



ROYAL BC
MUSEUM

Guide to the Genealogy Search

Introduction

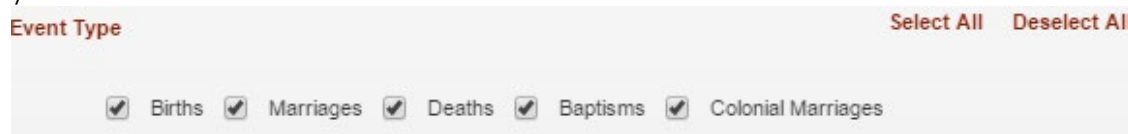
This guide provides an overview on how to look up records on the [Genealogy Search](#). It covers the three different search options ([General](#), [Browse](#), and [Keyword](#)), and offers tips on how to best find registration records.

General Search

The General Search is the default search screen for the [Genealogy Search](#). Note that you do not need to fill in all of the fields available; doing so may filter out possible results. It is recommended to use as few search fields as possible to begin and refine further if needed. Click on the "Search" button or hit "Enter" on your keyboard to execute your search.

Event Type

Select which type of event(s) you wish to search: births, marriages, deaths, baptisms, and/or colonial marriages. The default is to search all types. Click on the box(es) to deselect event(s) you do not wish to search.



Event Type Select All Deselect All

Births Marriages Deaths Baptisms Colonial Marriages

General Fields

You can use upper- or lower-case letters in search fields.

Name Fields



General

First Name:

Last Name:

It is not necessary to enter both first and last names.

If known, enter the last name in the "Last Name" field.

If known, enter the first name or all given names in the "First Name" field. You may want to try using the wildcard character (*) after the first name to get more results as individuals may have been listed using additional names or initials.

Using the wildcard character

If you are uncertain about the exact spelling of a name, or if a name is known or suspected to have variant spellings, the wildcard (*) may be helpful.

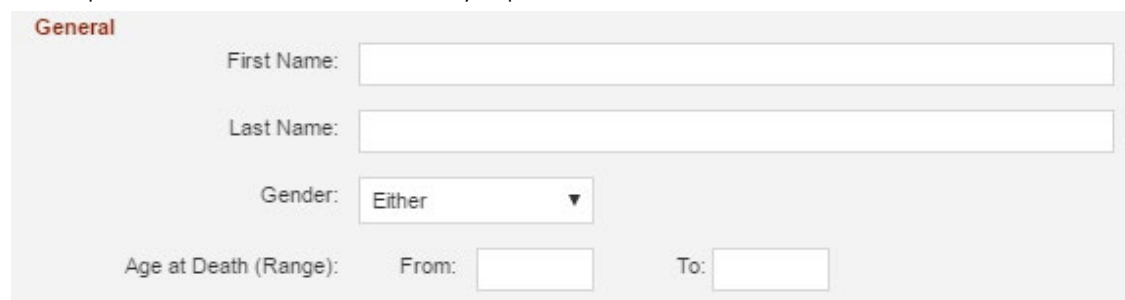
- gray Equals ("gray")
- *gray* Contains ("gray")
- gray* Starts with ("gray")
- *gray Ends with ("gray")
- gr*ay Starts with ("gr") and ends with ("ay")

Examples of search results using “Lena” in the “First Name” field, with and without the wildcard:

- Lena – will result in records where Lena is the first name and there is no middle name(s) (e.g., the name “Lena Reid” will be displayed, but NOT “Lena Mary Reid” or “Lena Susan Dixon”).
- Lena Susan – will result in a record with any first and middle names with “Lena Susan”, in that specific order (e.g., the name “Lena Susan Dixon” will be displayed, but NOT “Susan Lena Smith”).
- Lena* – will result in a record where Lena is the first name; it will include records both with and without a middle name(s) (e.g., the names “Lena Belle Freeman” and “Lena Reid” will be displayed).
- *Lena* – will result in records with Lena as first name, middle name, or portion of a name (e.g., the names “Lena Reid”, “Annie Lena Holly”, “Lena Belle Freeman”, and “Magdalena Sansregret” will be displayed).
- Le*na – will result in names that start with “Le” and end in “na” (e.g., the name “Leandina Hartnage” will be displayed).

Additional Fields

You may use additional fields to expand or narrow your search or to search when you have other pieces of information but only a partial name.



The image shows a search form with the following fields:

- General** (Section Header)
- First Name:**
- Last Name:**
- Gender:** (dropdown menu)
- Age at Death (Range):** **From:** **To:**

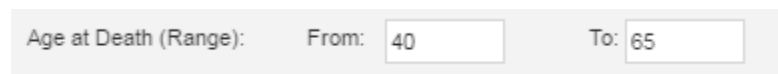
Gender

This drop-down menu allows a user to select either "Male" or "Female". This is useful when you need to reduce a large group of results or when you are searching for registrations based on gender.

Age at Death

Researchers may find the “Age at Death” field useful for conducting a more specialized search. It is also useful for narrowing a search when you have a large number of results.

The search boxes act as a range in which you enter the youngest possible age at death in the “From” field and the oldest possible age in the “To” field.



The image shows the "Age at Death (Range)" field with the following values:

- Age at Death (Range):** **From:** **To:**

The above example returns a results list of people who died at age 40 through to and including, age 65.

The field can also be used to search a single age at death. In this case you need to enter the age at death in both fields.

Age at Death (Range): From: To:

If you use the first field only you will get results for deaths at 33 years and up.

Age at Death (Range): From: To:

If you use the second field only, you will get all deaths up to and including 33.

Age at Death (Range): From: To:

Use caution when relying on memory for age at death fields. Experience has shown that people often are mistaken when recalling dates and ages. These fields can be extremely useful for narrowing searches, but if you do not get the result you want, try searching without using the "Age at Death" field.

Event Place

The "Event Place" field is used for narrowing results or for obtaining results for a specific community. You may find it useful to consult [Browse Search](#) to search for variants of place names.

Registration Number

The "Registration Number" field is used for searching the unique number assigned to the registration record itself. The registration number is used to locate the record on a reel of microfilm and/or to locate the digital image of the record, where it exists.

If you visit the BC Archives reference room to view a record, you will need the event date, registration number, and BC Archives Mfilm number to locate the record.

BC Archives Mfilm Number

The "BC Archives Mfilm Number" field is used for searching the number assigned to a BC Archives vital event registration microfilm reel. Reel numbers begin with the letter "B" followed by a five-digit number. Not all registration records exist on microfilm so not all are expected to have a BC Archives Mfilm number. However, if a digital scan of a record is not available, it may still be available on microfilm.

Newly released registrations are no longer copied onto microfilm; they are made available in a digital format. Within your search results, look for a .jpg file link to open an image of a digitized record.

If you visit the BC Archives reference room to view a record, you will need the event date, registration number, and BC Archives Mfilm number to locate the record.

Reels containing baptism records are not available at the BC Archives, even if a BC Archives Mfilm number is provided. Microfilm reels containing baptism records are in the custody of the [Vital Statistics Agency](#), except reel B16242. To request access to records on reel B16242, contact the [Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria](#) for permission to consult the original volume that is in their holdings.

GSU Mfilm Number

The "GSU Mfilm Number" is field is used for searching the numbers assigned to the microfilm reels produced by the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU). Not all registration records are expected to have a GSU Mfilm number. To locate microfilm reels within the BC Archives reference room, you must use the BC Archives Mfilm number not the GSU Mfilm number.

Event Date Range

Use "Event Date Range" fields to narrow a search to a specific year or range of years. Be aware that the [Genealogy Search](#) database currently contains registration records for births (1854-1903), marriages (1872-1949), deaths (1872-2004), colonial marriages (1859-1872), and baptisms (1836-1888). Searching years outside of those ranges will yield no results; newer records must be requested from the [Vital Statistics Agency](#).

Event Date Range

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|------|----------------------|
| Start Date: | Year: | <input type="text"/> | Month: | <input type="text"/> | Day: | <input type="text"/> |
| End Date: | Year: | <input type="text"/> | Month: | <input type="text"/> | Day: | <input type="text"/> |

- To search for a range of years – enter earliest year in "Start Year" field and latest year in "End Year" field.
- To search for a single year – enter year in both the "Start Year" and "End Year" fields.
- To search before a specified year – enter previous year in "End Year" field. Leave "Start Year" field blank.
- To search after a specified year – enter next year in "Start Year" field. Leave "End Year" field blank.

Month and day boxes are available but are optional. You can enter either with place-holder zeroes or as single digits (e.g., "09" or "9" for September). However, the search does not work if you enter letters as abbreviations for months, such as "Sep" for September.

If you visit the BC Archives reference room to view a record, you will need the event date, registration number, and BC Archives Mfilm number to locate the record.

Additional Marriage Fields

"Additional Marriage" fields have been included for searching specific marriage criteria. Use as required and only if exclusively searching for marriage registrations. The more fields you fill out, the narrower your search and the shorter your list of results.

Additional Marriage Fields

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Bride First Name: | <input type="text"/> | Bride Last Name: | <input type="text"/> |
| Groom First Name: | <input type="text"/> | Groom Last Name: | <input type="text"/> |

These fields are especially useful for looking up registrations where only a woman's married name is known, but not her maiden name. For example, there is no marriage registration result for Ethel Wilson when using Ethel* and Wilson in the fields for "First Name" and "Last Name". However, by using Additional Marriage Fields and entering Ethel* in the "Bride First Name" and Wilson in the "Groom Last Name" the marriage registration can be found.

Additional Baptism Fields

“Additional Baptism” fields have been included for searching specific baptism search criteria. Use as required and only if exclusively searching for baptism registrations. The more fields you fill out, the narrower your search and the shorter your list of results.

In the early part of the 20th century, the Vital Statistics Agency borrowed and microfilmed church registers containing baptismal information; and then returned the original registers to the churches. GSU volunteers transcribed all the information from the microfilm reels and entered it into the BC Archives [Genealogy Search](#) database. There are no actual registration forms for these records, as there are for other vital events. All the information on the microfilm reels is transcribed in the BC Archives [Genealogy Search](#) database.

Note that the reels containing baptism records are not available at the BC Archives, even if a BC Archives Mfilm number is provided. Microfilm reels containing baptism records are in the custody of the [Vital Statistics Agency](#), except reel B16242. To request access to records on reel B16242, contact the [Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria](#) for permission to consult the original volume that is in their holdings.

Additional Baptism Fields

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Mother First Name: | <input type="text"/> | Mother Last Name: | <input type="text"/> |
| Father First Name: | <input type="text"/> | Father Last Name: | <input type="text"/> |
| Denomination: | <input type="text" value="▼"/> | | |
| Church Name: | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Other Location: | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Birth Location: | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Birth Date - Year: | <input type="text"/> | Month: | <input type="text"/> |
| | | Day: | <input type="text"/> |
| Affiliation: | <input type="text"/> | | |
| Comments: | <input type="text"/> | | |

Mother and Father First and Last Names

There are fields for searching the mother and father first and last names which provide opportunities to enter combinations of partial names, such as a mother’s first name and a father’s first name.

Denomination

The “Domination” field presents a drop-down menu in which you can choose any single option (e.g., Methodist) or you can leave it blank.

Church Name

If you know the name of the church, you can search for baptisms performed at that church.

Other Location

The "Other Location" field searches data which often duplicates Event Location, although not in all cases.

Birth Location

When using the "Birth Location" field, keep in mind that a number of baptisms were adult baptisms and place of birth is not the same as event location (e.g., try entering *USA* in the birth location field to search for someone baptized in BC, but born in the USA).

Birth Date

The "Birth Date" field allows you to search baptism registrations by birth date. Month and day boxes have been added for your convenience, but their use is optional. You can enter either with place-holder zeroes or as single digits (e.g. "09" or "9" for September). However, the search does not work if you enter letters as abbreviations for months, such as "Sep" for September.

Affiliation

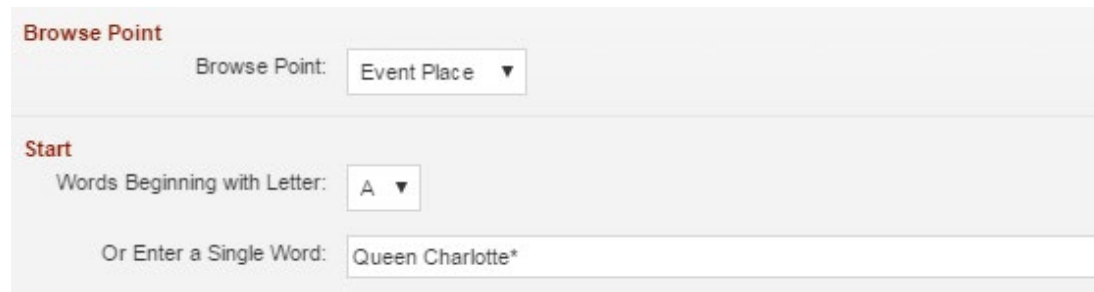
This is used to search Indigenous community affiliation information. The spellings of these have varied over time and experimentation will be required when using this field. Try any and all variations spelling variations. Some of the entries are also commonly found place names, such as "Yale" or "Fort Hope". Wildcards do not work in this field.

Comments

The "Comments" field may include the circumstances surrounding the baptism or other family information. Some comments include: "adult", "adult in great pain", "parents not named", "father Chinese", "born in Holland", "father from the USA", "illegitimate", "by immersion in lake", etc. Wildcards do not work in this field.

Browse Search

Browse Search is useful for determining place names and variant spellings.



The screenshot shows a search interface with the following elements:

- Browse Point:** A dropdown menu currently set to "Event Place".
- Start:** A dropdown menu for "Words Beginning with Letter" currently set to "A".
- Or Enter a Single Word:** A text input field containing "Queen Charlotte*".

For example, using the wildcard (*) after Queen Charlotte* returns the following results:

| Event Place | Occurrences |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| QUEEN CHARLOTTE CITY | 457 |
| QUEEN CHARLOTTE DISTRICT | 1 |
| QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLAND | 9 |
| QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS | 8 |
| QUEEN CHARLOTTE SOUND | 2 |
| QUEEN CHARLOTTE STRA | 10 |
| QUEEN CHARLOTTE STRAIT | 5 |
| QUEEN CHARLOTTE STRAITS | 1 |

Keyword Search

The Keyword Search currently has limited functionality, and we recommend using the [General Search](#). There is no wildcard or Boolean-operator (and, not, or) functionality using Keyword Search.

General

Enter Search Terms:

Event Date Range

Start Year: Month: Day:

End Year: Month: Day:

For example, a Keyword Search for “Yale” will return results for a first or last name (e.g., John Yale) and for Yale as an event place, but will not return results for more complex terms like John Yale-Smith or Yale St Johns (event place).

Further Information

If you cannot locate the record(s) that you are seeking, the following may assist in your search:

- You do not need to fill in all the fields in the General Search. Do not narrow your search by entering too much, or possibly incorrect, information. For example, if you are not certain of the exact place where the event took place, you are best to leave this field empty.
- Use the “Refine Search” button to move from your list of results back to the search page without losing information that you have already entered in the Search fields. Using the browser’s back arrow or selecting “New Search” clears all the previously entered data in the search fields. However, when you are viewing a registration record, you can return to your list of results by using the browser’s “back” arrow.
- Use the [wildcard character](#) (*) to increase the number of results returned. It is usually more efficient to enter only a last name unless you are certain how the given names

were registered. For example, the first name(s) for “Henry Pering Pellew Crease” might have been registered as Henry Pering P., Henry P.P., H.P.P, or even simply as Henry.

- Search for last names with an apostrophe, such as O’Connor, O’Hara, and O’Reilly, by substituting an asterisk for the apostrophe. For example, O*Reilly returns results for Oreilly and O’Reilly.
- Deaths are not registered unless a coroner, a doctor, or an undertaker files a registration; this sometimes does not happen when there is doubt about the death (i.e., in the case of a missing person).
- Indigenous and Chinese births, marriages, and deaths were excluded from 1872 to 1877, and Indigenous registrations were excluded again from 1899 to 1916.
- Stillbirths may have been registered as a birth, a death, or both and may need to be requested from the [Vital Statistics Agency](#).
- Death registrations for children aged 24 months or younger at death need to be requested from the [Vital Statistics Agency](#).
- If you find a registration via the [Genealogy Search](#) that does not have a corresponding BC Archives Mfilm reel number or a digital copy, it was probably a delayed registration. In such cases, contact the [Vital Statistics Agency](#).
- Some entries for World War II overseas deaths have two records within one attached image. Generally, the first record in the image will match the index entry.

Last modified: 23 August 2023