

Using the Ontario Land Records Index ca. 1780 - 1920

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The Ontario Land Records Index provides access to Crown land records and some land-related material found in the Canada Company and Peter Robinson fonds. The index lists settlers who:

- requested Crown land on which to homestead
- were granted permission to lease or reside on a specific Crown land lot while completing their settlement duties
- received the patent awarding private ownership of a specific Crown land lot
- leased or purchased land from the Canada Company or were Peter Robinson settlers.

The original records are fragile and the material is only accessible on microfilm.

GETTING STARTED

Step 1: Finding the Index

There are two versions of the index:

- an index arranged alphabetically by settler's surname, and
- an index arranged alphabetically by township.

You can view the records in one of three ways:

1. Visit our Reading Room. (See our contact information at the end of this research guide.) A step-by-step pathfinder is available in the Reading Room.
2. Your local library or research institution may have a microfiche copy of the index.

3. Ask your public library to order it through the Microfilm Interloan Service from the Archives of Ontario. [Click here for more information about the Microfilm Interloan Service.](#)

Step 2: Using the Index

- Search every possible variation of a surname spelling (e.g., “Smith”, “Smyth”, “Smythe”), taking into account potential phonetic pronunciations, clerical and typographical errors.
- Copy the ENTIRE citation — one entry may lead to several different groups of records.

If you find an entry for a particular settler in the Index, that does not mean that the settler gained title to the property.

Being granted the right to settle on Crown land did not automatically result in private ownership of the property. To see if a settler eventually acquired ownership of the land, check the Index to Land Patents in:

- Series RG 53-56 arranged by surname, 1826-1967, or
- Series RG 53-55, arranged by township, 1793-1852.

Both are available in the Reading Room or through inter-library loan.

You may also want to check the Abstract Indexes to Deeds (arranged by township), available in the Reading Room. These records document private land transactions that took place after the patent was issued.

If you find the entry you are looking for, write down the information in it. The Sample Entries noted below show samples of the information that you will find. Tables 1 to 4 explain the codes that you will find in the OLRI.

If you would like to see a microfilm copy of the original records that the index refers to, write down the Archival Reference numbers and [click here to consult the "Understanding the Archives Reference Code in the Ontario Land Records Index."](#) It explains the archival reference code and is available in the microfiche binders in the Reading Room and on our web site.

Sample Entries

Sample Entries										
Sample 1:										
NAME OF LOCATEE	TOWNSHIP	LOT	CONC.	DATE ID.	ISSUE DATE	TRANS TYPE	TYPE FG	TYPE OF LEASE/SALE	ARCHIVAL REF	
									RG	Ser Vol PG
BLUE DOUGLAS	MADOC	N1/2 12	5	1	18200304	FG	M		01 C13	123 045
RESIDENCE YORK (T)				3	18351225					

Translation of sample entry 1: Douglas **Blue**, a resident of the **Town of York** (indicated by the **T**) at the time of his application, was granted the opportunity to settle in **Madoc Township** on the **north half** of **lot 12** in the **5th concession**. Permission was given by a **Free Grant** ("FG") because of his **Militia** service and was issued as a **Location Ticket** on **4 March 1820**. By **Christmas day 1835**, he had fulfilled his settlement duties. An Order-in-Council was issued, awarding the **Patent** that gave him private ownership of the property. This record appears in **Record Group 1** (Crown Land Records), **Series C-I-3** (Fiats and Warrants), **Vol. 123** (Register for Military Fiats), **Page 45**, which has been microfilmed on MS 693, Reel 138.

Sample 2:									
NAME OF LOCATEE	TOWNSHIP	LOT	CONC.	DATE ID.	ISSUE DATE	TRANS TYPE	TYPE FG	TYPE OF LEASE/SALE	ARCHIVAL REF RG Ser Vol PG
JENNING P RESIDENCE	DEVLIN	15	6EHR	5	18770624			S	CC B3 29 578

Translation of sample entry 2: **P. Jenning**, whose residence is not listed in the records, bought the title from the **Canada Company** ("CC") for **lot 15** in the **6th concession East of the Huron Road** ("EHR") in **Devlin Township** by way of a **sale** on **24 June 1877**. This record appears in the **Canada Company Fonds** (F 129) in **Series B3** (Registers & Deed Books), **Vol. 29** (Register for the Huron Tract), **Page 578**, which has been microfilmed on MS 729, Reel 3. The Canada Company fonds may include other documents pertaining to this transaction; [click here to access a description of the Canada Company fonds](#). Subsequent land transactions are documented in land registration records; [click here to access our research guide 231, Finding land registration records](#).

Table 1: Date Identity Code (DATE ID)

Code	Explanation
1	Location ticket -authorized a grantee to occupy a specific parcel of land.
2	Assignment -the locatee was not the first individual offered this parcel of land.
3	Patent -transfers ownership of a parcel of Crown land to a private individual or organization. To see whether an individual or organization acquired ownership of a parcel of land, check the Indexes to Land Patents in Series RG 53-55 (arranged by township, 1793-1852) and RG 53-56 (arranged by surname, 1826-1967). Copies of the patents must be obtained from the Ministry of Natural Resources, Lands and Natural Heritage Branch, Crown Land Registry, 300 Water Street, P.O. Box 7000, Peterborough, ON, K9J 8M5. Telephone 705-755-2106. Fax 705-755-2181.
4	Lease -involves the Canada Company, often converted into a Sale. The Crown also issued some leases.
5	Sale -involves the Canada Company (check for a preceding Lease).
6	Contract –an agreement to purchase land from the Canada Company.
7	Deed -a document transferring ownership of private property between individuals or organizations (found here with Canada Company entries).

Code	Explanation
8	Order-In-Council -a command by the Crown's representatives in Canada ordering a specific action, e.g. awarding an individual the right to reside on Crown land.
Issue Date	Listed by Year-Month-Day (e.g., 18370515 = 1837 May 15th). "c" means "circa" or "in approximately". "ND" means no date listed of land patent being issued.

Table 2: Transaction Type (TRANS TYPE)

Code	Explanation
FG	Free Grant -awards grantee the right to occupy a parcel of Crown land. Does not transfer ownership but proves the person qualified for this privilege for the reason given under the Type Of Free Grant (Table 4). Check Upper Canada Land Petitions at the National Archives of Canada (Ottawa, Ontario) for additional documentation.
L	Lease –involves the Canada Company, often converted into a Sale. Some Crown Leases were also issued.
S	Sale –involves either the Canada Company, resulting in the issuing of a deed or the Crown, resulting in the issuing of a patent. For information on the subsequent ownership of the property, see the Abstract Indexes to Deeds catalogued in the "Land, Municipal and Church Records Microfilm" section of the Main Reading Room card catalogue.
A	Assignment -locatee was not the first grantee offered a specific parcel of land.

Table 3: Type of Free Grant (TYPE FG)

Code	Explanation
OR	Old Regulations: no administrative fees were demanded.
NR	New Regulations: no administrative fees were demanded.
FF	Full Fees: all administrative costs paid by locatee.
UE	United Empire Loyalist: a settler resident in Upper Canada before 28 July 1789
DUE	Daughter of a United Empire Loyalist: check for a related UE listing giving the parent(s).
SUE	Son of a United Empire Loyalist: check for a related UE listing giving the parent(s).
LB	Land Board: certificates issued in the original four Districts of Upper Canada 1789-1794.
COMM	Heir and Devisee Commissions: a federal (1797-1804) and provincial (1805-1911) board appointed to hear disputed claims for land titles.
M	Military/ Militia Service: especially for War of 1812-1814 service. The microfilmed fiat and warrant will give the petitioner's rank and regiment.
MC	Military Claimant: a disbanded or pensioned soldier of the British Army.
ME	Military Emigrant: Perth and Richmond Settlement locatees of Lanark County, originally administered by Quarter Master General's Dept. of British Army during 1815-1822.
SE	Scotch Emigrants: grants offered in 1815 to sons of Military Emigrants (ME).
PR	Peter Robinson Immigrant: settlers in Peterborough region 1823-1826.
AA	Gratuitous: grant to a settler who was (a) judged destitute by a government board and/or (b) had all their administrative fees waived.
1819	Regulations of 5 January 1819: no fees to be collected until the grantees had performed their settlement duties, and only when the patent was issued.
1820	Regulations of 1 January 1820
1825	Regulations of 21 November 1825

Code	Explanation
V	Veteran: offered after 1901 for service during Fenian Raids (1860s) or South African Campaign (1899-1902).

Note: The qualifying regulations and administration fees charged to the settlers changed over time. After 1826, Free Grants were limited to United Empire Loyalist or Military/Militia claimants. All other immigrants and settlers had to purchase or pay the administrative fees to the Crown for their land.

Table 4: Type of Lease/Sale

Code	Explanation
CL	Clergy Reserve
CR	Crown Reserve
SCH	School Reserve
I	Indian Land

Archival Reference (ARCHIVAL REF)

Note: To understand the archival reference code and to identify the microfilm reel that contains the original entry, [click here to consult the "Understanding the Archives Reference Code in the Ontario Land Records Index"](#). This index is also available in the Reading Room.

MAKING CONTACT

Ready and Willing

Although unable to do your land 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: [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 access the Archives of Ontario's 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 "Research Guides and Tools" under "Accessing Our Collection" on the home page of the Archives website.

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