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**How to Research the Heritage of your Home**

1. Found Items – Look in nooks and crannies of your house for personal documents, newspapers and other items which may help you date your house or provide information on who lived there.
2. Heritage Inventory - Check if your house is listed in the City or District Heritage Inventory or if it is part of the new Heritage Registry. The North Vancouver Museum and Archives (NVMA) has a copy of the published Heritage Inventories. The West Vancouver Museum (WVM) has a copy of the West Vancouver inventories.
3. District or City Hall - If your house is on the inventory, the planning department of your municipal district should have a file on your home. This might include copies of building permits, photos of your house, an architectural description of your house, and a description of one or more of its owners.
4. Building Permits – The NVMA has a list of building permits for 1911-1947 (CNV) and 1922-1948 (DNV) which is sorted by address but also provides information on the type of building, architect, owner, date and cost. It also provides the District Lot, Block No, Lot No. The District of West Vancouver municipal hall has some building permits for individual properties.
5. City Directories – The NVMA has hard copies of the directories for Moodyville (1871-1905), North Vancouver (1906-1916), Greater Vancouver (1949-1996) and BC (1917-1948). 1917-1924 are on microfiche. WVM has directories from 1920, 1921, 1935, 1937-1942, 1944-1994. In these directories, you can look up your address for each year in the “address” section to determine who the occupants were. You can then look up the occupant’s name in the “name” section to determine his occupation, employer and wife (after 1934). You can also look up the company which employed him to determine its locale. “h” or \* = homeowner “r” = resident. You can also search the city and provincial directories online at <http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php>. There are also descriptions of the City and District at the beginning of each directory, which provides information on population and other assorted information (more like a tourist brochure!).
6. Property Tax Assessments – The tax assessment rolls are the official records of property values and taxes owed, which can help to determine when a house was built, the size and value of the land and buildings and the names of the property owners. You will need your District Lot Number, Block Number and Lot Number to conduct this search. The NVMA has a combination of hard copy and microfilm copies of property tax assessments for both the city and district. WVM has tax assessment rolls from 1912-1974
7. Fire Insurance Maps – The NVMA has fire insurance maps from 1910, 1930 and 1965. WVM has fire insurance plans from 1930 and 1938. These will provide you with a drawing of the physical structures located on your property as well as those of neighbours. It includes houses, garages and tennis courts!
8. Clippings Files – Both West Vancouver Archives and the NVMA have clipping files on major subjects and important families of the North Shore.
9. Photos – The NVMA has a large on-line database of 15,000 photos of houses, individuals, aerial views, events and neighbourhoods. Some of the photos are visible on-line. Others will need to be retrieved by NVMA staff using the fond # which comes up in your search. Go to <http://www.northvanmuseum.ca/collections3.htm>. West Vancouver Archives has a large selection of historical and aerial photographs and maps (<http://archives.westvancouver.ca/>). The Vancouver Public LIbrary and BC Archives also have large collections. Be creative with your searches. You can try the name of the owner, his place of employment, the address, the street, the neighbourhood, a nearby school or park etc.
10. Local Newspaper Microfiche – WVM has microfiche records of Lions Gates Times, West Van News and North Shore News from 1926-1993. The North Vancouver City library also has microfiche records of some of these newspapers too.
11. Additional Records – The NVMA has a multitude of records including the CNV council minutes, CNV water permits, North Shore Clubs, Associations, Organizations, Businesses and Schools. If your homeowner was a part of the city government, a well known club or their kids went to school in North Vancouver, you may be able to find photos or information about their activities.
12. Canadian Census Records - If you want to find out where the homeowners were living during 1852, 1901 and 1911, you can try to find their name in the Canadian Census documents which are available at <http://automatedgenealogy.com/>. Watch out for people with the same names!
13. Vital Events Records - If you want to find out more information on the date of birth, date of death and date of marriage of any of the occupants, you can get some of this information for BC residents at <http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy/basicSearch>. This includes records which have been digitized so you can print the actual records from your computer, if you see a clickable link. For records which have not yet been digitized, you can get a copy of the actual certificate from the Vancouver Public Library (6th Floor) using their microfilm reader.
14. Additional Vital Events – For a more comprehensive search (i.e. outside BC), go to the search dropdown box at <https://familysearch.org/>. It is free and there are links to the original documents in some cases. It also allows for very refined searches. There may also be some valuable information at <http://www.findagrave.com/> where photographs of tombstones are available. Tombstones can be useful as it is not unusual for an entire family to be buried in the same grave.
15. Local Newspapers – The West Vancouver library has the North Shore Express available online (you need to have a WV library card to access it). The North Vancouver City Library has back copies of The Express (1905-1912), North Shore Press (1913-1940’s), and North Shore News on microfiche. The NVMA has some hard copies and some microfiche copies as well. If you look at the paper immediately after a vital event, you may be able to find an announcement or article in the paper. If a resident of your home was a member of an association, there may be articles on an event.
16. Blueprints – The CNV can provide blueprints of house plans, with a copy for a fee. The DNV no longer has these records. WVM has architectural plans for some homes.
17. Ownership Title – If you wish to find records of the owners of your house, you need to visit the BC Land Title & Survey Authority in New Westminster ([www.ltsa.ca](http://www.ltsa.ca/)). If you provide them with a legal description (District, Block, Lot), and payment, they will provide you with details on ownership history. You can pay by debit, cash or cheque.

Contacts:

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2. Reto Tschan, Archivist, West Vancouver Archives, 680 17th Street, West Vancouver, 604-925-7298 [rtschan@westvancouver.ca](mailto:rtschan@westvancouver.ca).
3. City of North Vancouver Cemetery (604-983-7351)
4. Capilano View Cemetery (West Vancouver) (604-925-7007)