

BC Archives Search Tips

The Archives Collections Search (also referred to as AtoM) is the entry point for searching the archival holdings of the BC Archives. This Search Tips document is organized into the following headings:

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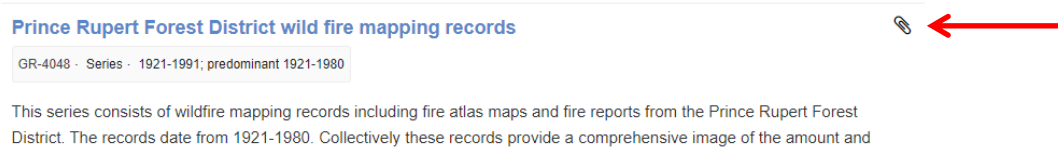
For more detailed information, please see the [Advanced Search](#) guide for AtoM.

New Features

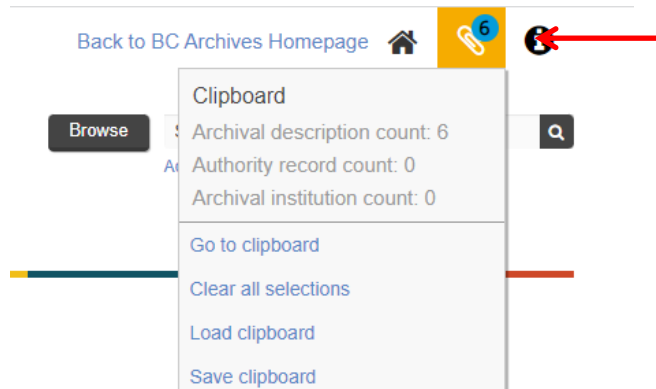
- In September 2021, we updated our Archives Collections Search database to AtoM version 2.6. Records relevant to your research can now be saved to the 'clipboard' for later review and further action.

Clipboard

To use the clipboard, click the paper clip icon directly to the right of a record description's title.



Your selections will appear at the top right-hand corner near the basic search bar. The number on the paperclip icon indicates the number of records you have added to your clipboard. Click on the paperclip to review them. This will open a drop-down menu where you can review, change, or clear your selections.



When you select Save clipboard, the database will generate a unique identifier for your clipboard—retain that identifier for future use. If, at a later date, you would like to review a particular clipboard, select 'Load clipboard' from the drop-down menu and enter the clipboard's ID into the corresponding field and select Load.

Load clipboard

A screenshot of the "Load clipboard" form. It has a text input field labeled "Clipboard ID" with the value "0000001" and a red arrow pointing to it. Below the input field is a dropdown menu labeled "Action" with the selected option "Merge saved clipboard with existing clipboard results". At the bottom of the form is a "Load" button with a red arrow pointing to it.

If you have saved both descriptive records and authority records, you will need to toggle between the two lists—the default is set to Archival descriptions.

The screenshot shows a search results interface. At the top left, there is a clipboard icon and the text 'Showing 2 results'. Below this is a 'Print preview' link. The main heading is 'Forest Service lookout photographs' with a sub-heading 'GR-3263 · Series · 1936-1983'. A description follows: 'The series consists of ca. 4300 negatives and ca. 5000 photographic prints taken from forest lookouts between 1936 and 1993. Falling under the function of forest protection, "lookout photography" or "panoramic lookout photography" was first initiated in ...'. Below the description is the text 'British Columbia. Dept. of Lands'. On the right side, there is a filter menu with 'Entity type: Archival description', 'Sort by: Title', and 'Direction: Ascending'. A dropdown menu is open under 'Entity type', showing 'Authority record' and 'Archival institution'. A red arrow points to the 'Entity type' dropdown.

From the clipboard, you can go to any of the archival descriptions or authority records you have selected. The clipboard will not change until you add or remove selections, clear the clipboard, or close the database. To prevent losing your clipboard at the end of a session, you can either save the clipboard, or export the data to a CSV or XML file.

The screenshot shows a toolbar with three buttons: 'Clear archival description clipboard', 'Save', and 'Export'. A red arrow points to the 'Export' button.


Basic Search

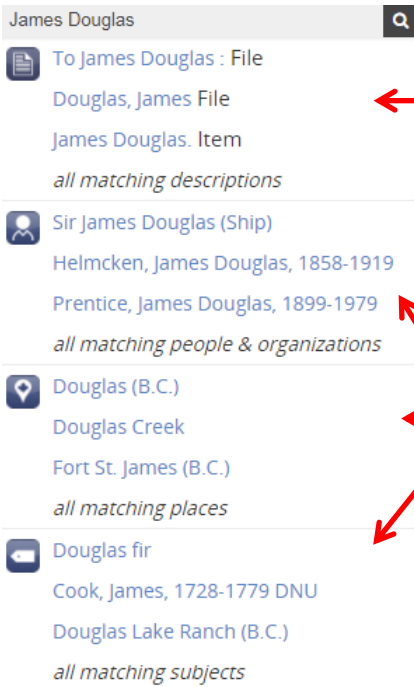
You can conduct a basic search of our archival descriptions using the Search box at the top right of the screen.

The screenshot shows a search interface. On the left is a 'Browse' dropdown menu. In the center is a search input field with the word 'Search' and a red arrow pointing to it. On the right is a search button with a magnifying glass icon. Below the search input field is the text 'Advanced Search'.

You can enter any number of words in this box. The default Boolean operator is AND between each keyword (e.g., if you enter Douglas Treaties, the search engine will look for any description that includes the words Douglas *and* Treaties). See some other [Useful Boolean Operators](#) below.

You may also see a drop-down menu of suggestions when you type key terms into this box. These suggestions include archival descriptions (i.e., descriptions of archival records in our holdings) as well as access points such as authorities, places, and subjects. Access points are linked to records descriptions. They are not descriptions of records but they can direct you to records related to the specific access point.

Please note these suggestions are not the only records available. To search all available records, type in your key words and hit enter or click the Search button .

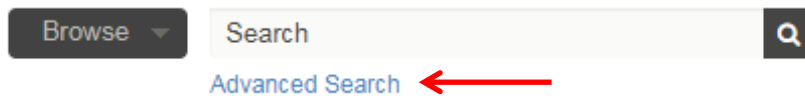


Archival descriptions: Descriptions of records in our holdings. These suggestions refer to specific record descriptions. Not all record hits are suggested.

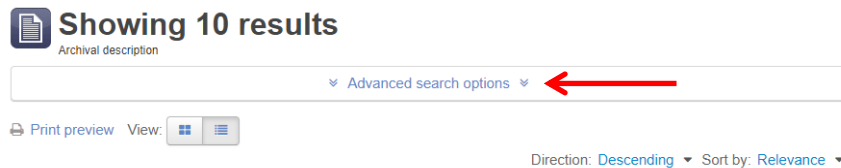
Access points: These are access point records. Access points (people/ organizations, places, subjects) are linked to descriptions. Please note that access points are not descriptions of records but can direct you to records related to the specific access point.

Advanced Search

You can conduct more complex searches by clicking on the Advanced Search hyperlink at the top right of the screen.

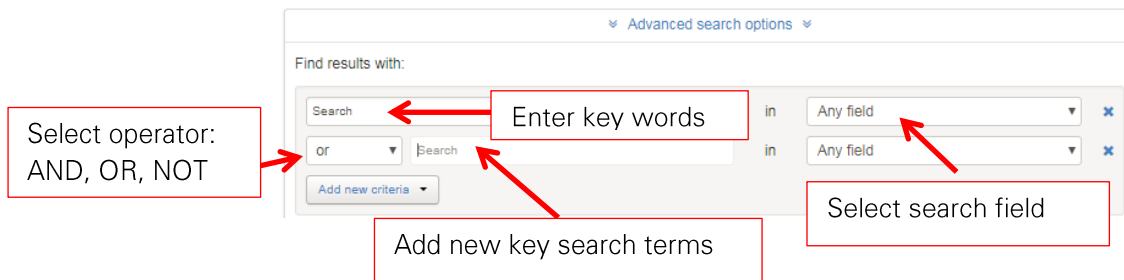


If you have already conducted a search, you can narrow your results using the Advanced Search filters available beneath the results count. Either action will offer the same filter options.



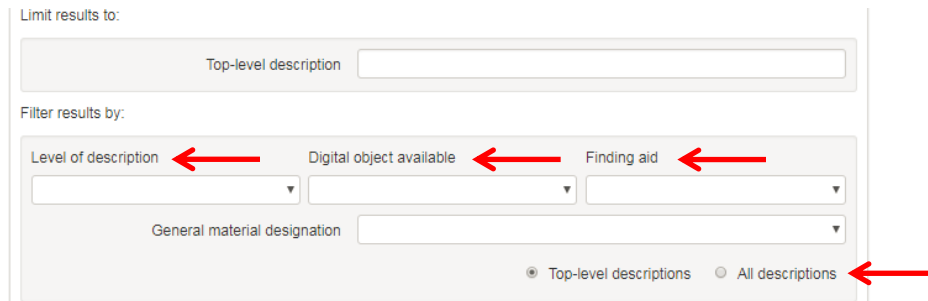
Add Criteria

You can add one or more keywords and narrow by search field. You can also choose how to structure your keyword search by selecting one of the operators: AND, OR, NOT. You can add multiple lines to include more search criteria.



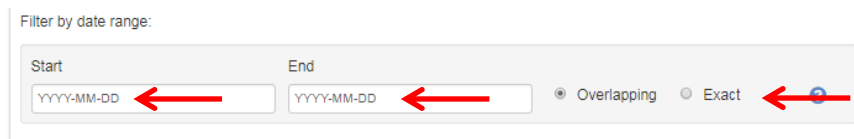
Filter your results

You can also filter your results by using the drop-down menus to select level of description, availability of a digital object (i.e., digital copy), or type of record (i.e., within General Material Designation, choose 'graphic material' for photographs or 'cartographic material' for maps and plans). You can also choose to view top-level descriptions (fonds, series) or all descriptions (fonds, series, file, item).



We are not currently using the finding aid drop-down feature. Finding aids are located in the Notes area of a [record description](#).

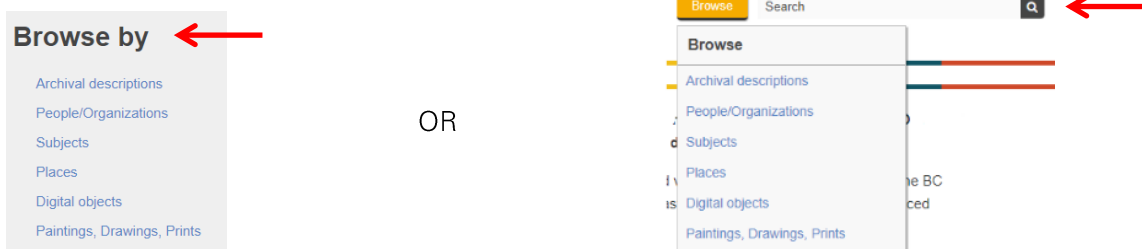
You can also filter records by their dates of creation. You can search for records using dates that overlap with your selected range or dates that fall exactly within your selected range.



Browse By

You can browse for records by archival descriptions; by access points (e.g., People/Organizations, Subjects, or Places); by digital objects; or by Paintings, Drawings, Prints.

Begin by selecting from the drop-down menu at the top right of the screen or by navigating on the left-hand side of the main screen.



- Browsing by Archival descriptions allows you to view all top-level descriptions of records in our holdings. These can be further filtered using Advanced Search options.
- Browsing by People/Organizations, Subjects, or Places allows you to view creator, subject, or place access points that have been applied to records. The People/Organizations access point search can be further filtered using Advanced Search options.
- Browsing by Digital objects allows you to view records or items that have been digitized. They can be further filtered using Advanced Search options.
- Paintings, Drawings, Prints allows you to view only those items within our Paintings, drawings, and prints (PDP) collection. They can be further filtered using Advanced Search options.

Search by Subjects or Places access points

To search by Subjects or Places access points use the search bar within the Subject or Places access point screens. The default Boolean operator for each search bar is AND.

The screenshot shows the 'Showing 1 results' page for the 'Places' access point. The search bar contains 'Alert Bay'. Below the search bar is a table with the following data:

| Places term | Scope note | Archival description count | Authority record count |
|------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Alert Bay (B.C.) | | 259 | 0 |

Red arrows point to the search bar and the 'Alert Bay (B.C.)' term in the table.

If the subject or place you searched gives a count of results, click on the term to navigate to the list of records related to that subject or place.

The screenshot shows the 'Alert Bay (B.C.)' record page. The left sidebar shows a list of 'PLACES' and 'SUBJECT' categories. The main content area displays '259 Archival description results for Alert Bay (B.C.)'. Below this, there are two result snippets:

- A collection of 'coppers'. Photo taken at Alert Bay, BC, ...**
H-03973 - Item - [ca. 1922] - Part of William and Jean Halliday fonds
- A collection of dance masks. Photo taken at Alert Bay, ...**
H-01066 - Item - [ca. 1922] -

Red arrows in the previous image point to the search bar and the 'Alert Bay (B.C.)' term in the table, which correspond to the search criteria used to reach this page.

Search by People/Organizations access points

To search by People/Organizations access points use the search bar within the People/Organizations access point screen. The default Boolean operator is AND.

The screenshot shows the 'Showing 192 results' page for the 'Authority record' access point. The search bar contains 'women's'. On the left, there is a 'Narrow your results by:' sidebar with the following 'ENTITY TYPE' counts:

- All
- Corporate body: 148
- Government: 26
- Person: 16
- Family: 2

The main content area displays two result snippets:

- 100 Mile House Women's Institute** ←
347 - Corporate body
The 100 Mile House Women's Institute was established in 1950 in the Cariboo District and was disbanded in 1956.
- 140 Mile Women's Institute**
348 - Corporate body
The 140 Mile Women's Institute was established in the Cariboo District

A red arrow points to the '100 Mile House Women's Institute' result.

Click on the title of a person or organization to view all of the records that they are the subject or creator of.

100 Mile House Women's Institute

Authority record > 100 Mile House Women's Institute

| Identity area | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Type of entity | Corporate body |
| Authorized form of name | 100 Mile House Women's Institute |

Description area

History The 100 Mile House Women's Institute was established in 1950 in the Cariboo District and was disbanded in 1956.

Sort Results

You can sort lists of search results using the Direction or Sort by drop-down menus.

Showing 10 results

Archival description

Advanced search options

Print preview View: [Grid] [List]

Direction: Descending Sort by: Relevance

Record Descriptions

All records are described in a hierarchy with fonds or collections as the highest level of description followed by series, file, and then item.

Within a record's description, you can:

- See where it fits within the hierarchy.
- Navigate between levels of description by clicking on each record's description within the hierarchy.
- Expand or collapse series and files to see or hide the items within by clicking on the triangles. Not all lower level descriptions will be displayed. To see lower level descriptions, you will need to click "## more".
- Search for key words within a collection using the Quick search tab.

Holdings Quick search

Series GR-3427 - Surveys Branch ...

Sub-series AAAA2199 - Lillooet su...

Sub-series AAAA0069 - Okanagan...

Sub-series AAAA0070 - Okanagan...

Sub-series AAAA0073 - Okanagan...

Sub-series AAAA0074 - Okanagan...

Sub-series AAAA0075 - Osoyoos ...

Sub-series AAAA0076 - Osoyoos ...

Sub-series AAAA0077 - Osoyoos ...

23 more...

Click to search for keywords within a collection

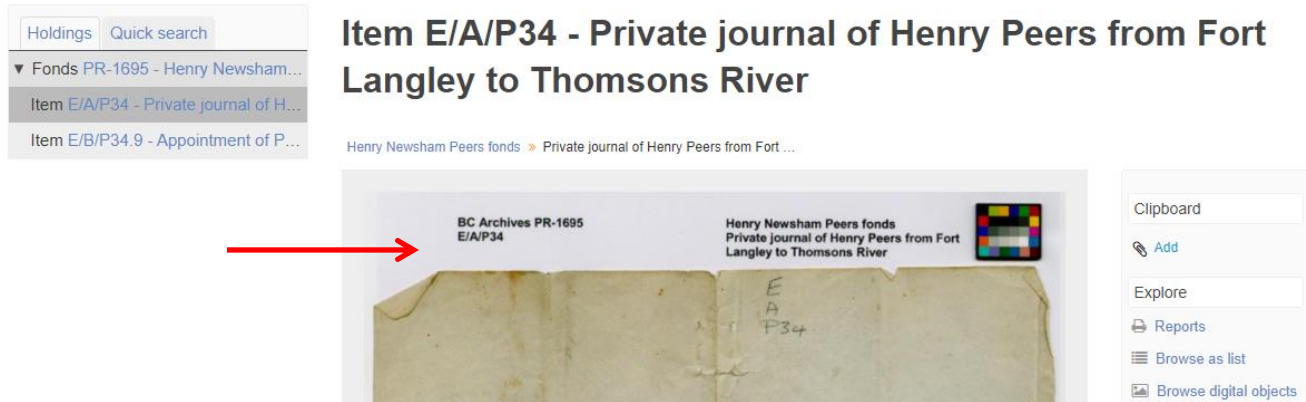
Click to expand/collapse

Click here to see additional series/files within the fonds/collection

Garibaldi Park Survey photograph.

Another way to view lower-level descriptions in a collection is to click on either Browse as list or Reports on the right-hand side of the screen.

If a digital object has been attached to a record's description, you will see it displayed below the record's reference number and title. To view an attached object—multiple page documents in particular—click on the image. It will open in a new window where you can review the entire document.



If there are multiple digital objects, you can use the slider bar to move through the carousel of objects or view them all by clicking Show all.

Series GR-3427 - Surveys Branch photo-topo negatives



Ensure you read all elements of the records description so that you understand the types of records contained in the record group as not all records are described to the item level. The Scope and Content will tell you what is in the record group.

The Notes area has useful information such as whether there are any **copyright or access restrictions** and if the record is available in **other formats** (e.g., digital, cassette, or microfilm copies).

Finding aids can be found in the Notes area in the section labelled Finding Aids and are searchable pdf documents. Most of our finding aids are linked to either fonds or series-level descriptions.

| Notes area | |
|---|--|
| Physical condition | Some plates broken. |
| Location of originals | Selected items are available in electronic form. ← |
| Restrictions on access | No access restrictions. ← Conservation restriction: when available, use digital copy. |
| Terms governing use, reproduction, and publication | Copyright belongs to the Government of British Columbia. ← |
| Finding aids | File list available. Selected items, and item descriptions, are available on the BC Archives visual records database. ← http://search-bcarchives.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Document/Finding_Aids_Atom/AA/ |

Useful Boolean Operators

| Operators | Description |
|-----------|--|
| OR, NOT | Used between key words to filter results (e.g., <i>logs OR journals</i> will search for descriptions with either logs or journals in the description). |
| () | Used to conduct more complex searches (e.g., <i>Douglas (diaries OR journals)</i> will search for any description that includes the words Douglas and either diaries or journals). |
| " " | Used to search an exact phrase (e.g., <i>"Vancouver Island"</i> will search for descriptions with "Vancouver Island" as an exact phrase). You will also need to use double quotation marks around special characters, such as reference codes with slashes (/) or colons (:) (e.g., <i>"F1981:17/043.03"</i> or <i>"CM/B99"</i>). |
| * | Used as a multiple-character wild card (e.g., <i>journ*</i> will search for journal, journals, journey, etc.). |
| ? | Used as a single character wild card (e.g., <i>licen?e</i> will search for license or license). |

For more Boolean operators, see the [Advanced Search Guide](#) for AtoM and scroll to the Boolean Operators section.