Wellington County Museum and Archives
Instructional Video Series

The Wellington County Museum and Archives Collections Catalogue

Welcome to the Wellington County Museum and Archives instructional video series. In this video, I'll show you how to search the Wellington County Museum and Archives collections catalogue.

What is the Collections Catalogue?

Our Collections Catalogue is a database that describes the artifacts and archival records in the collection of the Wellington County Museum and Archives. Together, these artifacts and records document the history of Wellington County.

The online collections tool only serves as a guide for researchers. A visit to our facility is recommended to view original records and for more extensive research.

Finding the catalogue

Let's start with how to find the catalogue on our website.

- In your web browser, navigate to the Wellington County website, at "www.wellington.ca".
- Next, hover over "Discover" at the top of the page, then click "Museum & Archives" in the menu that appears, to get to the Museum and Archives home page.
- From here, click the "Collections & Research" link.
- Scroll down to see a list of our online databases.
- The first one is "Wellington County Museum and Archives Collections Catalogue. Click the plus sign to expand this option, and then click the red 'Search' button.
- This will take you to the "Collections Catalogue" advanced search page
- The navigation bar lists the different search options: Home, Keyword Search, Click and Search, Advanced Search, Archives, and Objects. We'll go over these one by one.

The Home tab

"Home" is where you'll find our landing page and a few helpful tips for searching the catalogue.

The Click and Search tab

The "Click and Search" tab lets you browse three alphabetical lists: **People**, **Creators** and **Subjects**. Let's look at all of these.

- **People** includes both individuals and organizations who are referred in our catalogue records. Individuals are listed alphabetically by last name. Choose any letter to see a list of all the people and organizations that begin with that letter.

  - Select a letter, then use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + F to search for a particular name in the list. For example, if you search for the name "Gabe," the matching results will be highlighted on the page. Click on a name in the list to see which catalogue entries relate to that individual.

- **Creators** is an alphabetical list of the people who created the artifacts or records in our collection. You'll often see that we've entered a specific role or profession after the names in this list, like "maker," "photographer," or "publisher."

- The **Subjects** list contains the subject terms that we use in our catalogue. This is a limited list, but it can be useful to browse through, depending on the topic of your research.

The Keyword Search tab, the Archives tab, and the Objects tab

There are three different options for performing a simple keyword search. The "Keyword Search" tab lets you search the entire catalogue: museum, archives, and art collection. The "Archives" tab will only search Archival records. And the "Objects" search is for Museum artifacts and Artworks.

All three of these pages contain a single keyword entry field, and a checkbox to include only records that have images attached.

I'm going to use the "Keyword Search" page to give you a little bit of information on how our search engine interprets the text that you enter.

- If you input multiple words, the results will show you items containing ANY of those words. So if you want to search for an exact phrase or a full name, make sure to put it in quotation marks.
- For example, if I enter the name Gordon Couling without quotations, I get almost 4,000 results. That's because the search found all the items that contain the word "Gordon" OR the word "Couling." If I search again, but this time I put quotation marks around the name, this time I get only the 278 results that reference Gordon Couling specifically.
- If you want to do a multiple word search that isn't an exact phrase, for example you want to find records that have both the words "cat" and "dog," instead of using quotation marks you'll add the word "AND," in all capitals, in between your search terms. This will find all the results that have *both* these words in the record.

- You can also use these features in combination, for example if you want to search for "Grand River" AND mill, you will use quotes to contain the phrase, and the word AND to combine that phrase with your other search terms.

The Advanced Search tab

The "Advanced Search" page gives you a variety of options so that you can really drill down with your search. My advice for using this page is that less is more; you won't get good results if you try to be too specific. I'll review all of the options here.

- The checkboxes at the top let you limit your search results to specific categories. They are all selected by default. Unchecking one or more of the boxes may help exclude records you're not looking for.
    - "Objects" searches for museum artifacts.
    - "Archives" includes archival records.
    - "Creators" searches the list of creators that we reviewed in the last tab, but only if you type a name in the "Name of Maker/Creator" field below.

These are the fields for entering your search terms:

- **Person/Organization** searches for entries that are tagged or indexed with the name of a person or organization.
- **Place** searches for entries that are tagged with a place name, like Arthur or Morriston. Note that for a township like Minto Township you only need to type in Minto.
- **Name of Maker \ Creator** searches for entries tagged with the name of the person or organization that created the record or artifact.
- **Item Name** will search for a specific type of object, such as a quilt, a drawing, a letter or a postcard.
- **Subject** searches for records tagged with the subject terms we explored under the Click and Search tab. For example: agriculture, sports, or education.
- Use the **Accession #** field if you know the specific accession number of the group of records you are looking for. For example A1999.20
- Use **Photo, Map #** if you know the specific item number you're looking for. Note that the item number needs to be entered in quotation marks. For example "ph 20535"
    - Another use for this field is that you can type in "ph" to limit your search to only donations with photographs, and you can enter "map" to find only donations containing maps.
- The **Title** field will search the titles of catalogue entries for archival records – but not museum artifacts or artworks.
- **Description** is essentially a keyword search field, where you can type in any word or phrase to narrow down your search. You may want to review the tips we went over earlier about single word versus multiple word searches, and using quotation marks around an exact phrase.

- Use the **Art #** if you are searching for an artwork and you already know its specific art number. Enter the number in quotation marks. For example "Art 108"
- **Date** allows you to limit your search to records and artifacts created in a specific year. This will really restrict your search results, so proceed with caution.
- At any time you can use the **Reset** button to clear the text you've entered in the various fields and start over.

To give you an example of how we might use this "Advanced Search" page, let's imagine we're looking for photographs related to schools in Erin Township. Under **Place**, I'll enter "Erin." Under **Subject**, I'll enter "education." And under **Photo, Map #**, I'll simply type "ph" to indicate that I'm looking for any record that contains a photograph. I find 89 results that match my search.

Try not to judge your results by the thumbnail photograph you see beside the title. Click to read a thorough description of the records, and to see if there are more photographs included. For example, scroll down to select the last item in first page of results: *A2000.156 - Photographs, Erin Twp., collected by Ada Currie, ca.1930-1960*. You'll find a much more complete description of this collection, and many more photographs.

If you would like to look at the records in person at the Archives, make a note of the Accession #, the photo/map/art # if there is one, and, at the very bottom of the record, the container number. It also helps to write down a brief description of the item you would like to look at.

We'd love to hear from you if you have questions or need further assistance. Good luck with your research, and we hope to see you soon at the Wellington County Museum and Archives.

Phone: 1.800.663.0750 x5225 or email _archivesstaff@wellington.ca