

Massachusetts Archives Digital Repository Search Guide

There are multiple ways to find records in the Massachusetts Archives Digital Repository. This guide explains how to navigate the site and recommends tips for locating materials. Links to guides for specific Series are included under the **Guides** section of our website.

In general, collections of records at the Massachusetts Archives follow a specific order of arrangement, which is also reflected in the Digital Repository: records are arranged first by Agency, or **Record Group**, then by **Series**, and finally by **Container** (box, folder, volume, digital folder, etc.). For example, the following structure shows how *Series 889X*, or water and sewer construction photographs created by the Metropolitan District Commission, is organized in the Archives:



When searching or browsing in the Digital Repository, it is important to keep this structure in mind because it represents the virtual location of materials. There are two methods for accessing records in the Digital Repository: browsing and searching.

Browsing

Browsing allows you to explore records in the Digital Repository without using search terms. Click on the **Browse Archive** button at the upper left corner of any page to view our top-level collections (Record Groups).

BROWSE ARCHIVE

Clicking on any of these Record Groups will open its contents, showing the sub-Record Groups and Series within. Using the example above, clicking on Browse Archive will take you to a page listing *Record EN: Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs* as one of our main collections. Clicking on Record Group EN will list its sub-Record Groups, which include *Record Group EN4.12: Metropolitan District Commission - Engineering Division*. Clicking on Record Group EN4.12 will show you its Series, such as *Series 889X: Water and sewer construction photographs, 1928-1970*. From there, you can click on folders to view individual records and sort folder contents using facets and filters. Browsing is a good way to discover records in the Digital Repository and get a sense of our online materials.

Searching

To search the digital repository, enter any terms or phrases into the search bar at the top of any page:

Search

ARCHIVE Q

Massachusetts Archives Digital Repository Search Guide

This search bar queries all records in the digital repository. Results will be returned if a keyword matches text in a record's descriptive metadata and/or matches text in records of the following formats, which are full-text searchable:

- html (.html)
- xml (.xml)
- Microsoft Office documents (.doc, .docx, .xls, etc.)
- OpenDocument format (.odf)
- PDFs (.pdf)
- Rich Text Format(.rtf)
- Plain Text files (.txt)
- Mbox (.mbox)

Boolean and Wildcard searches can also be used to limit searches, in addition to facets and filters (see below). A second search bar appears on collection, series, and folder pages above the list of record results. This search bar queries just the records within that particular collection, series, folder, etc.

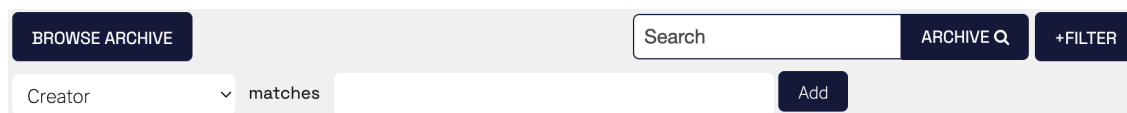
Returned results can be sorted by **Relevancy**, **Date**, and **Title** using the dropdown menu above the list of records. The default sort is by relevancy:



Facets and Filters

Facets are limiters which appear to the left of content in the repository. Selecting any values underneath these limiters will return only those records which contain the information selected. If no records are returned, then that means that the selected combination of limiters is not represented in any of the records. For example, selecting *Massachusetts. Adjutant General's Office*, one of the possible options underneath the **Creator** facet, will return only those records that were created by the Adjutant General's Office. The options underneath each limiter are listed by frequency, with the most common options appearing at the top of the list.

Filters narrow keyword searches and are available through a dropdown menu next to the main search bar after an initial search has been made:



Note: Filters will not return any results if an initial search has not been made. To limit your results using filters, enter in search terms in the search bar or conduct an *empty search* by clicking on the search bar without any terms entered. To use a filter, select the **+FILTER** button next to the main search bar at the top of the page, then select an option from the dropdown menu. Once an option is selected, enter in keywords in the **Matches** text bar and click **Add**. With the filter selected, the search will only return results where the keyword(s) entered appear in the specified filter field. For example, if the **Format** filter is selected, a keyword search of *pdf* will only return cards where **pdf** is specified in the Format field.

Filters also show up as links within the descriptive metadata attached to collections, folders, and items. Clicking on linked data is the same as searching that value using a filter.