document that actually grants the divorce. If an Application for a Decree Absolute was not made or the Decree Absolute is not in the divorce file, the divorce proceedings was not completed and the couple may still be legally married.

**For the years June 1949-October 1964:** Using Table #1 below, find the microfilm reel containing the Index for the year that the Decree Absolute was applied for (usually the same year that the divorce was granted) and look up the married surname. Record the application date of the Decree Absolute and the city where the divorce was granted. Unfortunately, the Index does not give the file number which is necessary to order the Divorce File. For this information, consult the "County/District" column of Table #2 at the end of this Research Guide to find which Courthouse handled the divorce proceedings. The Table will say whether the index for the year needed is at the Archives or still at the Courthouse.

**For the years November 1964-1969:** Using Table #1 below, find the microfilm reel containing the Index for the year that the Decree Absolute was applied for (usually the same year that the divorce was granted) and look up the married surname. Record the file number (generally the number on the first line), the year, and the city from the "Place-Writ No." column. Once this information is recorded, go to Step 3.

**TABLE #1: Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute  
(Available on microfilm in the Archives' Main 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	1970-1978*	MS 5094

\* The Index for these years lists divorces begun before June 1968 but where the Application for the Decree Absolute was not completed until 1970-1978.

**July 1968-Present: Call the Central Registry of Divorce Proceedings.** This is a Canada-wide index of divorces begun in July 1968. By providing the Registry with the names of the divorcing parties (including the wife's maiden name if known), they can supply the number of the Courthouse where the divorce took place, and the file number and year needed to retrieve the file. They can be reached at:

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

The pre-1979 divorce files are only available through the Archives of Ontario; post-1978 divorce files are only available through the local Courthouse where the divorce was filed. See Table #2 at the end of this Research Guide for a list of Courthouse numbers, addresses and telephone numbers.

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### **STEP 3: Ordering a 1931-1978 Divorce File at the Archives of Ontario**

Once you have the file number, the year when the divorce case began, and the County or District where the divorce took place, you have the information needed to order the divorce file. At this point, you should decide:

**Do you need a certified copy of the Decree Absolute granting the divorce?** If so, divorce files are stored at an off-site location and 5 to 7 business days are needed to retrieve, copy and certify a Decree Absolute. There is a \$25.00 fee (plus GST and postage) for certification. The certified copy can be mailed to you or picked-up in person.

**Do you need to see the entire file?** If so, divorce files are stored at an off-site location and a minimum of 1 business day is needed to retrieve them to the Archives of Ontario. Original files can only be viewed in the Archives' Main Reading Room in Toronto, Ontario. Copies can be ordered by telephone if you know which documents are required. Photocopying charges may apply.

To request a divorce file, contact the Archives of Ontario as follows:

- Telephone: (416) 327-1600 or toll-free within Ontario at 1-800-668-9933.
- Fax: (416) 327-1999.
- Mail: Archives of Ontario  
77 Grenville Street, Suite 300  
Toronto ON M5S 1B3
- Email: *reference@archives.gov.on.ca*

**TABLE #2: Ontario Courthouse Locations and Supreme Court Indexes**

This Table lists: Ontario's Counties and Districts; the Central Registry of Divorce Proceedings' number for each Courthouse; each Courthouse's address and telephone number; and the location of the Supreme Court indexes.

- If the **index** for the County/District and year(s) that the divorce took place is listed as being at the Archives of Ontario ("**At AO**"), the Table below will give the **Reference Code** and **title** of the index that you need (e.g. Series RG 22- 1117, Judgement Books, 1931-1954). The Reference Archivists in the Archives' Main Reading Room will show you how to order this material.

Once you have the **file number**, the **year** the divorce case began, and the **County or District** where the divorce took place, return to Step 3.

- If the **index** for the County/District and year(s) that the divorce took place is not at the Archives, contact the local Court Registrar for access to their indexes. Or, for divorces filed after June 1968, contact the Central Registry of Divorce Proceedings in Ottawa at (613) 957-4519/4520. You will need the **file number** and the **year** the divorce case began.

Pre-1979 divorce files are only available through the Archives of Ontario, while post-1978 divorce files (post-1979 in the case of Wentworth County) are only available through the local Courthouse of the Superior Court of Justice where the divorce was filed.

County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
<b>Algoma</b> Court #3539	Superior Court of Justice 426 Queen Street East <b>Sault Ste. Marie</b> , Ontario P6A 1Z7 705-945-8000, ext. 450	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Brant</b> Court #3505	Superior Court of Justice 70 Wellington Street <b>Brantford</b> , Ontario N3T 2L9 519-752-7828	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 1117 Judgement Books, 1931 – 1954  After 1954, contact the Courthouse for indexes.

<b>County/District</b>	<b>Courthouse Address</b>	<b>Indexes are located at:</b>
<b>Bruce</b> Court #3544	Superior Court of Justice 207 Cayley Street PO Box 39 <b>Walkerton</b> , Ontario N0G 2V0 519-881-1052	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 1204 Procedure Book, 1932 – 1954  After 1954, contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Carleton</b> Court #3528	Superior Court of Justice 161 Elgin Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor <b>Ottawa</b> , Ontario K2P 2K1 613-239-1560	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 1304 Procedure Books, 1927 – 1935  After 1935, contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Cochrane</b> Court #3510	Superior Court of Justice 149 Fourth Avenue <b>Cochrane</b> , Ontario P0L 1C0 705-272-4256	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 1404 Procedure Book, 1921 – 1938  After 1938, contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Dufferin</b> Court #3527	Superior Court of Justice 10 Louisa Street, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor <b>Orangeville</b> , Ontario L9W 3P9 519-941-5802	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Durham, United Counties of Northumberland &amp; - see Northumberland &amp; Durham</b>		
<b>Durham</b> Court #3546	Superior Court of Justice 605 Rossland Road East <b>Whitby</b> , Ontario L1N 9G7 905-430-5800	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 1604 Procedure Books, 1931 – 1970  Series RG 22 – 1603 Divorce Procedure Books, 1971 – 1976  After 1976, contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Elgin</b> Court #3537	Superior Court of Justice 145 Curtis Street PO Box 310, Station Main <b>St. Thomas</b> , Ontario N5P 3T9 519-633-1720	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Essex</b> Court #3547	Superior Court of Justice 245 Windsor Avenue <b>Windsor</b> , Ontario N9A 1J2 519-973-6620	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 1804 Procedure Books/Indexes, 1931 – 1978
<b>Frontenac</b> Court #3519	Unified Family Court 469 Montreal Street <b>Kingston</b> , Ontario K7K 3H9 613-548-6789	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Glengarry- see Stormont, Dundas &amp; Glengarry</b>		
<b>Grenville- see Leeds</b>		
<b>Grey</b> Court #3529	Superior Court of Justice 611 9 <sup>th</sup> Avenue East <b>Owen Sound</b> , Ontario N4K 6Z4 519-370-2430	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.

<b>County/District</b>	<b>Courthouse Address</b>	<b>Indexes are located at:</b>
<b>Haldimand</b>  Court #3507	Superior Court of Justice 55 Munsee Street <b>Cayuga</b> , Ontario N0A 1E0 905-772-3335	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 2104 Procedure Book, 1931 – 1967  After 1967, consult the Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute (Step 2 in this Research Guide).
<b>Haliburton - see <i>Victoria</i></b>		
<b>Halton</b>  Court #3524	Superior Court of Justice 491 Steeles Avenue East <b>Milton</b> , Ontario L9T 1Y7 905-878-4165	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Hamilton-Wentworth - see <i>Wentworth</i></b>		
<b>Hastings</b>  Court #3502	Superior Court of Justice 235 Pinnacle Street <b>Belleville</b> , Ontario K8N 3A9 613-962-9106	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Huron</b>  Court #3513	Superior Court of Justice 1 Courthouse Square PO Box 400 <b>Goderich</b> , Ontario N7A 1M2 519-524-2519	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Kenora</b>  Court #3518	Superior Court of Justice 216 Water Street, Room 211 <b>Kenora</b> , Ontario P9N 1S4 807-468-2842	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 2504 Procedure Books, 1931 – 1959  After 1959, contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Kent</b>  Court #3508	Superior Court of Justice 425 Grand Ave. West <b>Chatham</b> , Ontario N7M 6M8 519-355-2200	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 2604 Procedure Books, 1931 – 1959  After 1959, contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Lambton</b>  Court #3538	Superior Court of Justice 700 Christina Street North <b>Sarnia</b> , Ontario N7V 3C2 519-333-2950	Contact the Reference Archivist for further information.
<b>Lanark</b>  Court #3532	Superior Court of Justice 43 Drummond Street East <b>Perth</b> , Ontario K7H 1G1 613-267-2021	Contact the Reference Archivist for further information.
<b>Leeds &amp; Grenville</b>  Court #3506	Superior Court of Justice 41 Court House Square <b>Brockville</b> , Ontario K6V 7N3 613-341-2800 #2266	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Lennox &amp; Addington</b>  Court #3525	Unified Family Court 41 Dundas Street West <b>Napanee</b> , Ontario K7R 1Z5 For Files Dated: 1979-1995: 613-354-3845 1995-Present: 613-354-3850	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.

<b>County/District</b>	<b>Courthouse Address</b>	<b>Indexes are located at:</b>
<b>Lincoln</b> Court #3536	Superior Court of Justice 59 Church Street, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor <b>St. Catharines</b> , Ontario L2R 7N8 905-988-6200	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Manitoulin</b> Court #3514	Superior Court of Justice 27 Phipps Street <b>Gore Bay</b> , Ontario P0P 1H0 705-282-2461	Contact the Reference Archivist for further information.
<b>Middlesex</b> Court #3522	Unified Family Court 80 Dundas Street Ground Floor, Unit A <b>London</b> , Ontario N6A 6A3 519-660-3044	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 3304 Procedure Books, 1931 – 1975  Series RG 22 – 3308 Divorce Procedure Book, 1976  After 1976, contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Muskoka</b> Court #3503	Superior Court of Justice 3 Dominion Street North <b>Bracebridge</b> , Ontario P1L 2E6 705-645-8793	Contact the Reference Archivist for further information.
<b>Niagara North - see Lincoln</b>		
<b>Niagara South - see Welland</b>		
<b>Nipissing</b> Court #3526	Superior Court of Justice 360 Plouffe Street <b>North Bay</b> , Ontario P1B 9L5 705-495-8309	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Norfolk</b> Court #3540	Superior Court of Justice 530 Queensway West Level 3 <b>Simcoe</b> , Ontario N3Y 4L2 519-426-6550	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 3604 Procedure Books, 1931 – 1965  After 1965, consult the Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute (Step 2 in this Research Guide).
<b>Northumberland &amp; Durham</b> Court #3509	Superior Court of Justice 860 William Street <b>Cobourg</b> , Ontario K9A 3A9 905-372-3751	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 3723 Procedure Books, 1931 – 1969
<b>Ontario (pre-1974 files) - see Durham</b>		
<b>Ottawa-Carleton - see Carleton</b>		
<b>Oxford</b> Court #3548	Superior Court of Justice 415 Hunter Street, PO Box 70 <b>Woodstock</b> , Ontario N4S 7W5 519-539-6187	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Parry Sound</b> Court #3530	Superior Court of Justice 89 James Street <b>Parry Sound</b> , Ontario P2A 1T7 705-746-4251	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.

County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
<b>Peel</b>  Court #3504	Superior Court of Justice 7755 Hurontario Street <b>Brampton</b> , Ontario L6W 4T6 905-456-4744	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 4104 Procedure Books, 1931 – 1966  After 1966, consult the Province-Wide Indexes to Applications for Decrees Absolute (Step 2 in this Research Guide).
<b>Perth</b>  Court #3541	Superior Court of Justice 17 George Street West <b>Stratford</b> , Ontario N5A 1A6 519-271-1850	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Peterborough</b>  Court #3533	Superior Court of Justice 470 Water Street <b>Peterborough</b> , Ontario K9H 3M3 705-876-3816	All files are arranged alphabetically by defendant name.
<b>Prescott &amp; Russell</b>  Court #3523	Superior Court of Justice 59 Court Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor <b>L'Orignal</b> , Ontario K0B 1K0 613-675-4567	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Prince Edward</b>  Court #3534	Superior Court of Justice 44 Union Street <b>Picton</b> , Ontario K0K 2T0 613-476-6236	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Rainy River</b>  Court #3512	Superior Court of Justice 333 Church Street <b>Fort Frances</b> , Ontario P9A 1C9 807-274-5961	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 4604 Procedure Book, 1931 – 1934  After 1934, contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Renfrew</b>  Court #3531	Superior Court of Justice 31 Riverside Drive <b>Pembroke</b> , Ontario K8A 8R6 613-732-8581	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG RG 22 – 4704 Procedure Books, 1934 – 1969
<b>Simcoe</b>  Court #3501	Unified Family Court 114 Worsley Street <b>Barrie</b> , Ontario L4M 1M1 705-739-6111	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Stormont, Dundas &amp; Glengarry</b>  Court #3511	Superior Court of Justice 29 Second Street West <b>Cornwall</b> , Ontario K6J 1G3 613-933-7500	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Sudbury</b>  Court #3542	Superior Court of Justice 155 Elm Street <b>Sudbury</b> , Ontario P3C 1T9 705-564-7600	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Thunder Bay</b>  Court #3535	Superior Court of Justice 277 Camelot Street Main Floor <b>Thunder Bay</b> , Ontario P7A 4B3 807-343-2700	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Timiskaming</b>  Court #3516	Superior Court of Justice 393 Main Street PO Box 609 <b>Haileybury</b> , Ontario P0J 1K0 705-672-3321	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.



County/District	Courthouse Address	Indexes are located at:
<b>Victoria</b>  Court #3521	Superior Court of Justice 440 Kent Street West <b>Lindsay</b> , Ontario K9V 6G8 705-324-1400	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Waterloo</b>  Court #3520	Superior Court of Justice 20 Weber Street East <b>Kitchener</b> , Ontario N2H 1C3 519-741-3200	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 5405 Judgement Books, 1929 – 1949  Series RG 22 – 5404 Procedure Books, 1949 – 1968  After 1968, contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Welland</b>  Court #3545	Superior Court of Justice 102 East Main Street <b>Welland</b> , Ontario L3D 3W6 905-735-0010	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Wellington</b>  Court #3515	Superior Court of Justice 74 Woolwich Street <b>Guelph</b> , Ontario N1H 3T9 519-824-4100	Contact the Courthouse for indexes.
<b>Wentworth</b>  Court #3517 (Supreme Court of Ontario)  Court #3549 (United Family Court)	<b>Filed before July 1979:</b> Superior Court of Justice 45 Main Street East <b>Hamilton</b> , Ontario L8N 2B7 905-645-5252  <b>Filed after June 1979:</b> Unified Family Court 55 Main Street West <b>Hamilton</b> , Ontario L8P 1H4 905-645-6250	<b>At AO:</b> Series RG 22 – 5704 Procedure Books, 1927 – 1970  After 1970, contact the relevant Courthouse at left for indexes.
<b>York</b>  Court #3543   Court #3550	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.  City of Toronto Family Law Office 393 University Avenue 10 <sup>th</sup> Floor <b>Toronto</b> , Ontario M5G 1E6 416-327-5542  Regional Municipality of York Civil Office Superior Court of Justice 50 Eagle Street West Room 2025 <b>Newmarket</b> , Ontario L3Y 6B1 905-853-4809	Consult Archives of Ontario Research Guide No. 211 <i>Finding York County Divorce Files</i> for more information.

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This Guide was formerly Information Handout 10.