

# West Vancouver Memorial Library launches [digital.westvanlibrary.ca](http://digital.westvanlibrary.ca)

By Deb Hutchison Koep.

In celebration of West Vancouver's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, West Vancouver Memorial Library has launched [digital.westvanlibrary.ca](http://digital.westvanlibrary.ca), an online collection of historical photographs and documents. Some 5,000 images will be converted from original prints to digital format, and in the process are being restored and preserved. To date, nearly 2,000 images are fully catalogued and searchable. An additional 1,800 images will soon be completed, together with several unpublished personal histories.

In digitizing historical images, we have taken the opportunity to restore some of our more faded and damaged images to their original beauty. Users can easily access and download web-friendly copies (subject to copyright and conditions of use), and the Library is prepared to provide copies at a print ready resolution of 300 dpi. Higher resolution copies are available by special request.

The original prints have long been a hidden treasure of the Library, housed in archival envelopes in closed storage, and accessible via a card index. The collection, which pre-dates the District of West Vancouver Archives, dates from the 1970s, when then-Head of Reference Doreen Sullivan began to acquire images of the community from other repositories such as the Vancouver Public Library and the Vancouver City Archives. Since then, many additional images have been added thanks in part to donations from community members.

Key photographers represented in this special collection are Leonard Frank (1870-1944) and William (Bill) McPhee (d. 1989). Frank was one of the leading commercial photographers of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Vancouver and captured land clearing, roadway construction, and early settlement in the British Properties area. McPhee chronicled the development of West Vancouver, photographing homes and storefronts in the 1950s, 1970s, and 1980s.



Second May Queen Car (May Day 1932).  
Photographer unknown, West Vancouver Memorial  
Library, 0753.WVML

In putting these historical materials online, the Library has made them easy to find, explore and use. The images are searchable through the web, and also from the site's portal at [digital.westvanlibrary.ca](http://digital.westvanlibrary.ca). Visitors can currently search by subject, street name, neighbourhood, and more. Metadata has been constructed in accordance with Dublin Core.

Library staff are already receiving feedback from the community, including many suggested corrections and fascinating back stories. It seems everyone has a connection to one image or another in the collection. Our next step will be to integrate our digital collection with Bibliocommons, enabling patrons to add information about images, share their stories and comments, and create lists of their favourites.

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