

VANCOUVER, A BRIEF GUIDE TO GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH SOURCES

by M. Diane Rogers, Revised May 2012.

City of Vancouver Archives—At the Archives are directories, a small reference library, news clipping files, some newspapers, photographs and film, voters' lists, property related records and tax records, fire insurance plans and atlases, some city employee records, Mountain View cemetery burial records, as well as many Vancouver related collections from organizations and individuals. *Very few collections are name indexed*, but there are many guides and file lists. On-line scanned photographs and films, searchable catalogues and Major James Skitt Matthews, *Early Vancouver*, Volumes 1–7 (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011). Searchable and downloadable. Free to use for any purpose with attribution as are the scanned photographs.

Website: <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/archives>

Special Collections, and Genealogy, Central Branch, Vancouver Public Library (VPL)—In the Special Collections department, 240,000 photographs, most Vancouver (English) historical newspapers on film, directories and telephone books, maps and plans, including fire insurance plans, and rare books and pamphlets. BC Vital Event registration films are available in the Genealogy Department. On the website, over 25,000 scanned photographs (not only of Vancouver) and directories for BC and the Pacific Northwest are now on-line to 1929 & growing. Elizabeth Walker's book, *Street Names of Vancouver* (Vancouver Historical Society, 1999) is on-line with the directories. VPL has an on-line guide to BC Vital Events searches, a Chinese Canadian Genealogy website and wiki and a guide to researching Vancouver houses.

Website: www.vpl.ca BC Historical Directories, 1860-1947:
<http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php>

The Vancouver Heritage Society now has a database on-line for building permits, 1901-1921, including permits for the District of South Vancouver and the Corporation of Point Grey which became part of the City of Vancouver in 1929.

Website: <http://heritagevancouver.org/database.html>

The Museum of Vancouver has a searchable database on-line for artifacts in its collections. Search by keyword; limit your search to Vancouver connected items only or to only items with images.

Website: <http://openmov.museumofvancouver.ca/collection>

Walter Draycott Library, British Columbia Genealogical Society—At the Library, access to BC Pioneer Register files, all BCGS (and other) BC cemetery publications, BCGS's Vancouver Mountain View Cemetery inscription cards and a copy of the burial register to 1966, BC census films, the BC history book indexes, extensive clipping and surname card files, 1980s Lower Mainland assessments, directories and more. The BCGS website includes the 1901 census index, links to BC cemetery websites and publications, and to BC newspapers, current and historical, and obituary projects, BCGS Library catalogues and an index to past issues of *The British Columbia Genealogist*.

Website: www.bcgs.ca

The British Columbia Archives has Vancouver related material on-line at: www.bcarchives.bc.ca as well as in its collections, and the BC Vital Events index is on-line at the BC Archives website. There are also BC Vital Events indexes at FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com
Website: www.bcarchives.bc.ca

Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver. Alphabetical lists of burials, searchable cemetery maps, cemetery history.
Website: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/NONMARKETOPERATIONS/MOUNTAINVIEW>

James Johnstone, Vancouver's house detective. See his blog, *When an old house whispers*, for building research examples and ideas:
<http://househistorian.blogspot.com> and take one of his walking tours (nominal cost) for a lively and well documented look at various Vancouver neighbourhoods. For tour dates, see:
<http://historywalksinvancouver.blogspot.ca>

The History of Metropolitan Vancouver by Chuck Davis. The website is a decade by decade glimpse of Vancouver's history and its people. Read *Chuck Davis's History of Metropolitan Vancouver* (Harbour Press, 2011).
Website: www.vancouverhistory.ca

University of British Columbia, UBC Library, Special Collections and the University of British Columbia Archives. Special Collections focuses on BC history, exploration, settlement, business, politics, ethnicity, and labour. In the reading room are UBC publications and bound BC directories from 1882 to 1994. UBC has a wide variety of on-line collections, for example, 1,750 images from UBC yearbooks and digitized student publications and yearbooks, including McGill University College of British Columbia, 1911, 1913-15.
Website: www.library.ubc.ca

Three essential books—*Vancouver Voters, 1886: A Biographical Dictionary*, edited and compiled by Peter S.N. Claydon and Valerie Melanson. Details on the families, including descendants of those on the 1886 Vancouver Voters' List. Includes all name indexes. (Richmond, BC: British Columbia Genealogical Society, 1994), *Vancouver: a visual history*, Volume 1 by Bruce Macdonald (Talonbooks, 1992) and *The Man Who Saved Vancouver: Major James Skitt Matthews* by Daphne Sleigh, about the City of Vancouver's first Archivist (Heritage House Publishing Co, 2008). And one bonus book, *Vancouver Exposed: A History in Photographs* by Donald E. Waite (Maple Ridge, BC: Waite Bird Photos Inc., 2010).

For more books, and for articles, consult

The Vancouver Bibliography, Vancouver Historical Society, (published 1986). 15,000 citations to articles and books about Vancouver. Free, searchable database on-line
Website: www.vancouver-historical-society.ca/bibliography.htm

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Vancouver Books, books about Vancouver listed by decade, by Karen Cannon of the Friends of the Vancouver Public Library. Free on Chuck Davis's website, *The History of Metropolitan Vancouver*: www.vancouverhistory.ca/vancouver_books_2000.htm

British Columbia History, the British Columbia Historical Federation's journal, includes many articles relating to Vancouver. Previous publications free on-line to 2007, searchable, with a number of indexes.

Website: www.bchistory.ca

BC Studies: The British Columbia Quarterly. More academic articles, on-line and searchable for issues over 2 years old.

Website: www.bcstudies.com

For current and historical newspapers, see the *BCGS Newspaper and Obituaries page*.

Vancouver Public Library, New Westminster Library, the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University all have good collections of Lower Mainland newspapers, including some specialized papers. Check on-line library catalogues for specifics.

Vancouver Sun and Province Photo Library, Pacific Newspaper group. Extensive collections from 1950s. No individual access. Send queries on-line at:

www.sunprovince.com/reprints

or e-mail: infoline@sunprovince.com or call 604 605 2353. Pay service, research charges may apply.

Website: www.sunprovince.com/infoline

Note that a sampling of 1920s *Vancouver Sun* papers are on-line through Google and can be browsed: <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=ifldVpG6JtcC> and http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=NM66qo_NnIUC

MulticulturalCanada.ca. Digitized newspapers, including the *Chinese Times*: www.multiculturalcanada.ca

For many more Vancouver local research repositories and collections, churches, archives, museums, etc., see Cloverdale Library's book, ***Planning a Genealogical Trip to the Vancouver Area***, revised by Jacqueline Haines and Tamara Nadon, edited by Stephanie Kurmeyer (Surrey Public Library, 2008).

At the BCGS website is a handout on British Columbia Genealogy Sources and Links which may be useful to you. Web link: <http://www.bcgso.ca/Documents/Archived%20files/BC-VPL%20handout.pdf>

If you have favourite or new sources for Vancouver genealogy and history, please share them with other readers. Contact M. Diane Rogers: editor@bcgs.ca