

BC Archives Research Guide

CORONERS' RECORDS

The BC Archives has:

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

Inquiries are investigations conducted by single coroner and usually consist of a single form. Not all coroners' records between 1859 and 1970 have survived or are in the legal custody of the BC Archives.

Inquests are investigations in which a coroner's jury ruled on the cause of death. Inquest files often contain witness statements, transcripts, autopsy reports, and findings.

INDEXES FROM 1859 TO 1967/1970

Coroners' indexes are not restricted and can be used to locate the following details for requesting coroners' inquiry and inquest records.

- Series
- Box or microfilm number
- Whether the investigation is an inquiry or an inquest
- Inquiry or inquest number
- Date
- Name of the individual
- Location

Coroner's index 1859-1939

The *Coroner's Index 1859-1939* is available online, from the [Guides, Indexes, and Inventories](#) webpage. This index is ordered alphabetically by the surname of the deceased individual, as taken from the record. All fields are keyword searchable.

Coroner's indexes 1939-1967 or 1970

For coroner's inquiries from 1939 up to and including 1970 and inquests from 1939 up to and including 1967, consult the following microfiche in the BC Archives reference room:

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

IF YOU CAN NOT FIND AN INDEX LISTING

- Search the BC Archives [Genealogy database](#) for death registrations, which may provide alternate name spellings or dates. Registrations may also indicate whether an inquiry or inquest was held.

- Consult the Colonial Correspondence ([GR-1372](#)) card catalogue in the BC Archives Reference Room using search terms such as the name of the individual, "inquest", "murder", "suicide," "drowning," etc.
- See [GR-2946](#) for five inquisitions held before Peter O'Reilly in 1864 and W.G. Cox in 1866, in Cariboo East.
- See [GR-0429](#) - Attorney General correspondence (1872-1950) for correspondence covering inquests found in [GR-1327](#)

ACCESSING CORONERS' RECORDS

Coroners' inquiries less than 100 years old and coroners' inquests created in or after 1910 are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (BC).

Coroners' inquiries more than 100 years old and coroners' inquests before 1910

- If a microfilm reel number is provided in the *Coroner's Index 1859-1939*, 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 you cannot visit the BC Archives reference room, you can request a scanned copy by email to access@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca, for a [reproduction fee](#). Our retrieval staff will confirm the number of pages and associated fees before proceeding.
- If a box number is provided in the *Coroner's Index 1859-1939*, the paper record is stored offsite. Complete a call slip to request the box. It will take 24-72 hours for the box to arrive. 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, for a [reproduction fee](#). Our retrieval staff will confirm the number of pages and associated fees before proceeding.

Coroners' inquiries less than 100 years old and coroners' inquests during and after 1910

- Contact the BC Archives Privacy Office to request access to the records (privacy@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca) and include all details provided by the index. This process can take up to 30 days or longer.
- If access is approved, 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 photocopy, for a [reproduction fee](#).

FILES NOT IN THE CUSTODY OF BC ARCHIVES

Inquests from **1968** onward and inquiries from **1971** onward are only accessible through the [Office of the Chief Coroner](#), Burnaby, BC (604) 660-7745, within [BC Coroners Service](#).

INSTRUCTIONS TO STAFF

GR-1502 (inquests, 1938-1967); **GR-1503** (inquiries and some inquests for Vancouver, 1938-1965); **GR-1504** (inquiries 1938-1970), and **GR-1723** to **GR-1726** (Attorney General correspondence, includes inquiries), ca. 1938-1970. For **GR-1726** (inquiries, 1955-1965), use the GR-1504 finding aid.