

## Research Guide – CORONERS' RECORDS

The BC Archives holds:

- **coroners' inquiries from 1859 to 1970**
- **coroners' inquests from 1859 to 1967**

**Inquiries** are investigations conducted by a single coroner and usually consist of a single form.

**Inquests** or **inquisitions** are investigations in which a coroners' jury ruled on the cause of death. Inquest files may contain witness statements, transcripts, autopsy reports, and findings.

Note: not every coroners' record created between 1859 and 1970 have survived or are in the legal custody of the BC Archives.

### Indexes from 1859 to 1967 or 1970

The first step to finding an inquiry or inquest is to locate it in an index. The index will list the inquiry or inquest number, which can be used to determine the location of the actual records. Coroners' indexes are not restricted and are used to locate the following details about an inquiry or inquest file:

- Name of the individual (note that misspellings and typos can be common)
- Date
- Inquiry or inquest number
- Geographical location
- Series and box or microfilm number

### Coroners' index 1859-1939

The *Coroners' Index 1859-1939* is available online as a searchable pdf file from our [Guides, Indexes, and Inventories](#) webpage. The index is ordered alphabetically by the surname of the deceased individual, as taken from the coroners' record. The index includes both inquiries and inquests.

### Coroners' indexes 1939-1967 or -1970

To search indexes for coroners' inquiries from 1939 to 1970 and inquests from 1939 to 1967, consult the following microfiche in the BC Archives reference room:

- 1938 to 1944, [GR-1513](#), microfiche Bf00033
- 1945 to 1949, [GR-1514](#), microfiche Bf00034
- 1950 to 1953, [GR-1515](#), microfiche Bf00035
- 1954 to 1958, [GR-1516](#), microfiche Bf00036
- 1959 to 1963, [GR-1517](#), microfiche Bf00037
- 1964 to 1966, [GR-1518](#), microfiche Bf00038
- 1967 to 1970, [GR-1519](#), microfiche Bf00039

### If you cannot find an index listing

- Search the BC Archives [Genealogy database](#) for death registrations, which may provide an alternate name spelling, date, or location. Registrations may also indicate whether or not an inquiry or inquest was held.
- For 1849-1871, consult the Colonial Correspondence ([GR-1372](#)) card catalogue in the BC Archives reference room using search terms such as the name of the individual or 'inquest,' 'murder,' 'suicide,' 'drowning,' etc.
- See [GR-2946](#) for five Cariboo East inquisitions held in 1864 and 1866.
- See [GR-0429](#), Selected Attorney General correspondence (1872-1950), for correspondence regarding inquests found in [GR-1327](#).

### Accessing coroners' records

Inquiries less than 100 years old and inquests created in or after 1910 are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and/or *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Please note that **all** records after 1910 on microfilm are restrictedrequire a privacy review prior to providing access.

### Records created before 1910 and original paper copies

- If a microfilm reel number is provided in the *Coroners' Index 1859-1939* (e.g., B01234) and the records were created before 1910, the reel can be accessed within the BC Archives reference room. Using our microfilm readers, the record can be printed for \$0.50/page or saved to a USB for free.
- If a box number is provided in the *Coroners' Index 1859-1939*, complete a call slip to request the box of original paper records. You can make a copy of the record using a digital camera or cell phone for free.
- If you cannot visit the BC Archives reference room, you can request a scanned copy by email to [access@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](mailto:access@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca), for a [reproduction fee](#). Staff will confirm the number of pages and any fees before proceeding.

### Records created after 1910 on microfilm

- Email [access@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](mailto:access@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca) to request access to the record.
- Staff will locate the record and arrange for a privacy review. This process can take up to 30 business days.
- If access is approved, you can view a copy of the record in the reference room for free. If you cannot visit the BC Archives, you can request a scanned copy, for a [reproduction fee](#). Staff will confirm the number of pages and any fees before proceeding.

### Files not in the custody of the BC Archives

Inquests from **1968** onward and inquires from **1970** onward are not held by the BC Archives. They are only accessible directly through the [BC Coroners Service](#). Request a [report](#) or call them toll free: 1-866-200-2676.