



## HELP DOCUMENT - GENEALOGY



At its peak the number of people working on Canadian railways exceeded 191,000 (1952). Thus there are many, many Canadians who have relatives who worked for one or other of Canada's railways. Today there is a widespread interest in family history and the Archives receives a regular flow of questions on how to trace a relative who either "worked for the railway", or was known to have been involved in accidents.

The Archives does not hold any records which can assist in such searches. Employment records are the property of the companies and have rarely if ever been transferred to archives or other outside organizations. Today such information usually falls under the privacy laws which limit their dissemination and thus they are not readily available to the public. Research into railway relatives, however, can be pursued through other channels.

A guide to what can be done is:

Canadian Railway Records, A Guide for Genealogists from Douglas, Althea & J. Creighton Douglas.

The book may still be available from the publisher at:

The Ontario Genealogical Society  
40 Orchard View Boulevard  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4R 1B9

The involvement of relatives in accidents might be recorded in newspapers published in or near the location of the accident. Many of these papers have been microfilmed and are available at local public libraries or can be obtained by them for you through inter-library loan. Other reports which might be useful include coroners' reports where accidents resulted in deaths, and if the accident was a major one, an official investigation may have been conducted by the Board of Railway Commissioners or a successor body.

Local genealogical societies may be able to assist you in pursuing your research, they can often be located through the nearest public library. Indeed the local public librarian may well be the source for many other useful ideas and tips.

Canadian National has deposited much of its historical material with the National Archives in Ottawa and they can be viewed there. You can consult the list of the Archives holdings. The Archives also maintains a genealogical desk which may be worth consulting. At their web site click on the "Services to the public" listing for more information on what the Archives can offer.

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