Using the Ottawa Branch OGS (OBOGS) Library Catalogue:
Tips for effective and efficient searching

Visiting the Ottawa Branch OGS Library at 100 Tallwood:
- The Ottawa Branch OGS Library is located in the Reference Room of the City of Ottawa Archives, at 100 Tallwood Drive.
- Open Tuesday to Friday, 9 am to 4 pm, and most Saturdays, 10 am to 5 pm. Closed on holiday weekends.
- For up-to-date information on visiting the City of Ottawa Archives: https://ottawa.ca/en/arts-heritage-and-events/city-ottawa-archives

The collection in a nutshell:
- A single reference collection with three focus areas: Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec, the British Isles, and British Colonial America.
- Over 12,000 items, with about 27% of these being journals and newsletters.
- About 3,000 items have been added since September 2021. New and donated materials are added weekly.
- Wide range of genealogical guides and handbooks; census and cemetery transcriptions (mainly for Ontario and the British Isles); family histories; history, including social and military histories; atlases and maps.
- Periodicals and journals: Ontario and Quebec, other Canadian provinces, British Isles, U.S., particularly for New England, New York and Rhode Island, and Australia, also some commercial journals.

The catalogue – its design and features:
- Catalogue: https://ottawa.ogs.on.ca/researching/indexes/library-catalog/
- Or, from the home page (https://ottawa.ogs.on.ca/), navigate from Researching to Ottawa Branch Library.
- Global searches use the title, author, Dewey code, publisher, description, keyword and donor catalogue fields.
- Since 2017, a major effort has been underway to enhance the catalogue entries. Volunteers have been adding descriptions for the books and journals we hold to their catalogue entries. This enhances the usefulness of the catalogue as the description is one of the searchable fields. This work is again underway. Not every entry has an added description, but many do.
- For a Global Search, use the large search box found above the catalog listings.
- **Global search:** can enter multiple words (or fragments of words) in the search box. Separate each word or entry by a space. This operates like a Boolean "AND" search: the search engine will look for entries containing all of the entered search terms.
    - o Not case sensitive; order of words in the search box does not matter.
    - o Searches for everything containing the string of letters entered: e.g., John will find john, Johnson, Johnston, etc.
    - o To search for a phrase or a word with spaces, put the entry in double quotes, e.g., "Lanark Society".
- **Alternative: Column (or field) search:** by Dewey code, title, or author.
- Global searches are the most flexible: it uses all of the searchable fields and allows combination searches (e.g., words to be found in title & author; place & subject; title, year & Dewey code).
- Can toggle to display 10, 25, 50 or 100 results. Default is 10 entries; change to 100 to show more results.
- Can sort the order of your results, by Dewey code, or title, or author. Tap the column heading that you want to sort by. Sorting by Dewey code can help you refine later searches (more on this below).
- Know more: click on the green plus sign at the left hand side of an entry to see more information including the description.
- Plan your research or your visit: You can copy and paste your results (Dewey code, title and author) into a Word document or spreadsheet to record your catalogue searches or add notes.

The catalogue - making it work for you by efficient and effective searching:
- The trick is to use search terms that are most likely to identify the items you want without picking up too many other unwanted entries.
- Broad terms by themselves, e.g., Carleton or England, cast the net too widely.
- If you know the book you want to find, enter search terms in the search box, using the least common words in the title or author's name. Using a word or two or three should be enough to find it.
- Where you are not looking for a particular book, but want to know what we have on a particular subject or area, use more than one word in the search box to filter your results (e.g., place and subject).
  - Try Carleton cemetery, to find the cemetery records for Carleton County.
  - Use partial words where this will reduce the need to search twice, provided the partial word will not pick up too many irrelevant entries. Some examples that work:
    - Engl picks up both England and English; Scot picks up both Scotland and Scottish;
    - Milit picks up military and militia; migration picks up immigration and emigration.
    - Irish and Ireland should be searched using separate searches.
- Be aware that searching with a surname will pick up the use of that name in any field: title, author, description or donor.
- Be aware that searching with a place name, e.g., London, will pick up places with that name in both Canada and the British Isles, as well as Londonderry and London as the place of publication. Adding other search terms can narrow down what you are looking for. Or, list your results in Dewey order and take clues from the Dewey classification of the items of most interest.
- Sorting your results by Dewey code may help in refining your searches. In a family history collection, materials tend to be clustered under some Dewey codes more than others (e.g., cemeteries, how-to guides, resources for particular places). Knowing where the materials you are looking for are most likely to be classified in the collection may help you find other items which were not picked up by word searches.
  - In practice: For example, a search for [Ireland grave] will pick up some, but not all, cemetery related records for Ireland. Sorting them in Dewey order you can see that the records that are closest to what you are looking for are classified under 929.5. Refine your search by searching on [Ireland 929.5] and you will find more results including those that were not picked up using the word grave, e.g., cemeteries, monument, etc.
  - In practice: sorting your results by Dewey code will show you that journals in the collection are all classified under 052. You can use this, or even the Dewey code of the particular journal you are interested in, to search the contents of just that journal.
  - Example of some common Dewey codes in our collection:
    - 052 for all periodicals and journals;
    - 929.1 for genealogy guides and handbooks, with most clustered in 929.1072;
    - 929.2 for family histories;
    - 929.3 for guides to particular record sources;
    - 929.5 for almost everything to do with cemeteries;
    - 941 and 942 for Britain; use 941 and Scot for Scotland (located between 941.1 to 941.4), 941 and Irish (or Ireland) for Ireland (found from 941.5 up to 941.9); 942 for England;
    - 970, 971 for Canada; with 971.3 for Ontario, 971.4 for Quebec; 973, 974, 975, and 976 for the United States.
- Keep a list of search terms to try one at a time or in combination for other areas of interest: e.g., navy, ship, marine, merchant, maritime, etc.

Final tips:
- Search the catalog _**and**_ browse the shelves. Practice helps!   Both cataloguing and catalog searching are an art, not a science.   Questions or Suggestions? Seeking advice? Contact us at ottawalibrary@ogs.on.ca