



## **Genealogy Research: United Church of Canada Records**

The following resources can assist in genealogical research for Ontario:

### Local Church Records

This Archives holds records of the United Church and its uniting denominations (Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian<sup>\*</sup>—1925 union, and Evangelical United Brethren—joined in 1968).

For the above denominations, this Archives holds local church records for the five Ontario Conferences with headquarters in Ontario (EXCLUDING the counties of Carleton, Dundas, Glengarry, Grenville, Prescott, Russell, and Stormont, which are part of the Montreal/Ottawa Conference; and Cambrian Presbytery in northwestern Ontario, *part of Manitoba and Northwest Conference; and INCLUDING three churches in Noranda, Val d'Or, and Temiskaming, Quebec*). Other United Church local church records are available in Conference Archives across Canada (see pages 4-5).

### Record Types

Local church records can include baptismal, marriage, and burial registers. Such registers document these vital events and often name the parents of individuals documented. Other useful records include communion rolls and all forms of membership lists—i.e., circuit registers and historic rolls.

Although 19th-century records exist, most begin after 1896. Only very occasionally are there cemetery records.

In compliance with federal privacy legislation, *The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (S.C. 2000, c.5), records including personal information are **restricted** for:

Baptisms:	100 years
Marriages:	75 years
Burials:	25 years

### Searching for Local Church Records

The **name of the place** where the baptism, marriage, or burial took place is the key search term for access to the records of the over 1,000 congregations available at the Archives. For larger centres, the church name is also needed.

To determine whether the Archives hold the records of the area, search the Archives database at the computer workstations or online (<https://www.archeion.ca/united-church-of-canada-archives>) for geographical location and/or congregation name. Search items will describe the fonds name, list of relevant series, extent of holdings, inclusive dates of records followed by predominant dates in brackets, and availability of finding aid.

Finding aids are available for churches with extensive holdings; the database entries will refer to the following: **FINDING AIDS: Bay of Quinte Conference churches—287; Metropolitan Toronto—289; Toronto Conference, excluding Metropolitan Toronto—288; Hamilton Conference—290; London Conference—291; Manitou Conference—292**. These are available in the finding aid binders in the reading room. The database entries will also provide a hyperlink to an electronic version of the finding aids if available. These can be viewed with any PDF viewer.

**Note:** For records with less extensive holdings, the complete description is the database entry.

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<sup>\*</sup>The post-1925 records of congregations, which remained part of the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada after the establishment of The United Church of Canada, are held in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Archives and Records Office, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7. Phone: 416-441-1111.

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### *Indexes*

Only a few registers have been indexed by person's name. The Ontario Genealogical Society's Halton and Toronto branches have produced indexes for most of the Metro Toronto congregations, as well as some in Halton County. These publications are available in the reading room.

### *Photocopying*

Most of the registers **cannot be photocopied**. Please consult the reference staff.

### *Microfilm*

Available on microfilm are the minute books and vital record books (primarily baptisms, marriages, and burials) having entries beginning and ending before 1925. The denominations represented include those that became part of The United Church of Canada: Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Evangelical United Brethren. Researchers wishing to check whether records of interest to them are available on microfilm should contact the Archives or search the Archives database for an LCM number. Inter-library loan requests must be submitted by the borrowing library on the usual forms.

Many congregations have retained their own records; consult *The United Church of Canada Year Books* in the reading room, or search the Find a Church online service (<https://www.united-church.ca/search/locator>) for current addresses and telephone numbers. Although it is the policy of the United Church to have records deposited in an appropriate United Church archives, records sometimes have been deposited in local archives and/or museums.

### **Personal Registers**

Personal registers of individual ministers also include records of baptisms, marriages, and burials.

### **Central Methodist Baptismal Registers**

The *Wesleyan Methodist Baptismal Register* (WMBR) includes baptisms (1825-1910; predominantly 1840-1873) covering primarily Ontario and parts of Quebec. This register (four microfilm reels, plus index by township name) is also available through interlibrary loan and for sale. Please note that even though the register covers a wide area, it is not a complete record of all baptisms that occurred during this period. A printed index is also available in the reading room.

The *Methodist Episcopal Church Niagara Conference Baptismal Register* includes baptisms (1849-1906; predominantly 1858-1886) covering much of southern Ontario and after 1863 extending west of Toronto. An index published by the Ontario Genealogical Society is a transcription of all information in the register except for the minister's name, and is available in the reading room.

Information on ministers, missionaries, and lay workers of The United Church of Canada and its predecessor denominations include:

### **Biographical Files Collection**

The Archives has compiled biographical files on certain ordained ministers, missionaries, and some lay church workers in the various denominations. To search for an individual, search the Biographical database at the computer workstations, or contact staff to see what files exist.

### **Church Periodicals and Publications**

The Archives has a fine collection of church newspapers and magazines; however, most of these resources are stored off-site and there is a cost to retrieve them.

Check the University of Toronto library catalogue at [www.library.utoronto.ca](http://www.library.utoronto.ca) for the call numbers of the periodicals. To order these publications, contact the Archives and place an off-site retrieval request.

References to publications by or about people in the church and about local churches can be found in

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the library catalogue ([www.library.utoronto.ca/resources/index.html](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/resources/index.html)).

### Directories

Directories list ministers by denomination with information on charges served. The directories include the *Cyclopaedia of Methodism in Canada* and those compiled by Douglas Walkington. These resources are available in the reading room.

### Local Church History Files Collection

In addition to publications (above), local church history vertical files provide information on many of the Ontario churches. To see these files, contact Archives staff.

### Methodist Missionary Society Annual Reports

These reports include lists of contributors to the Missionary Society. The lists of personal names are arranged first by Conference, then by district, then circuit, and finally local church. Although no further information is provided, these reports often place individuals within a particular church if this information is not already available. Ask Archives staff for *Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church* (BV 2550.2.M5 PS REF).

### Pension and Personnel Files

Pension (see Finding Aid 519) and personnel files (see Finding Aid 518) are available for some former church workers. Due to lengthy restrictions on access, in accordance with federal privacy legislation, many of these files are closed to research.

### Personal Papers

Papers provide more detailed information on individuals, such as ministers and missionaries. See the Archives database for available personal papers.

### Photographs

Photographs of people (primarily ministers and missionaries), churches, church-related institutions, and activities are sometimes available. Please contact the [Archives](#) for information about our photographs.

**GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH: UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA RECORDS**

For records outside Ontario, contact the following United Church of Canada Archives please visit the [Archives Network](#) page for the contact information of United Church of Canada Archives across Canada.