



French Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut, Inc.
P. O. Box 928
Tolland, CT 06084-0928
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www.fcgsc.org

On the Green

Canadian Research Tips

Oh, Canada!

So, you want to dig down to your “tap” root and the search has led you to Canada. In addition to the resources available at the French Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut Library, this Canadian research guide will assist you as you continue your odyssey

Once you have a general sense of where your Canadian relatives lived, learn more about the province at the time they arrived in order to find documents. Fortunately for genealogists, each province and territory maintains an archive rich with genealogical treasure and open to the public for research. Web sites for each provincial archive outline their holdings of genealogical research and their policies. For instance, the site for the British Columbia Archives www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca features searchable vital-record indexes to British Columbia birth registrations for 1872 to 1899, marriage registrations for 1872 to 1924 and death registrations for 1872 to 1979, as well as more than 65,000 image files and a virtual museum. Bear in mind that some of the western facilities are little more than 100 years old. For instance, Yukon only became a separate territory in 1898. When looking for materials that predate formation of the province or territory, consult the archives for the region before separation.

While many of the Canadian resources available to researchers will be familiar, such as city directories, land records, vital records and census documents, you will notice some differences.

Censuses: Just like the United States, Canada now takes a census every 10 years. The first census dates from 1666, but there's a long gap in nationwide enumeration until the first Dominion census in 1871. Census documents exist on the provincial level for the 17th through 19th centuries, though the returns are scattered. Information on the census forms varied, but after 1851 they listed all household inhabitants. The censuses up to and including the 1901 enumeration are open to the public for research. (Unfortunately, you may never get access to later returns. Statistics Canada, which compiles the census, won't release post-1901 records to the National Archives—even after the regular 92-year privacy period expires. The agency believes that the Statistics Act of 1906 prohibits their release. You'll need to use city directories and similar resources to narrow your search; since the censuses aren't generally indexed, knowing your ancestor's street address can be a huge time-saver.

To access the Canadian census, you can tap microfilms available at our library as well as the Family History Library in Utah and National Archives of Canada. For a preview of what the FHL has, go to www.familysearch.org/Eng/Library/FHLC/frameset_fhlc.asp, click Place Search and type in a province. Scroll down the results and you'll see all the censuses for that province accessible through the library.



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Some actual census data is also online, but not entire census reports. The best place to look is at Censuslinks (censuslinks.com; choose Canada from the home page). This excellent site connects researchers to online census material.

Civil registration: Registering births, marriages and deaths was a complicated affair in Canada. In most provinces and territories, legislation for formal civil registration wasn't put in place until late in the 19th century. This doesn't mean that vital records weren't kept, just not on the governmental level. In Newfoundland and Labrador, for example, church records date from 1752 although civil registration didn't start until 1892.

Religious records: Given Canada's late start on official vital-record-keeping, you'll have to rely heavily on religious records of births, deaths, marriages and so on. First you'll need to determine your ancestors' religious affiliations. Among the many religious groups who settled in Canada are Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Mennonites and Quakers. Catholic records are particularly good, with women's maiden names recorded as part of the marriage record. The Toronto diocesan records are on microfilm at the Family History Library.

Searching for religious records can be complicated. Church registers may be in various places, including denominational or provincial archives, individual churches and the National Archives. Fortunately, many parish records have been transcribed and constitute a large part of the French Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut's vast holdings.

Military records: The soldiers who accompanied colonists served for the French and British governments, so finding military service records can mean re-crossing the ocean if you don't find answers in provincial archives. For English records, a good place to start are the Public Record Office www.pro.gov.uk in England, which has a helpful publication called *Tracing Your Ancestors* in the Public Record Office. For French records consult the Bibliothèque Généalogique et d'Histoire Social at www.geocities.com/Eureka/1568.

Canadian Web Sites

Canadian GenWeb

www.rootsweb.com/~canwgw

Links to GenWeb projects for each province, queries, research tips and more.

Canada Research Outline

www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/RG/frameset_rhelps.asp

Overview of resources for Canadian research; click on C for Canada, or go to separate research outlines for each province.



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National Archives of Canada
395 Wellington St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N3
Toll free: (866) 578-7777 (Canada and US)
Reference Services: (613) 992-3884
Genealogy Reference: (613) 996-7458
www.archives.ca/08/08_e.html
Publishes a free research guide, Tracing Your Ancestors in Canada.

National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
395 Wellington St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N4
(613) 992-6969
www.nlc-bnc.ca
Collects and preserves Canada's published heritage.

Bob's Your Uncle, Eh!
indexes.tpl.toronto.on.ca/genealogy/index.asp
Genealogical search engine created by the Toronto Public Library.

Digital Library of Canada at the National Library of Canada
www.nlc-bnc.ca/2/index-e.html
Topics arranged in alphabetical order, including resources for children. Site also contains a search feature with a choice of English or French.

Canadian Encyclopedia
www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com

Canadian Heritage Information Network
www.chin.gc.ca/English/index.html

Canadian Mailing Lists
www.rootsweb.com/~jfuller/gen_mail_country-can.html
Contains links to Canada-related mailing lists.

Global Gazette
www.globalgazette.net
Articles on doing research in Canada.

Upper Canada Genealogy
www.uppercanadagenealogy.com
Resources for Ontario research, including records indexes, links and a newsletter.



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Nova Scotia's Pier 21 immigration museum, www.pier21.ns.ca

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3 rue de Turbigo
75001 Paris, France
+33 (01) 42 33 58 21
www.geocities.com/Eureka/1568