

# A Guide to Researching Genealogy At the Cloverdale Library

# Ontario



Photo: Archives of Ontario: Rowley Murphy collection, C 59-2-0-0-2, Archives of Ontario, I0013795.

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Surrey Libraries recognizes that our work takes place on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), q̓íćəy̓ (Katzie), kw̓ikw̓əłəm (Kwikwetlem), q̓w̓ɑ:n̓ələn̓ (Kwantlen), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), x̓m̓əθk̓w̓əy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nations and on the ancestral and traditional territory of the sc̓əwaθən məsteyəx̓w (Tsawwassen) First Nation.

This guide is intended to familiarize you with the Ontario family history resources in our Family History department's print and microfilm collections. It will also provide information and links to online resources that may further assist you in your research.

The Family History department is located at the Cloverdale branch of Surrey Libraries at 5642 176A street, Surrey, British Columbia.

Our Family History department has trained staff that are willing to assist you in your research. Please contact us at [familyhistory@surrey.ca](mailto:familyhistory@surrey.ca) or call us at 604 598 7328.

## Databases

A large part of family history research involves searching within databases. The Family History department has several databases for you to use at the library. The main databases we will refer to are the following:

- *Ancestry Library Edition*: International genealogy resource with the largest online Canadian family history collection, searchable by surname. It is available at all Surrey Libraries branches. Many digitized records are available for viewing, printing, and saving. A list of resources within Ancestry, relevant to Ontario, can be found by following these steps:
  - Click TWICE on the Search Tab
  - Under "explore by location" select Ontario
- *Family Search* Affiliate Library Access. A large, free database available anywhere that is administered by the Church of Latter-Day Saints and has many digitized collections not found elsewhere. Surrey Libraries has Affiliate Library status with Family Search, allowing users at the library to access many digital images of original documents that would otherwise be locked to home users. Available at all Surrey Libraries branches.
- *FindMyPast*. An international genealogy resource with a large collection of Canadian records, searchable by surname. Many digitized records are available for viewing, printing, and saving. Available only at our Cloverdale branch.
- *TheGenealogist*. A key site for British research, this database contains over 800 million records and includes collections not found in other databases. Its international holdings include emigration and military records for Canada, Australia, South Africa, and India, and Scottish directories from the 15th to 19th Century. The majority of its records are independently transcribed – useful for addressing indexing errors in other databases.
- *Points to the Past*. This is a gateway to a world-class collection of primary sources, made up of nearly 200 million pages of digitized historical content – maps, photos, newspapers, manuscripts, pamphlets, portraits, and much more. Large Canadian content. Includes a solid collection of UK historical newspapers from the 17th to 19th Centuries.

- *American Ancestors*. This database provides access to more than 1.4 billion records covering the United States, eastern Canada, the British Isles, continental Europe, and beyond. Many Canadian ancestors either emigrated from the US, or through the US from Europe, and had family on both sides of the border. This database includes one of the most extensive online collections of early American genealogical records, and the largest collection of US Catholic records online. Available at Cloverdale branch only.

## Census Records

### GENERAL

Census returns are a very useful resource for family historians. You can learn a variety of information about your family, where they were born and where they lived, what they did for a living, their religion, and much more.

Remember that Ontario was one of the first four provinces that became our country of Canada in 1867. The area that is now Ontario was known as Upper Canada from 1792 – 1840, then Canada West from 1841 to 1867, and this will be reflected in the census entries for the applicable years.

### ONLINE

Census returns Ontario are available online and searchable by surname. There are many census resources available for Ontario. Of note, the most recent census that includes Ontario is 1921.

Below is a list of websites where you can find Canadian Census records.

- FamilySearch.org: [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). The 1921 Census is not available on this site.
- Ancestry Library Edition (available at all branches of Surrey Libraries) <https://www.surreylibraries.ca/services/family-history>
- Automated Genealogy: <http://www.automatedgenealogy.com/index.html>  
1901, 1906, 1911 and partial 1851 census available
- Library & Archives Canada: <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/Pages/census.aspx>
  - Information centre for all Canadian censuses (1640-1926) and links to searchable databases.

### MICROFILM

Microfilms are available at our Family History department for all federal census records taken in Ontario, from the early 1800s to 1911. Census films are *not* organized by name, but by place - you must know the geographical location of your ancestors to use microfilm. Various print finding aids will help you identify the microfilm you need. Please ask staff for assistance to locate these items.

- **1901:** *Catalogue of Census Returns on Microfilm, 1901*
- **1911:** *Canada Census Finding Aid*.  
This is a full print out of the same index found online at:  
<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1911/Pages/search-help.aspx>

- **1666-1891 Census:** There are several copies of a Finding Aid called *Catalogue of Census Returns on Microfilm 1666-1891*, which includes Ontario. The Aid is organized by province and district with relevant microfilm numbers noted for each location.

## PRINT

The census/directory shelving unit also includes numerous print transcriptions and indexes for Ontario Census records, primarily for the earlier years. Most are in plastic bins labelled by census year and county. These are easy to use and could help if you encounter difficulties with online transcription errors – e.g. perhaps these transcribers offer a different interpretation of spelling.

## Vital Records

Official civil registrations in Ontario began in 1869, many years after established colonial settlement. Full compliance was not achieved until approximately 1871. Ontario researchers going back further in time may be dealing with either parish records or British Colonial records. Most pre-confederation vital records were known as “registers” and were associated to a particular religious denomination. Keep in mind that boundaries and place names for the Ontario area changed significantly from the early days.

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Births:         | 1869-1917 |
| Marriages:      | 1869-1938 |
| Marriage Bonds: | 1803-1845 |
| Deaths:         | 1869-1948 |

You can find “some” marriages 1801-1869 and “some” births from 1830-1869 but there are many gaps.

Remember to request a photocopy of the *registration* document as this carries the most information.

## ONLINE

Archives of Ontario has an excellent information page found here; <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/tracing/vsmain.aspx> that describes all matters pertaining to Vital Records for Ontario.

Marriage Bonds for Upper Canada (now Ontario) are searchable online through Library and Archives Canada

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/vital-statistics-births-marriages-deaths/marriage-bonds/Pages/search.aspx>

The following databases have many vital records collections for Ontario:

- *Ancestry Library Edition* (available at all Surrey Branches)
- *Family Search.org* (free account)
- *FindMyPast* (available at Cloverdale Branch only) has an Ontario Birth Index 1860-1920
- *Ontario Vital Statistics Project* – a free website

## MICROFILM

The Family History department holds microfilm index reels for Ontario births, marriages and deaths beginning in 1869, including separate indexes for items like Marriage Index Retakes, Delayed Registrations, and District Marriage Registers.

You can also search Ancestry Library Edition. Our guidebook, *Canadian Family History Resources*, has instructions and film numbers in section 5: pages 5 – 22. You can always ask staff for assistance.

Our Family History department also has some donated church films from Perth, Ontario in our collection. They are labelled Z-20001 to Z-20005 and found in our microfilm cabinets.

## PRINT

Our Family History department has a large selection of vital notices for Ontario. Many of these items are extracted notices from newspapers, which are then made into books. Some are vital records from church sources. They can be found in the bookshelves under the call number range 929.3712 to 929.3713. Some examples are below. These are excellent resources in that they often have records that are not found online.

Britnell, W.E. ed. 1979. *County Marriage Registers of Ontario, Canada: 1858-1869 [38 volumes]*. Agincourt, Ontario: Generation Press.  
Library call number - GEN 929.3713 COU

Reid, William D. 1980. *Death Notices of Ontario*. Lambertville, N.J.: Hunterdon House.  
Library call number - GEN 929.3713 REI 1980

Rumpel, Renie. Ed. 1997. *Roman Catholic Marriage Registers in Ontario, Canada: 1828-1870*. Waterloo, Ontario: Ontario Indexing Services, 1997.  
Library call number - GEN 929.3713 ROM 1997

## Divorce Records

### ONLINE

After confederation in 1867 and up until 1963, people wanting to divorce were required to place a notice in the *Canada Gazette*. The *Acts of Divorce (1841-1968)* database at Libraries and Archives Canada, includes references to divorce acts published in the Statutes of the Province of Canada, Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, and Statutes of Canada and Journals of the Senate of Canada. Please follow this link:

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/vital-statistics-births-marriages-deaths/divorce-1841-1968/Pages/acts-divorce-1841-1968.aspx>

## Church Records

As with vital statistics records, churches may limit access to their parish registers based on an individual's privacy. The Archives of Ontario has a list of over 60 Ontario churches whose records are kept in their archives. See here for a detailed list: [http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/microfilm/church\\_records.aspx](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/microfilm/church_records.aspx).

Keep in mind that some religions performed baptisms only for adults, not children.

Check Archives of Ontario here for listings of various church denominations for records, as you may need to contact the churches/synods/repositories directly

with your query:

[http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/microfilm/ontario\\_religious\\_records.aspx](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/microfilm/ontario_religious_records.aspx)

## **MICROFILM**

The Family History department has some Ontario Parish Records on microfilm. They are listed in the library's guide, *Canadian Family History Resources*, on pages 5-26, and 5-27. We also have some donated church films from Perth, Ontario in our collection. They are labelled Z-20001 to Z-20005 and found in our microfilm cabinets.

## **PRINT**

Britnell, W.E. ed. 1979. *County Marriage Registers of Ontario, Canada: 1858-1869 [38 volumes]*. Agincourt, Ontario: Generation Press.  
Library call number - GEN 929.3713 COU

Rumpel, Renie. Ed. 1997. *Roman Catholic Marriage Registers in Ontario, Canada: 1828-1870*. Waterloo, Ontario: Ontario Indexing Services, 1997.  
Library call number - GEN 929.3713 ROM 1997

Langhorn, John. 1980. *Anglican Registers 1787 - 1814*. Kingston, On: Ontario Genealogical Society.  
Library call number - GEN 929.3713 LAN 1980

## **Cemetery Records**

Most cemetery records are maintained at the local level (church, town, municipal or city hall).

## **ONLINE**

The Ontario Cemetery Finding Aid (OCFA) offers an online database of over 3 million interments. Although this database is a large and worthwhile tool, it is by no means complete: <http://ocfa.islandnet.com/>

*Find a Grave.* <https://www.findagrave.com>

*Canadian Headstones Project:* <https://canadianheadstones.com>

*CanadaGenWeb's Cemetery project:*  
<https://cemetery.canadagenweb.org/>

*Canadian Genealogy* Select your province of interest from this page:  
<http://www.canadiangenealogy.net/index.htm>

The Ontario Genealogical Society has a cemetery index on their website:  
<https://ogs.on.ca/resources/cemeteries-name-indexes/>

*Note:* Many private and public cemeteries are moving their interment lists online. You must check each one on a case by case basis and call the appropriate cemetery directly if no interments are found online.

Ancestry Library Edition and FamilySearch.org also have a collection of cemetery/gravestone records, and there are several fee-based sites available on

the internet as well. It is also useful to contact the genealogy society in your location of interest for their holdings.

## **MICROFILM**

Ontario Cemetery Recordings, a collection from the Ontario Genealogical Society, is partially available on film in at the Cloverdale Branch, with the remainder available through the Ontario Archives via interlibrary loan. The Ontario archives provides a list of counties and the corresponding microfilms here:

<http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/microfilm/cemetery.aspx>

MS 451, Reels 1 – 19: Cloverdale Branch

MS 451, Reels 20 – 136: Ontario Archives

## **PRINT**

The Family History department has many books containing transcriptions of the text on headstones. To find out if we have cemetery record transcriptions for a certain place, search the library catalogue using the keywords “cemeteries – Ontario.” You can also browse our bookshelves in the section 929.5097 for Ontario Cemeteries or 929.507 for general information about searching cemeteries. Some examples:

Ontario Genealogical Society. 1991. *Grenville County Cemeteries*. Brockville, On: Leeds & Brockville Branch, OGS.  
Library call number – 929.709713 GRE

Grenville County Historical Society. 1983. *North Augusta Cemeteries, Augusta Twp. Grenville County*. Brockville: Leeds & Grenville Branch, OGS.  
Library call number – 929.70913 GRE 1983

Ronnow, Verna, & Ontario Genealogical Society. 1987. *Inventory of Cemeteries in Ontario*. 1987. Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society  
Library call number – 929.70913 INV 1987

## **Directories**

City directories are a great resource to fill in the gaps from Census records. They are generally published annually, and contain information such as address, occupation, and marital status.

## **ONLINE**

Different sites contain different collections of dates and locations covered:

*FamilySearch.org* – FamilySearch, Library and Archives Canada, and the Ontario Genealogical Society are in the process of digitizing all of the Vernon’s directories for Ontario. These are available on FamilySearch and the collection will grow as the digitization project continues.

*Canadian Directories Collection* – Library and Archives Canada – is a database of scanned, microfiche versions of pre-1901 Canadian directories. There are 95 directories in the Canadian Directories Collection database, including a comprehensive collection of directories for Ottawa (spanning 1861 to 1901).  
<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/directories-collection/Pages/directories-collection.aspx>

Toronto Public Library – digitized Toronto City Directories from 1797-1969.  
<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/history-genealogy/lh-digital-city-directories.jsp>

*Ancestry Library Edition*, available at all Surrey Libraries branches, also has a collection of Ontario directories.

Internet Archive - <http://archive.org/search.php?query=directories%20toronto>

*The Ancestor Hunt* - <https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/free-online-ontario-city-directories/>

OnGenealogy.com also provides links to many Ontario directories here:  
<https://www.ongenealogy.com/listings/ontario-online-historical-directories/>

## PRINT

The Family History department has a number of print directories for Ontario. Some examples:

Crowder, Norman Kenneth. 1988. *Inhabitants of York County, Ontario, 1850 / Roswell's City of Toronto and County of York Directory*. Nepean, Ont.: Crowder Enterprises  
Library call number - GEN 929.37135 INH 1988

Ontario Genealogical Society. 1989. *Brown's Toronto City and Home District Directory, 1846-47*. Toronto: Halton-Peel Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society.  
Library call number - GEN 917.1354 BRO 1989

Esquesing Historical Society. 1983. *Peel and Halton Directory 1866-67*. Georgetown, On: Esquesing Historical Society, 1983  
Library call number - GEN 917.1353 FUL 1983

Elliot, Noel Montgomery. 1984. *People of Ontario, 1600-1900: Alphabetized Directory of the People, Places, and Vital Dates*. London, On: Genealogical Research Library.  
Library call number – 929.3713 PEO

Elliot, Noel Montgomery. 1994. *The Central Canadians 1600 to 1900: an alphabetized directory of the people, places, and vital dates*. Toronto. Genealogical Research Library  
Library call number – GEN 929.3713 CEN

## Newspapers and Magazines

### ONLINE

*Canadian Genealogy Historic Newspapers*  
<http://www.cangenealogy.com/ontario-news.html>

Library & Archives Canada: <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/newspapers/newspaper-collection/Pages/microform-holdings-on-act.aspx>

List of newspapers available on microfilm.

The Toronto Public Library has the *Toronto Star* <https://www.thestar.com/about/archive-search.html> with over 110 years of historical newspaper digitized. However, it is not searchable unless you have a Toronto library card, but enquiries are welcome. Details are in the article.

Ancestry Library Edition and FamilySearch.org also have a collection of historical newspapers.

TheAncestorHunt.com provides a comprehensive list of links to historical newspaper sites for all provinces here <https://theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html> (scroll down to the Canada section).

Canadiana.ca provides a searchable collection of digitized historical newspapers for all provinces: <https://www.canadiana.ca/collection-serials>.

Library and Archives Canada provides a geographical list newspapers by province and then by city/town names. Some of the titles have links to digitized copies of the newspapers:

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/newspapers/newspaper-collection/Pages/microform-holdings-geographical-list.aspx>

This is a good resource for determining the name of the newspaper in the research location of interest. If the newspaper of interest does not provide a link to a digitized copy, it may be available by searching for it on Canadiana.ca

<https://www.canadiana.ca/collection-serials>

Google News Archive

<https://news.google.com/newspapers>

This resource requires that the newspaper name is known. If you are unsure of the newspaper name, please see our print resources section below.

Archives of Ontario provides an online index of newspapers that are mostly available through microfilm interlibrary loan (via Surrey Libraries Family History Department):

[http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access/documents/l23\\_newspapers.pdf](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access/documents/l23_newspapers.pdf)

The Ontario Community Newspapers portal offers a searchable database index of their large collection, which then provides contact information to assist researchers in accessing the full article.

<https://news.ourontario.ca/search>

An excellent, although fee-based, site is Newspapers.com, which has good coverage of many smaller newspapers in Canada. Sometimes free short trials of this paid subscription database are available.

Other good resources for finding digitized copies of historical newspapers would be found by contacting the local public library, archive, or genealogy association closest to the area of interest. Please ask a staff member if assistance is needed.

## **PRINT**

While the Family History Department does not hold any print copies of historical newspapers, we do have some print resources to assist you if you do not know the

name of the newspapers that were in publication in the period and place of your research area. Please ask staff for assistance.

The Family History department carries the Ontario Genealogical Society's newsletter, *Families*, available to browse or borrow.

## MICROFILM

The Archives of Ontario offers a collection of historical newspapers on microfilm, many of which are available through inter-library loan through our Family History Department. See the following links for searching and access information.

Newspaper holdings at the Archives of Ontario:

[http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access/documents/research\\_guide\\_212\\_newspapers.pdf](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access/documents/research_guide_212_newspapers.pdf)

Index to original and microfilmed newspaper collections at the Archives of Ontario:

[http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access/documents/l23\\_newspapers.pdf](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access/documents/l23_newspapers.pdf)

## Wills and Estate Records

Prior to 1858, wills were probated by either the provincial Probate Court or the local Surrogate Courts. The Probate Court dealt with larger estates having property valued over £5, and also those with holdings in more than one County or District. The Surrogate Courts dealt with smaller estates and those holding property in a single County or District. In 1858, these responsibilities were merged, and the Probate Court was abolished. Currently Ontario has Surrogate Court records from 1858-1970 available to the public. Please be aware that there are many types of files for Estates some of which are: administration, guardianship, probated wills and more.

## ONLINE

Archives of Ontario has an excellent pathfinder for Estate records from 1793-1970 which can be found here;

[http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/microfilm/c\\_efile.aspx](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/microfilm/c_efile.aspx). Surrey Libraries can borrow microfilms from Archives of Ontario. Please use this site as a starting point. There are several surname indexes which are an easy search for your deceased family member. This site will reference to various microfilm numbers, which our Family History Department may already have. Please ask a staff member for further assistance.

In some cases, probated wills were associated to the land records. If your deceased person owned land at the time of his death, you can check [www.onland.ca](http://www.onland.ca) to see if his or her will has stored within the land records. There are many steps to this process, but in order to begin, you must know the land description of the deceased person. The next steps are to go into OnLand and check the historical books, and then the Abstract Parcel Register. There will be a notation in the far-left column noting "will" and then followed by the deceased person's name. If the name is located, contact OnLand and provide all the details from the OnLand record and request the will. Note, you may have to employ a professional researcher who has to rights to research within the Land Registry Offices in Ontario.

## MICROFILM

As stated above, our Family History Department holds many of the Archives of Ontario Microfilms that relate to Estate records. Please check our book *Canadian Family History Resources* online or in print at Cloverdale Branch for specific details on what particular microfilms we have. Estate records are found in Chapter 8.

## Passenger & Immigration Lists

Passenger lists were not required in Canada before 1865. Before this date, record keeping was inconsistent. For the earlier time period, researchers will have to rely on a variety of websites, microfilm collections and print material, in hopes of finding an entry. Keep in mind that many of our ancestors arrived in Ontario by means other than a passenger ship. Especially since the big ships were unable to make it down the St. Lawrence River.

Form 30A - 1919-1924: These individual passenger forms were used as early as 1919, yet some passengers still appear on sheet manifests as late as 1922. The information provided can be very helpful.

## ONLINE

### Ancestry Databases at the library:

- Canadian Passenger Lists: 1865-1935 - searchable by name, port, ship, arrival/departure dates, with digital images of records
- Canadian Immigration Records: 1790-1906 - searchable by name. Transcriptions of records.
- Border Crossings from Canada to US: 1895-1956 - searchable by name, location, with digital images of records.

**Library & Archives Canada:** <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/Pages/introduction.aspx>

- Home page for information on passenger lists and links to resources for ship's passenger lists (ocean arrivals) as well as border entries.
- Naturalization records 1915-1951  
<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/citizenship-naturalization-records/naturalized-records-1915-1951/Pages/introduction.aspx>
- Upper Canada and Canada West Naturalization Records. 1828-1850  
<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/citizenship-naturalization-records/naturalization-upper-western-1828-1850/Pages/introduction.aspx>

## MICROFILM

Microfilms for all Canadian incoming passenger lists are available in our Family History Department. The films are organized by port of arrival and date. If neither of these is known, you can search the Canadian passenger list records or Canadian census records on Ancestry. Census records often include the year a person arrived in Canada. For details on the microfilms, see section 3-10 of the library's guide: *Canadian Family History Resources: A Guide to the Materials Held at Cloverdale Library*.

*Peter Robinson Papers.* This microfilm series relates to Irish arrivals to Canada, specifically to the Peterborough area in the early 1800's. Some passenger records are included. MS 12, Reels 1-3

*Toronto Immigration Office Records: Hawke Papers.* From 1831 -1892 records were compiled by Anthony Bowden Hawke (and his successor J.A. Donaldson), the first specialized emigration agent in Canada. He was responsible for settlement in what was known as Upper Canada. MS 6909-61917

*Colonial Office Records Index:* Contains names taken from the correspondence of the British Secretary of State C-4252

## **PRINT**

There are also numerous books of passenger list arrivals and a variety of books on the topic of immigration to Canada. Browse the bookshelves in the **929.3** area. General books about Immigration are in the **325** area.

Filby, William P., and Lower, Dorothy, compilers. *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index (PILI): A guide to published records of more than 1,775,000 passengers who came to the New World between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries.* Detroit: Gale Research 1990-.  
Library call number GEN 929.3 PAS

McCuaig, Carol Bennett. *Peter Robinson Settlers.* Renfrew, Ontario: Juniper Books, 1987.  
Library call number GEN 971.38 EBN 1987

## **Border Entry Records**

### **ONLINE**

Ancestry Library Edition includes Border Crossings: From U.S. to Canada, 1908-1935 that covers border entries into Ontario at various locations along the US border. Ancestry also has Border Crossings from Canada to the U.S., 1895-1956.

The Ancestry database also includes Form 30A records: from 1919 to 1924. During this time, the federal government required that individual forms be completed and submitted when crossing the border into Canada.

### **MICROFILM**

The library has microfilm records of border crossings from the U.S. to Canada between 1908-1919, organized by date and port. To view a list of ports of entry and the corresponding film numbers, check section 3-41 in the library's guide: *Canadian Family History Resources: A Guide to the Materials Held at the Cloverdale Library.*

## **Land Records**

Finding land records can be challenging research that may take considerable time. Our guide *Canadian Family History Resources* offers instruction about how to locate Ontario land records, across a wide range of record sets. These include Crown land, patents, sales, petitioners, grantees, and wills. You will also need to consult one or more of the Archives of Ontario's excellent guides for researching land records, several of which are noted in the paragraphs below.

The Archives of Ontario has also kindly provided our department with an excellent resource guide, "Researching Land Records at the Archives of Ontario", which is available in print in our department. Please ask staff for a copy.

For a list of the Archives of Ontario guides for land records, see this page and scroll down to the Land Records section:

[http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/tracing/the\\_records.aspx](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/tracing/the_records.aspx)

These guides are critical in helping you find your way through this potentially complex research.

The best starting point would be to first study the Archives of Ontario's research guide 215 entitled: *Early Land Records from the 1780s to the 1850s*. This should help you with any unfamiliar legal terminology and processes used in earlier times, and with understanding the many types of documents available that were generated during the land grant process.

[http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access/documents/research\\_guide\\_215\\_grant\\_to\\_patent.pdf](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access/documents/research_guide_215_grant_to_patent.pdf)

Documents covering original transactions in which land is "alienated" from the Crown and granted to homesteaders are generally held separately from documents about subsequent changes of ownership. The original grant from the crown, as well as the secondary transactions of changes in ownership are usually found in Ontario's Land Titles Registry, now online at OnLand (see below).

United Empire Loyalists (UEL) arrived by the thousands to Ontario in the late 1700s. If your ancestors can be found in Ontario this far back, there is a good chance they were Loyalists. People researching Loyalists will benefit from studying land records; in particular, land petitions. In return for being loyal to the Crown, UEL people were entitled to land grants. They applied for these grants with "Land Petitions." Our guide book *Canadian Family History Resources*, lists the various films with these petitions and other related documents found in Land Books, under the heading Land Records, section 6 -1.

If you are looking for original homestead records, including land grants to United Empire Loyalists, the Ontario Archives guide 205, *Ontario Land Records Index* might be a good place to start. This index consolidates numerous land record documents under one index. Instructions for use can be found at this site:

[http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access//documents/research\\_guide\\_205\\_land\\_records.pdf](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access//documents/research_guide_205_land_records.pdf)

FamilySearch.org also has an excellent wiki guide to Ontario Land Records:

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ontario\\_Land\\_and\\_Property](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ontario_Land_and_Property)

Library and Archives Canada is another good starting point and also has many collections of records regarding Ontario land. To get started check here:

<https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/genealogy-family-history/pages/land-records.aspx> . Their "Research Guides and Other Resources" list is found here (land records are half-way down that list): <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/genealogy-family-history/pages/genealogy-family-history.aspx#result-DTResearchGuides-genealogy-english>

Note that many of Library and Archive Canada's microfilms have been digitized for online searching, specifically the Upper Canada Land Books, and have uploaded to to Heritage Canadiana. You will need to know the microfilm number you require,

which can be researched from the above two links:

[http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/ooциhm.lac\\_mikan\\_205068](http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/ooциhm.lac_mikan_205068)

## ONLINE

The Land Registry office of Ontario, ONLand, plays a crucial role in historical record keeping for Ontario land records. (Up until the 1900's most wills were registered with the Land Record Office as well.) Of note, private land transactions were not legally bound to be recorded until 1846.

You will need to know the location (Land Registry Office, aka LRO) of the person/property you are looking for. If you do not know the location, resources such as censuses, directories, and our print book *The Central Canadians, 1600-1900* (see print section below) can assist you. Once you have selected the LRO and clicked on search, on the next page select "Historical Books" from the "Find Your Land Registry Service" list. <https://www.onland.ca/ui/> From there, select "Browse Books." On the next page, select "Browse Abstract Parcel Register Books", and that will give you a list of townships and municipalities within that LRO. From there select your municipality and the associated "Details" link, which will provide a digitized microfilm with the land transactions and associated personal names involved.

Aside from the guides, the Archives of Ontario can also be contacted for assistance. <https://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/about/contact.aspx>

If you have identified a particular microfilm that is not digitized online and not available in our Family History Department, it may have been uploaded to Heritage Canadiana, and you can search for it here: <http://heritage.canadiana.ca/>. If it is located at the Archives of Ontario, you may be able to request it from there through our Interlibrary Loan service; ask staff for assistance.

## MICROFILM

Our Family History department holds microfiche and microfilm regarding Ontario land records. This information can be found in our guide; *Canadian Family History Resources* pages 6-4 to 6-14.

The three main categories are;

- Upper Canada Land Petitions and Land Books C-10810 to C-10836
- Upper Canada Land Books 1764-1867 C-100 to C-110
- Ontario Computerized Land Records Index 1780's to 1920 Microfiche by surname or location

## PRINT

The McGill Historical Atlas project created a collection of historical atlases for each of the Ontario counties, focused on the late 1800s. This is a unique and valuable resource that describes the county, its towns and smaller communities, many of its prominent residents, and includes charcoal drawings of many homes. It also provides maps of the lots of most communities and often includes the surnames of the owners of the lots. It is worth examining if your research includes this period. The series is shelved in the Family History Department's map stand. While many researchers prefer the print atlases because of the large format, there is an online version at this link as well:

<https://digital.library.mcgill.ca/countyatlas/default.htm>

Corupe, Linda. *From Settler to Land Owner*, Records of the First Heir & Devisee Commission. 2023.  
This is a series documenting records of the first Heir & Devisee Commissions for the districts of Midland, Johnstown, Eastern, London/Western, Home/Newcastle/Niagara.  
Library call number GEN 929.3713 FRO

Murphy, Sharon L. *Researching Canadian Land Records*. Toronto: Heritage Productions. 2001.  
Library call number GEN 929.1072 MUR

*A Guide to Ontario Land Registry Records*. Toronto: The Society, 1994  
Library call number GEN 929.3713 GUI 1994

McFall, A. David and Jean McFall. *Land Records in Ontario Registry Offices: a Genealogical Research Guide*. Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, 1982.  
GEN 929.3713 MCF 1982

For assistance in locating where your ancestor may have lived:  
*The Central Canadians, 1600-1900*. Toronto: Genealogical Research Library, 1994.  
Library call number GEN 929.3713 CEN

## Place Names

### ONLINE

Ontario Locator – directory of place names for Ontario.  
<https://canadagenweb.org/specialprojects/ontario-locator/>

### PRINT

Gartner, M. E. and C. F. Prono. *Townships of the Province of Ontario, Canada: a complete index of all the townships & districts of Ontario (includes area maps)*. Ontario Genealogical Society, Nipissing District Branch, North Bay, Ontario, 1992.  
Library call number GEN 971.3 TOW 1992

Mika, Nick, and Helma Mika. 1977. *Places in Ontario: their name origins and history, Parts, I, II, and III*. Mika Publishing Company, Belleville, Ontario, 1977.  
Library call number GEN 971.3 MIK.

## Atlases & Maps

Our Family History department has a collection of illustrated historical maps for the counties of Ontario. These are filed on the map stand in our department.

Of particular note there is the McGill Historical Atlas project created a collection of historical atlases for each of the Ontario counties, focused on the late 1800s. This is a unique and valuable resource that describes the county, its towns and smaller communities, many of its prominent residents, and includes charcoal drawings of many homes. It also provides maps of

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<https://digital.library.mcgill.ca/countyatlas/default.htm>

## Hudson's Bay Company Indexes

The Hudson's Bay Company was active in the development of the western provinces since its establishment in 1670. However, Hudson's Bay Company's early years started in Ontario. Many types of records exist including contracts, personal accounts, pension records, estate records and census information on some First Nations peoples.

### ONLINE

The Archives of Manitoba houses the Hudson's Bay Company archives and research information is available here:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/>

Note, there is an easy-to-use guide to the HBC records here:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/resource/filmist.html>

### MICROFILM

Cloverdale library has three Hudson's Bay Company record indexes on microfilm, that act as detailed finding aids to what's available at the Hudson Bay Archives in Manitoba. They are; 20M1, 1M1252 and 1M1253. The remainder of these records can be ordered by interlibrary loan from the Manitoba Archives. Please ask staff for assistance.

### PRINT

Payne, Michael. *The Most Respectable Place in the Territory: Everyday life in Hudson's Bay Company Service York Factory 1788 to 1870*. Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites, Environment Canada, 1988.  
Library call number GEN 971.2701 Pay 1988

## Biographical Resources

### ONLINE

*Canadian Who's Who*

<https://canadianwhoswho.ca/>

### PRINT

Search the library catalogue under the subject: Ontario – BIOGRAPHY for a list of books. Check the indexes of these books for the surnames of people you are looking for. A few examples here:

Beers, J.H. & Company. *A Commemorative Biographical Record of the County of Kent, Ontario (1904)*. Global Heritage Press, Milton, Ontario, 2005.  
Library call number: GEN 971.333 COM 2005

Watson, Henry B. *Pioneer Sketches of Kent and Elgin Counties: transcribed from the Highgate Monitor*. Chatham, Ontario, Kent Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society, 1992.  
Library call number GEN 971.333 WAT 1992.

Note that the department's local history books (see below) will also contain biographies of local residents.

## Local Histories

Local histories can be an excellent resource for filling in many different types of family history details. Local histories can have detailed information about the people who lived there, including photos and biographies.

### ONLINE

The University of Calgary's digital collections include a number of local history books for Ontario, and can be searched here: Note that the books are not in place-name order, so you will need to scroll through the titles. A sort filter is available (top right) but only provides title sorting. Once you find a title of interest, select it and it will load for online reading. If you need a larger window, click on the little page icon (top right of the viewing pane) for a full screen view.

Google Books: <http://books.google.ca/bkshp?hl=en&tab=wp> Search by place name for access to digital books

### PRINT

The library has local histories for several communities in Ontario. To see if the library has a history of a particular town or area, look in the library catalogue using "**Subject browse**" and terms: Ontario – History. A few examples:

Gateman, Laura M. (ed.). *The History of the Township of Brant 1854-1979*. The Brant Township Historical Society, Elmwood, Ontario 1979.  
Library call number: GEN 971.321 HIS 1979.

Lepard, Ivy. *A Century Plus in Uthoff 1879 to 1990*. 1991.  
Library call number 971.317 LEP

## Indigenous Peoples and Métis Nation

***Please refer also to our separate Indigenous / Métis genealogy research guide for more resources for researching Indigenous ancestors.***

First Nations, Inuit, Métis are collectively referred to as Indigenous peoples.

***An important note on bias and colonial records language in historical records:*** Language in historical records reflects the culture of the times in which they were written. As such, you will see terms we would not use today such as "Indian", "Native", and racial slurs such as "Half-Breed", used for Indigenous peoples, "Racial Origins" used for heritage, and "white" for Caucasian people. While we strive to develop new relationships with Indigenous peoples based on recognition

*of their rights, respect, and cooperation, family historians will need to look for and use these types of historical terms when searching historical records.*

## **CENSUS RECORDS**

Census records may be a good starting point as “racial origins” are often noted on the census, as well as household members, place of birth and birthdates. Determining the geographical location could also lead you to a band name.

Cloverdale Library owns microfilm number T-6554 covering the 1901 Native census returns for several provinces.

See page 7-1 of *Canadian Family History Resources: A Guide to the Materials Held at Cloverdale Library* for more information on how to search census records for Indigenous information. Searches for 1871 and 1881 allow you to search by “ethnic origin”. One way to help establish Indigenous ancestry -use terms such as “Indian” or “Indigenous” in the keyword fields.

## **ONLINE**

Library and Archives Canada has many resources for researching Indigenous and Metis family history:

Indigenous:

<https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/indigenous-heritage/Pages/first-nations-genealogy.aspx>

Metis:

<https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/indigenous-heritage/Pages/metis-genealogy.aspx>

Residential Schools:

<https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/indigenous-heritage/Pages/residential-schools.aspx>

Métis Nation Ontario: <http://www.metisnation.org/>

Ontario Métis Family Records Centre: <http://www.omfrc.org/>

Métis information and online Scrip (land grant) index at Library and Archives Canada – includes many digital images. Use this link and enter a surname into the search box: <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Home/Search?q=%20metis%20scrip>

## **MICROFILM**

Section 7 of the library’s *Canadian Family History Resources: A Guide to the Materials Held at Cloverdale Library* describes the microfilms that we have at Cloverdale for Métis scrip records. Ask the information desk staff for assistance.

## **PRINT**

Listed below are a few of the books you can find by doing a subject search of the library’s catalogue using the terms: METIS – GENEALOGY or INDIGENOUS - GENEALOGY

*Understanding Ontario First Nations Genealogical Records: Sources and case studies*

Faux, David K

Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, 2002

GEN 929.3713 FAU 2002

*Indians from New York in Ontario and Quebec, Canada*

Bowie, MD : Heritage Books, 1995

GEN 929.308997 PRE 1995

Gail Morin has compiled several excellent and comprehensive collections of Metis family genealogies, including the 35 volume series *Company Men*

GEN 929.37127 MOR, and

*Métis Families: A Genealogical Compendium. (6 vols)*

Morin, Gail. Pawtucket, R.I.: Quinton Publications, 2001.

GEN 929.37127 MOR 2001

## Military Records

### ONLINE

World War 1 attestation papers are comprehensive records completed by soldiers registering for service. They contain a wealth of valuable information for family historians. These are searchable by name through Ancestry, available at the Cloverdale Library, and on FamilySearch.org.

Library and Archives Canada also hold this collection, as well as additional World War 1 records, available to search here: <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/personnel-records.aspx>

Library & Archives Canada also has other resources for searching for military records here: <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/military-heritage/pages/military-heritage.aspx>

Veterans Affairs Canada: <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng>

Books of Remembrance search page

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/books/search>

Commonwealth War Graves Commission: A site that honours the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars,

<https://www.cwgc.org/>

Canadian Military Heritage Project: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~canmil/>

### MICROFILM

See Section 9 of the library's *Canadian Family History Resources: A Guide to the Materials Held at Cloverdale Library* which describes Canadian military records on microfilm available at the library. Our microfilm covers topics such as United Empire Loyalists, the Fenian Raids, the War of 1812 and more.

### PRINT

When searching for military print items use keywords such as "SOLDIERS-CANADA", "SOLDIERS-CANADA-INDEXES", or "SOLDIERS - ONTARIO-REGISTERS".

*Index to Canadian Service Records of the South African War (1899-1902) held at the National Archives of Canada.* Ottawa: British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa, 1999.

Library call number GEN 929.371 IND 1999

Thornley, Bruce. *Index to Overseas Deaths of Ontario Servicemen and Servicewomen, 1937-1947*. Ontario Genealogical Society, Toronto. 2006  
Library call number GEN 940.5467713 THO

## Newsletters and Magazines

The department holds a collection of popular family history magazines such as *Internet Genealogy* and *Family Tree*. Articles within these magazines may include information specific to Canada and Canadian provinces.

The department also holds the newsletters of the Ontario Genealogical Society, *Families*.

Newsletters and magazines can be borrowed with a Surrey Libraries card.

## Other Resources

Ontario Genealogical Society <https://ogs.on.ca>

Ontario GenWeb Project <http://www.geneofun.on.ca/ontariogenweb/>

United Empire Loyalist association of Canada – <http://www.uelac.org/>

Kingston Penitentiary inmates 1913-1916 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lac-bac/sets/72157649959725467/>

Ottawa Valley Irish <http://www.ottawavalleyirish.com/>

Upper Canada (Ontario) Insane Asylum Inmates  
[www.ontariogenealogy.com/insaneasylum.html](http://www.ontariogenealogy.com/insaneasylum.html)

Ontario and Upper Canada Genealogy and History [www.ontariogenealogy.com](http://www.ontariogenealogy.com)

Need help? Have questions? Contact us!

### Surrey Libraries Family History

<https://www.surreylibraries.ca/services/family-history>

Email: [familyhistory@surrey.ca](mailto:familyhistory@surrey.ca)

Tel: 604-598-7328