

GUIDE TO THE MICROFILMS¹ OF INDIGENOUS BIRTH, MARRIAGE AND DEATH REGISTRATIONS COLLECTED BY BC INDIAN AGENTS 1917-1956

When civil registration of births, marriages and deaths was introduced into the province of British Columbia in 1872, "Indians", as well as Chinese, were excluded from the provision of the Act (SBC 1872, c.26, s.22). In 1888 the exclusionary section was repealed (SBC 1888, c.34, s.8) and in 1897 the Act was made applicable to "all races and nationalities, including all Indians and persons of Indian blood, Chinese and Japanese" (RSBC 1897, c.33, s.3). Two years later, however, the Act was amended to exclude "persons who are Indians within the meaning of the Act of the Dominion Parliament respecting Indians" (SBC 1899, c.8, s.3). In 1916 the section was amended to allow the Registrar to "accept returns to be made monthly by the respective Indian Agents in the Province," those returns to be made on special forms and to be "kept separate and apart from the other returns" (SBC 1916, c. 73, s. 3.2). In 1943 the registration of "Indian" births, marriages and deaths was made mandatory (SBC 1943, c. 69, s. 2). The use of the special forms and separate filing of the forms was discontinued in 1956.

The following information applies to the microfilmed registrations of births, marriages and deaths of indigenous individuals defined as "Indian" under the federal *Indian Act*, collected between 1917 and 1956 on the special forms by Indian Agents, and filed separately from all other BC vital event registrations. These registrations were designated as "Indian" registrations.

BIRTH REGISTRATIONS (TABLE 1)

The collection of birth registrations which appear on a separate set of microfilm reels² are all delayed registrations received after 1916 and all have been assigned volume number 995.³ The earliest birth dates back to 1868.⁴ Indigenous birth records may also be found with the regular birth registrations, especially for the period from 1877 to 1899.

MARRIAGE REGISTRATIONS (TABLE 2)

From 1917 to 1956 marriage registrations were recorded in separate volumes with a separate numbering system.⁵ Each volume, starting with 1917 as Volume 1, corresponds to a year. The registration numbers are, however, in a single continuous sequence to 1934 (1-2286). This creates a potential problem for finding registrations on reel B13892 (1926) when the numbers change from three digits to four digits. Because only the last three digits of the official

¹ Note that many registrations are now available as digital images linked to the index records. See (<http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy>).

² Reels B13802-B13803, B13868-B13872, 1868-1903. Registrations dated 1904 to 1916 will also be delayed registrations once they are released (starting in 2025).

³ Between 1917 and 1956, "Indian" birth registrations were maintained in a separate sub-series. They were bound in volumes, initially in sequentially-numbered annual volumes, starting with Volume 1 in 1917 and then, commencing in 1946, by year using a single volume number, 95. During the same time period, delayed registrations of "Indian" births were bound in a separate set of volumes numbered 795 and 995-998. A special form was used, which included additional information such as tribal affiliation. This form was altered in 1943 and discarded in 1956 when "Indian" registrations were no longer separated from other vital event registrations and the general form was used.

⁴ There are 338 in total from 1868 to 1903. As most of these registrations are on forms introduced in 1943, it would appear that they were collected, for the most part, in 1943 and later.

⁵ Reels B11391, B13888-B13897, 1873-1931.

registration number appear in the index entry, registrations numbered 001000-001113 will be shown as 1926-09-010000 to 1926-09-010113 (1926, volume 10, last three digits of registration number). They appear on the microfilm reel in the proper sequential order according to the original four-digit registration number but not according to the three-part index registration number (i.e. 1926-09-010000 will follow 1926-09-010999, as marriage registration number 1000 immediately follows 999).

Another problem occurs on the reel for 1922 (B13888) which includes Volumes 26 and 26A containing marriages prior to 1922 which were registered in 1942. Because the six-digit part of the index registration number does not distinguish between the two volumes, the numbers for registrations 207 to 498 in Vol. 26 and 1207 to 1468 in Vol. 26A will have the same six-digit number, e.g. 026253 for an 1873 marriage (registration number 000253) and a 1906 marriage (registration number 1253). Volume 26 is comprised mostly of registrations from Kamloops and district and Volume 26A of registrations from the Fort St. James district and northern BC so the place of marriage may provide a clue. If not, both volumes may need to be checked to locate the correct registration.

Early indigenous marriage records may also be found with the regular marriage registrations for the period from 1877 and 1899.

DEATH REGISTRATIONS (TABLE 3)

From 1917 to 1956 death registrations were recorded in separate volumes with a separate numbering system and have also been microfilmed on separate reels. For 1917 to 1945, the registration numbers consist of a prefix (the sequential volume number starting with Volume 1 in 1917) followed by a sequentially assigned number. To locate registrations filed in these volumes (nos.1-29), the volume numbers can be used.

From 1946 to 1956 the numbers have a single prefix (volume number 95) followed by a sequential number starting at 1 at the beginning of each year. **To locate registrations from 1946 to 1956 assigned to volume 95, the year must be used in conjunction with the registration.** For example, to find the following registration first advance the reel (B13376) to the section for 1949 (see the footer⁶) and then look for 576 in the upper right corner.

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Event Type: | Death |
| Registration Number: | 1949-09-095576 |
| BC Archives Mfilm Number: | B13376 |
| GSU Mfilm Number: | 2034106 |
| Event Date (YYYY-MM-DD): | 1949-12-25 |
| Event Place: | HAZELTON |
| Age at Death: | 27 |
| Person: | ARCHIBALD HARRIS |

Early indigenous death records may also be found with the regular death registrations for the period from 1877 and 1899.

⁶ Note that the footer is missing for the 1948 records.

See the following tables for the contents of the microfilm reels designated as “Indian” births, “Indian” marriages and “Indian” deaths.

TABLE 1 Registrations collected 1917-1956 : **birth registrations**¹

| Seq. no. | Reel no. | Date | Volume ² | Content |
|----------|----------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | B13802 | 1868-1897 | 995A-998B | 195 registrations |
| 2 | B13803 | 1898 | 995A-998B | 13 registrations |
| 3 | B13868 | 1899 | 995A-998B | 17 registrations |
| 4 | B13869 | 1900 | 995A-998B | 32 registrations |
| 5 | B13870 | 1901 | 995A-998B | 20 registrations |
| 6 | B13871 | 1902 | 995A-998B | 33 registrations |
| 7 | B13872 | 1903 | 995A-998B | 28 registrations |

¹Delayed registrations only, mostly collected circa 1945 to 1956, specifically as “Indian” birth registrations. No updates until 2024.

²The label on the microfilm reels also shows 795 and 001-002 as volume numbers. These are for post-1903 reels which were not released. Volume 1 will be for 1917 and Volume 2 for 1918.

TABLE 2 Registrations collected 1917-1956 : **marriage registrations 1871-1933**¹

| Seq. no. | Reel no. | Year(s) ² | Volume/Registration numbers |
|----------|----------|---|--|
| 1 | B11391 | 1916-1917 1917-1918 1917-1919 1917-1920 1920-1921 | Vol. 01, 1-67 Vol. 02, 68-139 Vol. 03, 140-325 Vol. 04, 326-445 Vol. 05, 446-541 |
| 2 | B13888 | 1911-1922 1871-1922 | Vol. 06, 542-651 Vol. 26, 207-776 to Vol. 26A, 777-1468 ³ |
| 3 | B13889 | 1920-1923 | Vol. 07, 652-757 |
| 4 | B13890 | 1922-1924 | Vol. 08, 758-876 |
| 5 | B13891 | 1924-1925 | Vol. 09, 877-984 |
| 6 | B13892 | 1925-1926 | Vol. 10, 985-1113 ⁴ |
| 7 | B13893 | 1926-1927 | Vol. 11, 1114-1226 |
| 8 | B13894 | 1927-1928 | Vol. 12, 1227-1354 |
| 9 | B13895 | 1927-1929 | Vol. 13, 1355-1479 |
| 10 | B13896 | 1913-1930 | Vol. 14, 1480-1637 |
| 11 | B13897 | 1922-1931 | Vol. 15, 1638-1770 |
| 12 | B13898 | 1922-1932 | Vol. 16, 1771-1935 |
| 13 | B13899 | 1926-1933 | Vol. 17, 1936-2116 |

¹Reels for later marriages are not available but the registrations – if more than 75 years old – can be found on the Genealogy Search database (<http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy>).

² Each volume includes a certain number of registrations from previous years. For purposes of finding the registration the year can be ignored.

³ Volume 6 covers registrations in 1922. Volumes 26 and 26A have registrations for marriages from 1871-1922 which were registered/filed in 1942. Note that numbers 1 to 206 do not appear on the reel. See “Marriage registrations” p. 1-2 above.

⁴ See “Marriage registrations” p.1-2 above.

TABLE 3 Registrations collected 1917-1956 : **death registrations** (complete)

| Seq. no. | Reel no. | Year ¹ | Vol./Reg. numbers | Notes |
|----------|----------|--|--|-----------------------|
| 283 | B13359 | 1917 1918 1919 1920 1921 | Vol. 01, 1-310 Vol. 02, 311-935 Vol. 03, 936-1674 Vol. 04, 1675-2045 Vol. 05, 2046-2406 | Registrations |
| 284 | B13360 | 1922 1923 1924 1925 1926 | Vol. 06, 2407-2772 Vol. 07, 2773-3227 Vol. 08, 3228-3689 Vol. 09, 3690-4124 Vol. 10, 4125-4515 | Registrations |
| 285 | B13361 | 1927 1928 1929 1930 | Vol. 11, 4516-5041 Vol. 12, 5042-5540 Vol. 13, 5541-6087 Vol. 14, 6088-6581 | Registrations |
| 286 | B13362 | 1931 1932 1933 1934 | Vol. 15, 6582-7097 Vol. 16, 7098-7607 Vol. 17, 7608-8138 Vol. 18, 8139-8675 | Registrations |
| 287 | B13363 | 1935 1936 1937 | Vol. 19, 1-525 Vol. 20, 1-514 Vol. 21, 1-770 | Registrations |
| 288 | B13374 | 1938 1939 1940 | Vol. 22, 1-589 Vol. 23, 1-557 Vol. 24, 1-638 | Registrations |
| 289 | B13375 | 1941 1942 1943 1944 | Vol. 25, 1-569 Vol. 26, 1-539 Vol. 27, 1-603 Vol. 28, 1-589 | Registrations |
| 290 | B13376 | 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 | Vol. 29, 1-611 Vol. 95, 1-693 Vol. 95, 1-646 Vol. 95, 1-576 Vol. 95, 1-586 | Registrations |
| 291 | B13377 | 1950 1951 1952 1953 1954 1955 1956 | Vol. 95, 1-546 Vol. 95, 1-529 Vol. 95, 1-493 Vol. 95, 1-390 Vol. 95, 1-376 Vol. 95, 1-447 Vol. 95, 1-471 | Registrations |
| 292 | B13378 | 1915-1946 | Vol. 995, 1-410 | Delayed registrations |

¹Years shown are the years of registration, not necessarily the year the death occurred. Each volume includes a certain number of registrations from previous years, going as far back as 1916.

