



County of Simcoe
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GUIDE TO FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH AT SIMCOE COUNTY ARCHIVES

This guide will provide an overview of some of the resources available at the Simcoe County Archives that can assist with your family history research.

CENSUS RECORDS

Federal Census records are a great place to start. They provide a snapshot of a person's living situation every 10 years.

The six available personal Census records for Simcoe County were recorded in **1861**, **1871**, **1881**, **1891**, **1901**, **1911** and **1921**. Each is divided by township or municipality, and provides personal details of each member of a household, including:

- Address or type of dwelling
- Age
- Birthplace
- Ethnic origin
- Household members
- Literacy
- Marital status
- Name
- Occupation
- Religious affiliation
- Year of Immigration

The 1851 personal Census for Rama and Mara Townships is also available, as well as aggregate totals, and limited nominal information from the 1842 Census of the Home District. SCA holds indexes for the 1861, 1871, and 1891 Censuses on microfilm. These records, in addition to the 1881, 1901, 1911, and 1921 Censuses can also be accessed via the Archives Ancestry subscription, available in the Archives Reading Room.

VITAL STATISTICS (BIRTH, MARRIAGE, AND DEATH RECORDS)

Legislation requiring municipal maintenance of Birth, Marriage and Death records was passed in 1869. These records can provide a wealth of information for researchers. I

It should be noted, that vital statistics records are under the jurisdiction of the Archives of Ontario and are not held by municipal archives. The Simcoe County Archives can facilitate access to open vital statistic records through our Ancestry subscription. The following records have been digitized and are searchable through their online databases: **Ontario Births 1832-1914**, **Marriages 1826-1938**, and **Deaths 1869-1948**.



Information from vital statistics records

Birth records	Marriage records	Death records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Date of birth • Name • Names of grandparents • Parent's names • Place of birth registration • Religious affiliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age at marriage • Date of marriage • Name of bride and groom • Names of each spouse's parents • Names of witnesses • Occupation • Place of marriage registration • Religious affiliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age at death • Cause of death • Date of death • Duration of illness • Length of time lived in Ontario • Marriage status • Name of deceased • Name of registrant • Name of spouse • Place of death registration

The pre-1869 Marriage Registers for Simcoe County and the Home District are also available at the Archives on microfilm.

DIRECTORIES

Farm, business and nominal directories are available for a number of representative years, dating as early as 1866. Directories will help establish the presence of individuals and businesses, and will often locate them on specific property.

TAX ASSESSMENT ROLLS

The comprehensive County collection, available on microfilm, covers the period 1858-1912. Most townships and municipalities have deposited with the Archives collections of tax rolls, which cover significant portions of the 20th century. These records can provide following information:

- Age
- Assessed property values
- Assessed statute labour days
- Description of the property
- Livestock inventories
- Name of the head of each household
- Number of family members in particular age groups.
- Occupation
- Religious affiliation
- School section into which taxes were paid
- Type of occupancy (ownership, tenancy, etc.)



PATENT BOOK FOR THE COUNTY OF SIMCOE AND MUSKOKA

Land patents offered greater security of legal title than deeds alone provided. Due to survey and patent fees, however, land could change title several times before a patent was issued. The Land Patent Book, although incomplete in some respects (not all lots were patented), is valuable to a genealogist, since it can help to establish land occupancy prior to the earliest available Assessment Roll (1858).

ONTARIO ARCHIVES LAND RECORDS INDEX

Available on microfiche, this index contains data ranging from the 1780's to World War I, from Grants to the United Empire Loyalists, to those given veterans of the South African War. There are 236,747 entries drawn from three Ontario Archives Record Groups: the Crown Land Papers, the Canada Company Papers, and the Peter Robinson Papers. There are two separate alphabetical listings: by locatee and by township or town. Information typically available from this index includes name, residence, location of land, date of transaction, and type of transaction (Order-in-Council, location, sale, lease, grant, etc.).

CEMETERY STUDIES

Through monumental transcriptions, the headstone information from many cemeteries in Simcoe County has been recorded and indexed by surname. A number of cemetery surveys, compiled by various individuals and the Simcoe County Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society, are available at the Archives, including Monumental Transcriptions, Central North Simcoe County (Vol.I), Cemetery Inscriptions, Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury Townships, Simcoe County, Ontario, and Cemeteries in Adjala-Tosorontio Township. In a very few instances, burial records, including undertaker's records, may be available. Some cemetery transcriptions are also accessible online through the Ontario Cemetery Finding Aid database:

<http://ocfa.islandnet.com/>

NEWSPAPERS ON MICROFILM

The newspaper collection dates from 1847 to current editions, and includes most of the newspapers published in Simcoe County. A wide spectrum of information is available from newspapers. There is an alphabetical subject index for the Barrie Magnet and Northern Advance 1847-1950. In addition, both papers, along with the Barrie Examiner and the Barrie Herald, have been indexed for Birth, Marriage and Death notices and items. The index is currently available for the period 1847-1968.

SCHOOL AND CHURCH RECORDS

Recent best practice has been to encourage donors to direct church records to appropriate denominational archives in Toronto. Similarly, most Simcoe County school records are under the jurisdiction of the Records Officer of the Simcoe County District School Board. The

Archives does, however, hold significant numbers of school records, including class registers and school section censuses. PLEASE NOTE: Attendance registers are closed to public access for a period of 100 years. While church records often consist of sessional minutes and financial records, they may include marriage, burial and baptismal records.

Fonds and Collections

The permanent collection of the Simcoe County Archives holds:

- Archaeological papers
- Maps, atlases, and surveys
- Municipal records for all lower-tier municipalities, including By-laws and Minutes
- Newspapers and publications
- Over 400 private collections donated by local individuals, families, organizations and businesses
- Photographs
- Reference Library

Finding aids and inventories are available to facilitate research use. Many of these sources may contain information of interest to family history researchers.

GENEALOGICAL RECORDS OF SIMCOE COUNTY FAMILIES

The Simcoe County Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society has undertaken a program of compiling genealogical records of Simcoe County settlers. The forms are completed by researchers and descendants, and are collected, maintained and indexed by the Simcoe County Archives. Joining the Simcoe County Branch of the OGS is a good way to expand the scope of your genealogical research, as well as to meet people with similar interests. The above are not the only family history resources available at the Simcoe County Archives.