

Archives Resource Kit: Government Records

Grade 11: Canadian and World Studies, Law

Overview of Archives Online Resources

Designed to complement a teacher's practice, PAMA's resource kit links archival resources, activities and the [Ontario curriculum](#). The lesson focuses on a key feature of PAMA's archival collection and questions to explore to connect Peel's history with curriculum and learning goals.

PAMA Goals

- Make connections, spark discussion and tackle questions related to history
- Create a comfortable and fun experience for young learners
- Build a public gallery and archival audience for the future
- Provide students with the opportunity to look and talk about history
- Showcase the PAMA collection and special exhibitions

Curriculum Connections

A. The Inquiry Process and Skill Development in Legal Studies

A1.5 use the concepts of legal thinking (i.e., legal significance, continuity and change, interrelationships, and legal perspective) when analysing, evaluating evidence about, and formulating conclusions and/or judgements regarding legal issues

B. Legal Foundations

B2. Legal Heritage: demonstrate an understanding of early laws and legal systems and their relationship to the Canadian legal system

B4. Development of Law: analyse and describe how various social, scientific, and technological factors have influenced and continue to influence the development of Canadian law

Continuity and Change

This concept requires students to analyse how and why laws, justice system structures and practices, legal precedents, and legislative agendas change over time. Students consider forces that reinforce continuity and factors that have both short-term and long-term effects on legal systems and the administration of justice.

PAMA Resources

Using primary documents and resources to investigate issues and events from the past can help illustrate how society has changed over time. Archival government records show a community's history and the growth.

Discussion points and connections between the resources provided and the Canadian and World Studies Ontario Curriculum for Grade 11 are in the following pages.

Before jumping in, explore these videos and blogs with students. They will provide a great introduction to the topics in this lesson.

[What is a fonds?](#)

[Why I Love Government Records](#)

[Why Bylaws Matter](#)

Investigation #1 - Court Documents

There are a wide variety of government records held in PAMA's archives. The court document resources below from the George W. Gordon fonds, 1 & 2, (donated by the family of George W. Gordon) show a glimpse into 1921 court records and processes. Gordon was a respected farmer, justice of the peace, and local magistrate.

The County of Peel fonds, 3 & 4, also show a unique glimpse into court proceedings in 1873. These are from a minute book of County Judge's Criminal Court Co. Peel, 1869-1883, and deal with the larceny of a horse.

Archival Documents

Package 1

1. Complaint & Search Warrant
2. Transcript of Court Records, 1921

Package 2

3. 1873 court records
4. Transcripts of 1873 Court Records

Sample Guiding Questions

Have students read through and examine the historical court documents. Below are some possible questions to prompt discussion.

- What do the transcripts say about the laws and justice system in 1873 and 1921?
- Think about the ways in which society has changed.
- Why is it valuable to have accurate minutes and records or court proceedings?
- Explain the difference between being tried summarily or on indictment?

Investigation # 2 – Bylaws

The preservation of public morals was a very important topic for early municipal law makers. The bylaws highlighted in this lesson show three bylaws from the three townships that would make up the Region of Peel. They provide an interesting look at life in the 1870's.

Encourage students to explore the bylaws below while using the Inquiry Process in Legal thinking. Determine how the law has evolved over time. Sample questions are provided to help get started.

Archival Documents

Package 3

5. Township of Albion, original bylaw #189
Village of Brampton, original bylaw #181
Township of Toronto, original bylaw #292
6. Transcript for all three bylaws

Formulate Questions

- Do these bylaws still exist?
- Do you see similarities between the three township bylaws?
- Who wrote these bylaws? What level of government?

Gather and Organize

- Find comparable current bylaws or Provincial statues (ie: Safe Streets Act).
- Have any of the bylaws shifted to a different level of government?

Interpret and Analyse

- What do the bylaws tell you about society in 1873?
- Do different townships have similar bylaws/needs in their local municipalities?
- How have laws changed over the years?

Evaluate and Draw Conclusions

- Explain the impact of legal decisions and the effects of the residence in the township.
- Why is it important for bylaws to change over time?
- As society evolves, how do you think bylaws will further evolve?

Communicate

- How does learning about past events help to enhance your understanding of current events and your role as an informed citizen?

Share Your Stories

If you have had the opportunity to use this resource with your class for your own lesson development or if you have an idea for a Resource Kit that you would use, we would love to hear from you!

Email: InfoPAMA@peelregion.ca

Twitter: [@visitPAMA](https://twitter.com/visitPAMA)

Instagram: [visitPAMA](https://www.instagram.com/visitPAMA)

For More Information

If you have any questions about the information provided in this kit, or wish to find out more about any of the resources included, please contact PAMA Archives:

Phone: 905-791-4055

Email: pamaarchives@peelregion.ca

The Archives features a variety of resources such as:

- Photographs
- Maps

- Architectural Plans
- Newspapers
- Posters
- Letters
- Journals
- Business Records
- Government Records