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# ARCHIVES

news

Eric Rathborne waves from the cab of TCA aviation fuel tanker at Vancouver Airport, 1939. Archives item number 1997 5 48. This is one of 111 Eric Rathborne photographs now available online at [www.city.richmond.bc.ca/archives](http://www.city.richmond.bc.ca/archives).

## In The Works...

Mary Keen, President of the Friends of the Richmond Archives, and archives volunteer, is currently working on historical research into the neighborhoods of Richmond. Brighthouse, Bridgeport and Mitchell Island are the focus of her efforts this spring with hopes of producing historical pamphlets and displays in the future.

Members of the Friends of the Richmond Archives, led by Dody Wray and Jack Lowe, have been meeting with people involved in horse racing in Richmond's earlier years. Several fine images have been acquired for the Archives holdings including the 1952 image of "Treasure Boy" shown below.



## Archives Web Site Builds on Success

The City of Richmond Archives web site has had two significant additions in recent months. A new virtual exhibit features extracts from the Archives' publication **We Will Remember Them: The lives behind the Richmond Cenotaph**. An image map of the Cenotaph links to text and photos of five men honoured on the monument. The Photo Search feature of the web site has grown with the addition of all 111 images from the Eric Rathborne fonds. Mr. Rathborne's photographs of the airport and flying in the 1930's through the 1950's are wonderful fresh images of an exciting era in aviation. The Archives web pages have been among the busiest areas on the City of Richmond web site as a whole.

## What can the Archives do for You?

### TEACHERS:

Resource material  
*Online* access to photographs, and virtual exhibits allow you to access Archives materials without a field trip!

### REALTORS:

Know the neighborhood you specialize in. Use Archives photos to do a *Then and Now* comparison for your advertising or newsletter.

### INVESTORS and DEVELOPERS:

Use maps, photographs, directories and City records to investigate previous land use. Environmental assessments often begin with Archival research.

### ARTISTS / WRITERS:

Photographs, oral histories, maps and plans provide background, reference and inspiration for creative works.

### PARENTS:

Historical photographs and other records help students with homework and special projects.

### HOME-OWNERS:

Selling your house and facing capital gains? Need to find assessed values for several years ago? Archives has tax assessment records your accountant will need to complete your return.

### COMMUNITY GROUPS:

Concerned about how or why the City did something in your area? You can access current community plans and other documents at City Hall, but what if your inquiry goes back a few years? At the Archives you can access original city records to determine for yourself not only what decision was made, but why.

## Archives and Time Capsules

It comes up every so often, and with the approaching millenium it can be expected that many groups will plan the creation of a time capsule. An alternative idea would be to put the same energy into placing photos and other documents in archives. Archives are a vast time capsule that is open every year. Why wait for 100 or 1000 years when you can visit your friendly archives to find reliable records today?

Finn Slough, 1955.  
Archives Item Number 1985-5-3

## ARCHIVES: The other Dimension of HERITAGE

When people talk of *heritage* they usually talk of heritage sites, heritage buildings or heritage trees. It is true that these things can speak to us about our past and offer insight into our society, however, there is another dimension to heritage – the archival record of our society. The documents preserved in archives provide the public with a rich resource for learning about, and coming to understand, our society. In fact, such sources are essential in determining which sites, structures, trees, and other heritage features are most worthy of preservation.

As we all know, not every site has been or can be preserved. When the best efforts to save a structure fail, the importance of the site can still be protected for future generations. Carefully preserving photographs, plans and other documents that describe the structure, and perhaps more importantly, the people who lived and worked there will ensure that the memory of our society will not fade.

People do more than build structures. We invest the things we build with our dreams, we give them life. This is what makes a collection of buildings into a community. The records of our triumphs, hopes and dreams as well as our failures and sorrows are contained in the letters and dairies, photographs, maps, plans and other documents we produce throughout our lives. These documents, when preserved, can speak to all of us about who we are as a society. They provide an intimate view of our heritage.





## Friends of Archives host 2nd Annual Senior's Tea

On September 25 1998 the Friends of the Archives hosted their second annual Senior's Tea. The first year's success was such that this year two rooms were booked for the event and everyone had a bit more elbow room. The turnout was once again very good with both the Lecture Hall and the Archives filled with folks swapping stories and meeting old friends.

Noteworthy highlights of this year's event include the launch of the new Archives' publication *We Will Remember Them: The lives behind the Richmond Cenotaph* by Mary Keen. Councillor Dang in his role as acting Mayor addressed the crowd which also included Councillor McNulty. All in attendance were impressed with the final publication and moved by the stories it relates. Mary Keen presented copies of the book to several families who had participated in the project through loans and donations of photographs and other records.

Attendees were also treated to a slide show prepared and hosted by Don Gordon. The Archives reference room was filled to capacity and a second showing was required to give everyone a chance to enjoy Don's many tales and showmanship.

Many thanks are in order for Mary Keen, Don Gordon and other members of the Friends who worked so hard to make the event a success once again. The invitations committee worked many hours to get the list just right and Dody Wray wrestled with an insufficient cash box making change for book sales without the aid of a calculator. She was never flustered, not even by the prospect of having to make change for her former high school principal. On this day everyone came out ahead.

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Archives

**Q. Can I order copies of photographs from the Archives?**

**A. Yes.** You can custom order any of our photographs printed by a professional lab to your specifications. Turn around lab time is about a week.

**Q. How many records does the Archives have?**

**A. Archives usually don't count records as individual items but rather by volume or shelf space required to hold them. If you put all the Archives records in a row it would stretch over half a kilometer! That's a lot of reading, and it's a lot of information you can't get anywhere else.**

**Q. What if the Archives isn't open when you need it?**

**A. You can search our database on the Internet at our website [www.city.richmond.bc.ca/archives](http://www.city.richmond.bc.ca/archives). The web site also provides access to over 4,300 Richmond photographs online!**

**Mary Keen and Bernice Anderson of the Friends present a copy of We Will Remember Them to Jean Myron.**





Clockwise from above: Lansdowne Mall under construction c.1975; Lansdowne Park racetrack from the air c.1928; biplane at airfield just north of Lansdowne race track c.1928; skating on ponds in racetrack infield c.1970; BCER tram on siding behind grandstand c.1955;



## Discovering Richmond through Archives

In a modern community that has grown as quickly as Richmond has in recent years it is easy to forget what this place was like just a short time ago. This may be why almost everyone is fascinated by “then and now” features that show an historical photograph paired with the same area today. By visiting the Archives in person or even by visiting our web site you can find photographs and other records that show you how much specific locations have changed.

For example, shopping malls are a big part of the Richmond scene today. You may know that Lansdowne Mall is built on the site of Lansdowne Park racetrack. Checking our database using the keyword search term Lansdowne brings up many hits that include city records on the development of the shopping centre, photographs of the mall under construction, races at the old track, the interurban tram stopped behind the grandstand, and even photos of the air field used prior to the opening of the Sea Island airport in 1931.



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Public Reference Room Hours  
Monday - Thursday  
9:30-11:30 and 1:00-4:00

