

BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES RESEARCH GUIDE

CENSUS OF CANADA, 1911: BRITISH COLUMBIA

The BC Archives holds microfilm copies of the federal census returns for British Columbia for 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911. The census, unlike other research sources identifying individuals such as city/business directories and voters lists, intended to capture information about every individual. Although attempts were made to include returns for the Native and Chinese population, this was not a systematic enumeration until 1901 when the Native population was, for the first time, enumerated by "Indian agency".

The federal Department of Agriculture organized the 1911 census under the provisions of the Census and Statistics Act, 1905. British Columbia was divided into 7 census districts (**COMOX-ATLIN, KOOTENAY, NANAIMO, NEW WESTMINSTER, VANCOUVER, VICTORIA CITY** and **YALE/CARIBOO**), with each district divided into sub-districts. Local census enumerators were appointed to record detailed information about the population: name, age, sex, racial origin, religion, profession, wages, education, health, etc. This information was written down in what is known as Schedule 1. The original paper copies were destroyed after microfilming in 1955.

In addition to the complete digital version of the 1911 census available at no charge on the Library and Archives Canada ArchiviaNet web site (searchable only by census district/sub-district or place), there are also some nominal indexes available only on the Web. The BC Archives does not provide access to these electronic resources, but they are described at the end of this guide. In order to locate an individual on the microfilm without first consulting these web sites, you will have to search through each census district/sub-district, line by line to find an individual. To be successful in your search, you need to know roughly WHERE the person was living in 1901. Please follow the instructions below in order to find a census entry for a particular individual on the BC Archives microfilm copy:

1. Consult the finding aid for the 1911 census (**GR-3261**) on a bookshelf in the reference room.
2. Turn to page 27 of the *ArchiviaNet Research Guide to Census of Canada 1911*, and you will see the beginning of the listing of districts and sub-districts. Many sub-districts list communities included but smaller communities were not always identified by name, and you will have to approximate which sub-district these places were in. Maps for the federal electoral districts, upon which the census districts were based, are to be found on pages 40-43.
3. Once you identify the likely district, carefully examine the list to determine the sub-districts you need to check. There are two schedules for each sub-district. Write down the district name and number and the sub-district number.
4. To locate the reel number, use the list below or turn to the first page of the finding aid. Help yourself to the self-service microfilm from the cabinets along the wall to the left of the retrievals desk. You may need to take the finding aid to the microfilm room to guide you through the microfilm to the correct district and sub-district. Please note that the first reel contains returns from other District 7 in Alberta; just advance through them until you reach the BC portion.
5. Because the census is not arranged alphabetically, you have to search through the entire sub-district. Since it is time-consuming to locate someone in the census if you do not know where they lived, you may want to check other sources first to locate a person's residence. There are self-serve reference copies (red, bound volumes) of city directories located on top of the card catalogues and you might try to locate the individual in these. You will have to search by area, but it can be easier than the microfilm. There are also clippings files and newspaper indexes that might contain information; staff can direct you to these.
6. The Indian Agency schedules are included as sub-districts in the regular census for their geographic area. See the list of districts and sub-districts for the agencies and reserves included

7. As the original microfilming of the 1911 Census Schedule 1 records was not of consistent quality, not all images are decipherable.

If you know the district and wish to browse the microfilm reels directly, use the following list

REEL NUMBER	CENSUS DISTRICT
B16578	Alberta: District 7 (Victoria) to British Columbia: District 8 (Comox-Atlin)
B16579	British Columbia: District 9 (Kootenay)
B16580	British Columbia: District 10 (Nanaimo) to British Columbia: District 11 (New Westminster), Sub-district 20
B16581	British Columbia: District 11 (New Westminster), Sub-district 21 to British Columbia: District 12 (Vancouver), Sub-district 18
B16582	British Columbia: District 12 (Vancouver), Sub-districts 19-50
B16583	British Columbia: District 12 (Vancouver), Sub-district 51 to British Columbia: District 13 (Victoria City), Sub-district 14
B16584	British Columbia: District 13 (Victoria City), Sub-district 15 to British Columbia: District 14 (Yale and Cariboo), Sub-district 54
B16585	British Columbia: District 14 (Yale and Cariboo), Sub-districts 55-65

TO MAKE COPIES:

You can make your own copies, at the current price per page, during regular hours. It will probably require two sheets to print out one page of the census. .

PUBLISHED RESOURCES AT THE BC ARCHIVES

There are also a number of published sources that deal with a number of different census returns. Please use the following subject headings as a guide to locating some of these resources in our library catalogue:

Canada – Census	Canada – Census, 1784	Canada – Census, 1890-91
Canada – Census, 1901	Canada – Census, 1911	Canada. Census and Statistics Office.
Canada. Dept. of Agriculture Statistical Office.		

INTERNET/WEB RESOURCES FOR 1911 CENSUS

- Library and Archives Canada has a guide to and a complete digital version of the 1911 census (www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/1911/index-e.html). Searching is by geographic location only.
- Canadian Genealogy Centre guide to census research (www.collectionscanada.ca/genealogy/022-911-e.html)
- Automated Genealogy project (automatedgenealogy.com/index.html). Surname search for 1911 census.