

BC Archives: Collections by media type

The BC Archives collects both archival records and published materials. These records are maintained in our BC Archives collection and Archives Library collection and can be accessed online using our collections databases or onsite in our reference room.

The archives collection consists of unpublished materials such as textual records, maps and architectural drawings, photographs, film, and video and sound recordings. It is described according to Canadian archival standards. See our [Guide to Archival Description](#) for more information.

The library collection includes published materials such as books, magazines, newspapers and government reports.

Read this document to learn about the different types of records we collect and why.

Textual records

Textual records provide us with first-hand accounts of the political, economic, social and cultural history of the province and are acquired from government agencies and private individuals, businesses and organizations.

Textual records are any type of written record, including but not limited to

- Correspondence
- Diaries
- Journals
- Manuscripts
- Official records
- Personal papers



Richard Carr fonds. MS-0610.

Some of our textual records have been digitized and are attached to the online description of the records. Many others are available on self-serve microfilm which will be noted in the online description.

Maps and architectural records

We have many maps and architectural and technical drawings. These records relate to the colonial exploration, discovery and development of the province of British Columbia.



This includes

- Published maps and atlases
- Cartographic and architectural records of the provincial government
- Geographical maps of British Columbia
- Plans by important architects or of building types contributing to the study of British Columbia's architectural heritage

Many of our maps are available on self-serve microfiche in the BC Archives reference room.

Map of a portion of the Colony of British Columbia.
CM/F9.

Photographs

Photographic records provide visual documentation of people living in British Columbia and their activities, as well as the landscape, industries, and events of the province from the early days of photography up until the twenty-first century.

Our photographic records include

- Ambrotypes
- Daguerreotypes
- Flexible film
- Glass plates
- Lantern slides
- Modern transparencies
- Photo-engraving plates
- Tintypes
- Photographic prints of all varieties



Mail Carriers, Skeena River. D-03262.

Many have been scanned and attached to their online description. We also have access copies of photographs available in the reference room which have been organized by subject.

Artworks

We also collect paintings, drawings and prints depicting the people, landscape, culture and industry of British Columbia. As well as the works of historically significant BC artists, including the world's largest collection of Emily Carr works, there are many pieces by military personnel, surveyors, adventurers, pioneers, watercolourists and amateur sketchers.

These works of art are done on a variety of media and include

- Sketches and sketchbooks
- Oil paintings
- Watercolours
- Engravings
- Colonial broadsides
- Posters

- Hooked rugs
- Pottery
- Busts



Lillooett, on the Fraser River. PDP00070

More than 6,000 works have been scanned and attached to their online description. To access original works of art, you must book an appointment with the Paintings, Drawings and Prints Collection Manager, lgolding@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca.

Film and video

We also have many films and video, which include a copy of one of the first film footage shot in British Columbia, *Down Western Slope* (1899), as well as glimpses of the early twentieth century. The most strongly documented era is from 1935 to 1985. This was a period of tremendous change in both industrial development and the domestic and working lives of British Columbians.

These works include

- Documentaries
- Dramatic and experimental shorts
- Educational films
- Family home movies
- Industrial and promotional films

- Newsreel items
- Public affairs programming
- Television news footage
- Travelogues



Jack Webster radio broadcast collection, PR-2320

A selection of titles have been digitized and are available either on our YouTube channel or on our sound and moving image kiosk in the reference room. We also have access copies available on videocassette in the

reference room. Availability of access copies will be noted in the online description.

Sound recordings

The BC Archives has sound recordings on cylinders, audio discs, tape reels, cassettes and compact discs. These recordings document our history through recorded experiences, musical creations and on-air recordings.

These recordings include

- Songs
- Interviews
- Oral histories
- Published recordings by British Columbia musicians, composers, ensembles and studios
- Unpublished recordings of indigenous music



Mungo Martin, T4339:11

A selection of titles have been digitized and are available either on our YouTube channel or on our sound and moving image kiosk in the reference room. We also have access copies available on videocassette in the reference room. Availability of access copies will be noted in the online description.

Publications

The BC Archives Library contains publications that document the history and culture of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest Coast since the late sixteenth century. Many are rare records of first explorations, colonization and development of the province.

Examples of publications include

- Books
- Directories
- Government reports
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Pamphlets
- Serials
- And other publications



BC Archives Library, NW 970.4 S664

Some of our publications are available on self-serve microfiche or on microfilm, including our newspaper collection. Many resources in our library are also available online through other institutions.