

FAQ

Published on McMaster University Library (<https://library.mcmaster.ca>)

FAQ

Not finding the answer to your question? Send us a message: archives@mcmaster.ca

[How does COVID-19 change the information listed below?](#)

The library, including Archives and Research Collections, is closed at present.

We are responding to research inquiries as we are able, but we are not onsite to access the collections. Please email archives@mcmaster.ca and we will do our best to assist you.

You can still view all of our digitized content! There is a summary and links to the material in [Our Digital Collections](#).

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[Where are you located on campus and how do I find you?](#)

We are located on McMaster's Main Campus in Mills Memorial Library on the Lower Level.

Elevator number 2 and the central stairwell next to that elevator will take you down to our lobby and exhibit area.

Please enter through the wooden doors into the Reading Room and a staff member will greet you.

Sticking points: the wooden door into the reading room is not intuitive, turn the handle and push (we still have a hard time with this). There is no automated button, if you are carrying a number of things, or are using a mobility device, this door may be difficult. Please don't hesitate to let us know you are coming and we will prop the door open. Or wave at us through the the window.

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[When are you open?](#)

Monday to Friday, 10am - 5pm (1000-1700), last retrieval is at 4:00.

We close for all statutory and university holidays and for two weeks at the end of August. When planning your visit, please consult the [Hours](#) or contact us to confirm.

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[Who can use the materials?](#)

Everyone. We are here to support research, teaching, and learning through our collections.

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[How do I get to campus?](#)

We are happy to help you as best we can, but keep in mind we're not a travel service.

- [Directions to campus](#) if arriving by car, plane, or bus from another city
- [Hamilton Street Railway](#) (HSR - city bus)
 - Buses to the Library - 5A or 5C Delaware, 1A King (no evenings/weekends), 51 University (September-April)
 - Stop name: Sterling at University
 - Buses to South Campus (about a five minute walk to the library): 5 or 52 Delaware; 10 B-Line (express bus)
 - Stop name: Main at Emerson

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[Parking?](#)

There are many parking options for a range of price and convenience. Lot B and the Underground parking at L.R. Wilson are closest to the Library (building 10)

[Parking Services](#) - rates, how to pay, etc.
[Parking Map](#)

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[Where can I stay?](#)

[On campus options](#) - some of these may be limited by time of year
[Off campus](#) - There are few hotels in walking distance to campus, however the campus is well served by the city bus service (HSR) and there are numerous options downtown and elsewhere that would work well.

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[Do I need to make an appointment?](#)

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You do not need to make an appointment, but **we recommend** you contact us in advance. Letting us know when you are coming and what you would like to look at will allow us to retrieve material in advance, setup wifi, identify potential access issues, and request material from offsite. 48 hours is recommended, but we will do our best to respond to all inquiries.

Last retrieval is at 4:00 pm. We may not be able to accommodate researchers who have not contacted us in advance after this time.

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[How do I request material?](#)

Please send us an email at archives@mcmaster.ca.

For archives please identify the title of the Archive you wish to look at and the box numbers by consulting the finding aids linked from the [Archives Database](#).
eg. I would like to see the Vera Brittain fonds, boxes 34-38, and 40.

For books, please provide title, author, and call number or the link to [the catalogue](#) record to the book or books you would like to view.

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[What is your policy on cameras and personal scanner?](#)

You are welcome to take your own photos for reference after you leave the archives. We will likely have you fill out a form so you are aware of your responsibilities in regards to those images.

For personal scanners, it depends on how they operate. Please contact us to confirm.

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[What is it like in the Reading Room? What should I know about working there?](#)

Noise level - the reading room is a relatively quiet space. While it is not a silent area, we do try to maintain a respectful level of audio, aware that researchers can only look at the material here. We have ear plugs available, but if you are sensitive to noise, you may want to bring your own headphones or other devices. There are often small groups conducting research together, tours, or classes passing through the area.

Food and drink - no food or drink (including water) can be permitted at the reading room tables. If you bring such items with you, we ask you to keep them in your bag and take them outside the reading room to consume.

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Lunch - But you will need to eat! There are food and beverage vending machines on the second floor of the Library. If you are looking for places to eat on campus, the library is directly adjacent to the busy Student Centre (MUSC), which has a cafeteria and other options. There is also the campus pub (the Phoenix) and a variety of other options [on campus](#). There are a number of options off campus. Head East along Sterling St, and enjoy a 10-15 minute walk through the residential neighbourhood around campus to [Westdale](#), with a variety of shops and places to eat (or a very short bus ride - see buses to the library under 'Getting to Campus'). Or a slightly shorter walk South through campus and across busy Main Street where there is a Starbuck's, Subway, William's, and Pinks Burgers.

Drinking fountain and washroom facilities - These are located one level above the archives on the ground floor. The fountain has a bottle filler as well as a spout.

Electrical outlets and computer terminals - The tables are equipped with outlets on the table top as well as usb ports for powering and charging your devices. There is a single public terminal for accessing finding aids and the library catalogue.

Wifi and Internet access - You can use wifi through Eduroam or we can set you up a guest account. The latter may take some time, and we would appreciate it if you could let us know in advance to avoid delay.

Temperature - Typically, the Reading Room is on the cool side, however it can fluctuate in either direction. In the summer, it can be quite cold, especially compared to the hot and humid air outside. We recommend that you bring an extra sweater and that you dress in layers to help keep yourself comfortable regardless of the temperature.

Personal belongings - We ask you to leave your personal belongings in the coat rack located next to the reference desk. If you bring your bag to your desk, please keep it on the floor.

Note-taking - Please bring your own personal computer or paper to record your notes in. We have pencils and a sharpener, but you are welcome to bring your own. We ask you not to use pens, markers, or similar while working with our material as they cannot be removed if accidentally marked.

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[I'm looking for information about a former student or professor at McMaster...](#)

At present, we are not the official archives of the University. We have yearbooks both here and in the library upstairs, which you are welcome to look through, but we do not have student records. Please direct inquiries to the alumni or registrar's office.

We have a small amount of records relating to some of the faculties and departments. We **do not** have old exam papers.

To get a better sense of what McMaster records we do have, please consult [this archival box listing](#) and contact our staff.

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[I'm looking for medical records or something related to the hospital...](#)

Hamilton Health Sciences and the Faculty of Health Sciences has its own archive for historical records located in

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the Health Sciences Library.

Please see the [Health Sciences website](#) for details.

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[I'm looking for Anglican Records for the Niagara Diocese...](#)

The William Ready Division houses the records for the Anglican Diocese of Niagara. We have the baptismal, confirmation, marriage, and burial records for the churches in that area.

If you know which church the records are housed in, you may want to start with [this listing of parishes](#) to identify the register and microfilm reel you need or contact us to get help with where to begin.

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