

Canadian archives in the Toronto area: by Shelley Lunney

My name is Shelley Lunney, I am a genealogist and member of Fermanagh Genealogy Centre. My roots are County Fermanagh and I have a passionate interest in the Lakeland County. I visit family in Fermanagh as often as I can! It gives me great pleasure to offer this piece on Canadian archives in the Toronto area as I know that many families from Fermanagh settled here.

My maternal grandmother was Mary "Minnie" Elliott from East Bridge Street. Her parents were builder William H. Elliott and Mary Jane Bleakley, a dressmaker from Darling St. The family emigrated to Toronto, Canada in May 1906. My paternal 3x gt-grandparents were Isaac Lunny and Ann Moore from the Enniskillen area who emigrated about 1835.

Many of our family members left Ireland to begin new lives in "The Colonies". Central and Southern Ontario was the recipient of thousands of Irish newcomers. In 1825 Peter Robinson brought 568 Irish emigrants to what is now Peterborough, ninety minutes northeast of Toronto. Irish from both north and south followed and descendants still reside in the area.

North of Port Hope, Ontario Irish place names also followed – Bailieboro, Cavan, North Monaghan and South Monaghan. Hope Township, near Bailieboro, was known as the Hills of Hope since it represented hope for a new life free of famine and restraint. The area is reminiscent of Fermanagh with gently rolling green hills as far as the eye can see. Many families from the north settled in or near Hope Township – Lang, Graham, Lunney, Cathcart, Henry, Elliott, McCamus, McMahan, Winslow and Halleran to name a few and who were later interred in St. Paul's Anglican Cemetery on the 4th line of Cavan Township (now in Peterborough County following the 1973 county realignment from Durham County.)

Just a few miles north, many more families, particularly the Cathcarts, are interred in St John's Anglican Cemetery, Ida, Ontario. (Both cemeteries are on Find A Grave). North of the city of Peterborough was a predominantly Roman Catholic area with families named Leahy, Sullivan, Cranley, Heffernan, Townes, Kyle and Moher populating villages named Ennismore and Douro.

Further west along Lake Ontario the Irish influence remains with villages named Enniskillen, Lifford and Tyrone. Many families later moved to this area as new lands became available.

Local libraries and historical societies have been digitizing early newspapers that are now online. Peterborough Public Library has 102 years of Peterborough newspapers online as well as directories at: [Local History and Genealogy - Peterborough Public Library \(ptbolibrary.ca\)](http://ptbolibrary.ca). The Kawartha Lakes Public Library in Lindsay, Ontario has digitized several of the surviving editions of small village newspapers and can be sourced on their website: [Kawartha Lakes Local Newspapers: Kawartha Lakes Public Library Digital Archive \(vitacollections.ca\)](http://vitacollections.ca).

Further west, the Bowmanville Public Library has digitized the Clarington newspapers: [Clarington Local Newspapers: Clarington Digital Newspaper Collection \(vitacollections.ca\)](http://vitacollections.ca). Port Hope Public Library has a large local history component with several databases. These can be found at: [Local History and Genealogy | Port Hope Public Library](http://ptbolibrary.ca). The Cobourg Public Library also has a large local history section including newspapers and various databases which can be found at: [Ontario Genealogy Historical Newspaper Collection - Cobourg](http://vitacollections.ca). In the early days, Port Hope and Cobourg were the disembarkation point for steamships bringing the Irish to Ontario before they made their way through the bush to their land claims. Further northwest in the village of Uxbridge, the local library has online databases for cemetery searches and newspaper indexes for the Uxbridge Times Journal and Port Perry Star. These can be found at: [Local History & Genealogy – Uxbridge Public Library \(uxlib.com\)](http://uxlib.com)

Another site that provides access to digital newspapers is [Ontario Newspaper Archives 1810-1977 | NewspaperArchive®](http://NewspaperArchive.com). The Anglican Church Diocese office holds the parish records for the province of Ontario and resources can be found at [Genealogy |The Diocese of Toronto \(anglican.ca\)](http://anglican.ca).

These libraries in these small towns/villages, about the same size as Enniskillen, hold a wealth of databases and online newspapers which may prove fruitful to your research if you have family that emigrated to Canada and settled to the east and northeast of Toronto.