

BRITISH COLUMBIA ARCHIVES RESEARCH GUIDE TO PROBATED WILLS

Wills probated in British Columbia between 1861 and 1981 are available at the British Columbia Archives. Please follow the instructions below to find a will:

1. Retrieve the **central will indexes** on self-serve microfilm reels according to the dates you wish to search. The dates represent the year a will was filed, **not** the year of death:

- A. GR-1417, volumes 1 to 4, 1861-1948 = Reel **B01990**
- B. GR-1417, volumes 5 to 12, 1948-1981 = Reels **B11790 - B11794**
- C. See the finding aid to GR-1417 for a further breakdown by year and reel number for the 1948-1981 period. Finding aids are found on the bookshelves opposite the card catalogues.

2. Load the microfilm reel onto any of our microfilm readers. Ask staff for assistance if you are unfamiliar with the equipment.

3. Orient the film so you are viewing the bottom of each page where there will be a "title strip" listing the volume number and date range covered by the volume.

4. Locate the letter and section of the person's family name you wish to search (see sample below).

- A. Each volume is arranged in alphabetical groupings by the first two or three letters of a person's family name.
- B. Check all the names on each page within that grouping, as the names are not alphabetized beyond those first two or three letters.
- C. Watch for a "contd. [page number]" note at the bottom of a page that is completely filled with names and continue your search on those additional pages.
- D. If no name is found, this means no will was filed or only a probate file exists. See the **Probate Files Research Guide** for suggestions.

5. Sample index entry:

SURNAME	CHRISTIAN NAME	PAPERS		BOOKS		WILLS		REMARKS
		No.	A or P	Vol.	Fol.	Vol.	No.	
He (Her-Hes)								
<i>Heseltine</i>	<i>Samuel</i>	342	A	III	85	297		2984
<i>Heron</i>	<i>William</i>		P			7	30	<i>Vernon</i> 3184
<i>Hertzley</i>	<i>George</i>		A					<i>Resealing</i>
<i>Heswood</i>	<i>David</i>	400/39	P			3	42	31,229

RECORD YOUR NUMBERS HERE:

6. HOW TO USE THE INFORMATION

- A. The number in the **PAPERS** column is the **Victoria Supreme Court Probate file number**. When this column is blank, it means the will was probated in another court registry. The name of the registry *may* appear on the line between the PAPERS column and the REMARKS column. If the **PAPERS** column is blank, see the **Probate Files Research Guide**.
- B. The **A or P** column indicates whether the estate was **Administered** by an official administrator or **Probated** by Executor named by the testator or appointed by the court.
- C. The **BOOKS** column refers to the Victoria Letters (Grants of) Probate and Letters of Administration.
- D. The **WILLS** column is the Duplicate Will Number.
- E. The **REMARKS** column is the **Original Will Number**.
- F. **RESEALING** means the estate was probated outside the province. There may, however, be a probate file for British Columbia and a copy of the will should be in that file.

7. If you are only looking for the will, the number in the **REMARKS** column is all you need.

8. LOCATE THE WILL ON MICROFILM

Finding aids (microfilm reel lists) for all wills can be found on the finding aids bookshelves in the Reference Room or on our Internet (World Wide Web) site (see below). You will need to consult one of three groups of government records:

- A. **REMARKS** = 1 through 31,200, see **GR-1052** (microfilm reels B08945 - B08993), wills filed between 1861-1939.
- B. **REMARKS** = 31,201 through 46,021, see **GR-1574** (microfilm reels B06352 - B06386), wills filed between 1939-1946.
- C. **REMARKS** = 46,022 through 236,339, see **GR-2009** (microfilm reels B08663 - B08679 and B11795 - B12164), wills filed between 1946-1980; originals, 1981 (request box using call slip at retrieval desk).

9. COPYING WILLS

You can make copies of wills yourself in the Reference Room during full service hours, on our self-serve microfilm reader-printers. **Note: Certified copies** of wills can only be made by BC Archives staff. See current price list for fees. Copies of original wills on paper, where available, as well as on microfilm may also be requested by completing a Photocopy Requisition form or by writing, faxing or e-mailing Access Services. Pre-payment on our invoice is required prior to copy orders being filled. Prices do not include PST or GST.

10. **FURTHER INFORMATION** on wills and probates can be found in Attorney General Guide to Estates Binder 7A in the Reference Room and the Probate Case Files Research Guide.

Mailing Address: Access Services, BC Archives, 675 Belleville St., Victoria, BC V8W 9W2

Reference Room: 655 Belleville St., Victoria, BC

Phone: (250) 387-1952 **Fax:** (250) 387-2072 **E-mail:** access@www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca

World Wide Web: <http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca>

