

ArchiviaNet: A Canadian Researcher's Online Tool

"Along Those Lines" George Morgan

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<http://www.ancestry.ca/learn/library/article.aspx?article=8963>

I spent a tremendous amount of research preparing the manuscript for my latest book, *How to Do Everything with Your Genealogy* (McGraw-Hill/Osborne, 2004), and the publisher was insistent on the inclusion of U.S., Canadian, U.K., and Australian resources, to name a few. One of the joys of writing about genealogy for me is that it forces me to continue looking for and at new resources and some that I've missed along the line. Such a resource is ArchiviaNet, online research and consultation tool for the National Archives of Canada.

The [Library and Archives Canada](#) website, accessible in both English and French, is a tremendous online resource. If you are researching your Canadian ancestors and family, you will find a wealth of information in both text and digital format to help your quest. In "Along Those Lines..." this week, I want to introduce you to ArchiviaNet.

What is ArchiviaNet?

ArchiviaNet is a master research access facility into the massive holdings of the National Archives of Canada. I suggest that you start at the [ArchiviaNet Web page](#).

There you will find a list of research tools. However, before you jump right in, please visit the page titled, "What is ArchiviaNet?" because there are descriptions of the types of materials you will find there. The descriptions of fonds, collections, series, files, items, and accessions will help you understand, as you conduct your research, the logical relationships between grouped materials in the collections.

There are a number of resources on that Web page too. If you read French, the PDF file for genealogy under the Research Guides is helpful but can't be translated electronically. The most important link on the page, however, is the one that is labeled "genealogical research" in the Genealogy section. This takes you to the [Canadian Genealogy Centre](#). This is your portal into a wealth of materials. The menu bar at the top of the screen will help you navigate to the various resources.

The Databases

The databases are listed alphabetically, with AVITUS listed first. AVITUS is the Directory of Canadian Genealogical Resources. It allows you to browse or search databases, catalogues, and websites all over Canada. Some of the results may only be descriptions of materials, while others may provide access to digitized materials.

The census indexes are impressive. There is a catalog of the microfilmed census materials from 1666 to 1901, which will assist you in locating the correct roll(s) when you visit the Archives or when you want to request film through your local LDS Family History Center. The 1871 census for Ontario is a compiled index to help locate people enumerated in that province that year and will help you locate microfilmed images. The bonanzas, however, are the Census of Canada of 1901 and the Census of the Northwest Provinces in 1906 (the first for that area). These are completely digitized, and although there is no index by name, you can browse through the images by geographical region.

ArchiviaNet provides access to three searchable immigration record indexes. These include:
- Immigrants at Grosse-Île (a database listing some immigrants who stayed at the Grosse-Île

Quarantine Station between 1832 and 1937;

- Immigration records for 1925 to 1935 (earlier records back to 1865 do exist on microfilm);
- and Home Children sent from England between 1869 and 1930.

The Western Land Grants database is an index to Letters Patent issued in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the railway belt of British Columbia between approximately 1870 and 1930. The index provides the name of the grantee, the description of the land, and the date granted. You can then contact the provincial archives to obtain copies of the homestead applications and other file contents.

Military records are not overlooked. Canadian service persons' records are indexed in two important databases. The first is the Soldiers of the First World War (1914-1918). The database is completely searchable, and results include the individual's name, regimental number(s), and a reference to the record group at the archives, box, and file/record number. A click on the button at the left of the entry presents an individual page with a link to instructions for ordering a copy of the file contents.

The other military database indexes the records of Soldiers of the South African War (1899-1902). Search results here include the individual's name, regimental number(s), name of the regiment, and the name of the files or database(s) in which records are contained. These are primarily service files, medals registers, and land applications. Some of the land grant applications have been lost over the years. However, in the last column you will find an "X" if images have been digitized. (Please note that in my search for MORGAN, results were displayed that included a MORGAN, Charles Bird. His service file was record #1, and his land application was record #10.) Be sure to continue looking down the search results list to make sure you see all the records. Be sure to click on the button at the left for the items marked with the "X", and you'll be presented with a screen for that individual. A drop-down box will be displayed with the words "Associated images:". When you select the contents from the box, you'll find that each document in the soldier's file has been digitized.

Digitized Canadian naturalization records from 1915 to 1932 and an index developed by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Ottawa and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Montreal facilitate your search among the more than 200,000 names in the file.

The People databases consist of three distinct collections. The Dictionary of Canadian Biography is searchable by name or browsable. The Post Offices and Postmasters database is searchable in various ways, including by office name, electoral district, province, and postmaster. The results include opening and closing dates of the facilities and/or terms of appointment by the postmaster(s). Last but certainly not least is the Canadian Directories: Who Was Where database, a pilot project which has to date indexed and digitized fifteen of the National Library of Canada's massive collection of city directories.

Other Database Resources

AMICUS WEB is an online catalog providing access to published sources such as books and newspapers. The database also contains references to local histories, church and cemetery indexes, family histories, city directories, genealogy society journals and periodicals, and other materials.

CAIN is an acronym for the Canadian Archival Information Network, which is the portal into holdings of more than 800 archival institutions across Canada. CAIN itself could be the subject of an entire column because it truly does open Canada's historical materials to you.

Search the Library and Archives Canada Site

If you can't find what you're looking for at the Canadian Genealogy Center page, don't despair. The Library and Archives Canada site has lots more! Return to the home page and type a word into the Search box at the top upper-right of the page. I typed "map" and was rewarded with 812 matches at this writing. Some of these resources include: Electoral Maps; an index to more 40,000 historical maps, including 4,000 digitized images; maps of Indian Reserves in Western Canada (1,200 of 1,500 maps have been digitized); and more. A search for the phrase "Hudson's Bay" produced more than 350 results including books, online exhibits, maps, and other resources.

Summary

The Library and Archives Canada has done an impressive job organizing, indexing, and making their collections accessible, much of it in digitized image format. I hear many researchers who have Canadian ancestry complain that there is so little material available to them. ArchiviaNet is decidedly an important addition to your Canadian research toolkit. In addition, the provincial archives' holdings add even more--much, much more--to the body of available resources. Even if you don't have Canadian roots, take a tour of the Library and Archives Canada's online site. You'll be impressed, too!