

Celebrating the Centennial at the West Van Memorial Library

West Vancouver's centennial year has seen a surge of interest in the history of our community. This past spring, in celebration, the West Van Library launched digital.westvanlibrary.ca an online version of our historical photographs collection.

The Library's photograph collection was started in the 1970's, pre-dating the District of West Vancouver's Archives, when Librarian Doreen Sullivan began to acquire images of the community from other repositories such as the Vancouver Public Library and the Vancouver City Archives. The collection is selective and focuses on people, places, and community life in West Vancouver.

Key photographers represented in the collection are Leonard Frank (1870-1944) and William (Bill) McPhee (died 1989). Frank was one of the leading commercial photographers of early 20th century Vancouver and captured land clearing, roadway construction, and early settlement. McPhee chronicled the development of West Vancouver, photographing homes and storefronts in the 1950s, 1970s and 1980s. Other significant collections include the British Properties and Park Royal photographs.

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. Visitors can search by subject, street name, neighbourhood and more. Web-friendly versions of the images can be readily downloaded for personal use (detailed conditions of use are available on the site). Jenny Benedict, Director of Library Services, reflects "People of all

ages are playing a great role in creating their own content and we are providing an accurate, relevant resource to foster active learning and creative inquiry.

These images help us to understand and appreciate our heritage, and also inspire us to create and innovate as generations before us did."

This year the Library received a Young Canada Works grant to hire local resident and photography student Helen Theilmann to continue Mr. McPhee's legacy by photographing many of the sites that he photographed decades ago. As well, the Library, commissioned another young photographer, Jan Snarski, to create stunning, cinematic images that epitomize the many changes seen in West Vancouver over the past century. Both photographers' work will be part of the upcoming exhibit **Changing Time**, which juxtaposes historical images of West Vancouver with modern renditions (on display in the Library's Gallery from November 4 - January 4).

Future plans for the online collection include adding interactive tools that will allow visitors to add information about images, share their stories and comments, and create lists of their favourites.

High resolution copies of all images are available on request. Any questions about the collection can be sent to info@westvanlibrary.ca. Funding for the Library's digitization projects has been generously provided by the Friends of the West Vancouver Memorial Library and by the University of British Columbia's Irving K. Barber Centre BC History Digitization Program.



Marine Drive and 15th Street looking west - 1975-76 William McPhee West Van Library 0249.McP



Taylor Way looking north before Highway built - 1940's to 50's - Leonard Frank West Van Library 3353.PR **page 10**