On-line Government Archival Resources for Canada, Ontario and Toronto

Archival holdings are normally defined as unpublished primary materials produced by a given government agency, corporate entity, organization or individual. These ‘records’ are often unique and irreplaceable. Government archives are primarily concerned with collecting documents produced by government agencies, regardless of format. Documents may include but are not limited to birth, death, and marriage certificates, cartographic materials, sound and video recordings, posters, and photographs.

Government archives are found at all levels; federal, provincial and municipal government agencies will generally submit their documents to archival agencies at the same level. In addition, government archives often provide access to select collections of personal papers, normally defined as the documents of an individual or private agency.

This column will introduce readers to a few of the archival resources available on the World Wide Web. As promised previously, the focus of this column will be on domestic materials. I would like to thank my colleagues at the York University Archives and Special Collections Department for their input on constructing this list of resources.
The Archives of Ontario Web site provides intuitive access to a wealth of on-line materials. The site map provides a comprehensive outline, something promised but not always delivered by many Web sites, and should prove helpful for most users. Don’t miss the on-line exhibits or the Visual Database. The former covers a wide range of topics including human rights, military involvement, toys, and architecture and the latter allows users to view more than 5,000 images with search limiters for format, creator and subject.

Alternatively, use the “Search the Collections” link from the homepage to select from a variety of research tools including detailed pathfinders about birth, marriage and death records, research guides covering topics from divorce and estate files to newspapers, the Visual Database, and the Archives Descriptive Database. The descriptive database allows researchers to search for records held by the institution. In addition, the Archives of Ontario is a contributor to ARCHEION, described below.

ARCHEION is the Ontario component of Archives Canada, described above. It provides researchers with intellectual access to the archival holdings of institutions and agencies across Ontario. A quick review of the long list of contributors reveals that many governmental, academic, and public library archives have submitted information about their collections to this database, including the Bank of Canada and the cities of Toronto and Ottawa, the University of Ottawa and Victoria University, and the North York Central, Windsor and Sault Ste. Marie public libraries.

In addition to detailed descriptions about the records themselves, contact information for the holding institution is provided. On-line exhibits maintained by ARCHEION’s contributors are easily linked from the main page. The Links section includes Web sites for similar projects undertaken in other Canadian provinces and territories.

ARCHEION: Ontario’s Archival Information Network
http://archeion-aao.fis.utoronto.ca/

References
Web sites for provincial and territorial government archives are noted here for your reference. They are also linked from the Library and Archives Canada Web site, noted in the main article. Links to related archival networks are available from the main page of the Archives Canada Web site, also noted in the main article.

Archives Nationale du Quebec
(French language only)
http://www.anq.gouv.qc.ca/

Archives of Manitoba
http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/

Archives of the Northwest Territories
http://pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca/programs/archive.htm

British Columbia Archives
http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/

Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management
http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/

Nunavut Territory
http://www.gov.nu.ca/cley/english/heritage.htm

Prince Edward Island Public Archives and Records Office
http://www.edu.pe.ca/paro/

Provincial Archives of Alberta
http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/preserving/PAA_2002/

Provincial Archives of New Brunswick
http://archives.gnb.ca/

Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador
http://www.gov.nf.ca/panl/

Saskatchewan Archives Board
http://www.saskarchives.com/

Yukon Archives
http://www.btc.gov.yk.ca/archives/

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