



Eye on *the Web*

LINKS TO THE RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

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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Archival holdings are normally defined as unpublished primary materials produced by a given government agency, corporate entity, organization or individual.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.

CANADA

**Library and Archives Canada:
ArchiviaNet**
<http://www.collectionscanada.ca>

ArchiviaNet is the main gateway for identifying archival materials held by the Library and Archives Canada (LAC). This multi-level tool is linked from the top right of the main LAC Web site. Thematic guides provide users with research strategies for finding archival materials about aboriginal issues, immigration, UFOs, and federal provincial conferences, to name only a few.

The General Inventory database allows users to search through thousands of entries created to represent LAC's archival holdings. It is important to note that these entries also include information about supplementary finding aids, many of which are available on-line

although linked separately through the main ArchiviaNet Web page. These finding aids provide access points to more specific materials including relevant on-line images. For example, searches in the Colonial Archives, Documentary Art, Photographs, and Maps, Plans and Charts sections of ArchiviaNet allow users to view more than 50,000, 5,000, 10,000, and 4,000 on-line images respectively. Other searchable finding aids include early census and immigration records, postal archives, and Prime Ministers' fonds for Macdonald, Laurier, Borden, Meighen, Bennett and Mackenzie King. In addition, the LAC contributes its General Inventory records to Archives Canada, described below.

Finally, be sure not to mistake the 'On-line Help' link for a chat reference service! Following this link from the General Inventory

database will produce useful plain language explanations about archival terminology and research strategies; following this link from supplementary finding aids will provide detailed information about searching that specific sub-section of ArchiviaNet.

**Archives Canada (Canadian Archival
Information Network)**
<http://www.archivescanada.ca>

Launched by the Canadian Council of Archives in 2001, this database allows users to search across the holdings of more than 800 archival institutions in Canada. The advanced search feature allows for search limitations by province or territory. Follow the "Virtual Exhibits" link to browse or search on-line exhibits maintained by contributors to Archives Canada.

ONTARIO

Archives of Ontario

<http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/index.html>

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: Ontario's Archival Information Network

<http://archeion-aao.fis.utoronto.ca/>

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.



TORONTO

City of Toronto Archives

<http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/archives/>

The Web site of the City of Toronto Archives provides access to information about its holdings and an impressive array of virtual exhibits covering topics as diverse as the construction of the Yonge Street subway and the history of private housing in Toronto. Research guides covering specific buildings, black history, and council proceedings are also available. Geared to junior and high school students, the Ontario History Quest, linked from the main page, contains more than 3,300 documents from 1820-1970 and includes curriculum guides for teachers.

Finally, be sure not to miss the on-line sampling of editorial cartoons, Victorian advertising cards, and Edwardian postcards or the searchable image database of more than 1,700 photographs taken between 1906 and 1939 by photojournalist Williams James. On-line access to the descriptive database of the City of Toronto Archives is planned for 2005. In the meantime, users can search ARCHEION to obtain intellectual access to its holdings via the World Wide Web.

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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 Nationales 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/culthertiage.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/>