

B.W. Leeson collection [graphic materials] / Benjamin William Leeson

SUPPLIED TITLE NOTE

Title based on the creator of the collection.

COLLECTION NUMBER

VMM47

DATE(S)

[1894-1939]

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

19 photographs : b&w glass plate negatives ; 20.3 cm x 25.4 cm and other graphic material

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION NOTE

19 mylar negatives and 20 prints

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY / BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Benjamin William (B. W.) Leeson (1866 - 1948) of Vancouver, B.C. was a scholar and photographer who studied the Quatsino peoples of Vancouver Island. His article "A Quatsino Legend" appeared in the Canadian Geographical Journal.

B. W. Leeson was born in Coventry, Warwickshire, UK, in 1866 and emigrated to Vancouver, British Columbia in 1886 with his parents, Anna and Jobe L. Leeson. He began taking photographs in the Cariboo in 1887 and moved to Quatsino Sound in about 1894 where he and his father managed the salmon and clam cannery located on the opposite shore, as well as a store (J. L. Leeson & Son) selling clothes and provisions. Ben Leeson is particularly noted for his portraits of First Nations people and was fascinated by "flat-headed" Kwakiutl women.

According to the British Columbia Archives, B. W. Leeson married Evelyn May Hawkins on February 15, 1912 in Quatsino. In 1939 Leeson retired and moved to Vancouver. He died March 15, 1948.

Source: [Ben William Leeson collection](#). University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology Archives.

See also: [Quatsino First Nation](#)

SCOPE & CONTENT

Collection consists of 19 photographs (glass plate negatives) taken by Benjamin William Leeson. Images depict First Nations people, including the Quatsino, and Caucasian colonists taken circa 1894-1939 while Leeson was working as a customs official.

Original image titles have been maintained unless otherwise noted.

Viewers should be advised that these historical materials have been created by a white colonial-settler and often depict Indigenous peoples, specifically Inuit peoples. For historical accuracy, the creator's original titles and descriptions have been retained wherever possible, and therefore may include terms that are outdated, inaccurate, or offensive. The Vancouver Maritime Museum's Library & Archives is committed to representing Indigenous materials with accuracy, respect, and dignity. To that end, we welcome any feedback related to the descriptions found in this finding aid. We are also open to restricting online access to any materials that are deemed private by the communities represented in those materials. To give feedback, or for more information, please email archives@vanmaritime.com or use our Ask an Archivist button.

LANGUAGES

English

RELATED MATERIALS

[The MOA Archives](#), [City of Vancouver Archives](#), and [Vancouver Public Library Historic Photo Dept.](#) all have collections related to B.W. Leeson.

RESTRICTIONS

Reproductions: None - see donor file "Leeson, B.W." for notes on copyright research. Photos are now in public domain and can be reproduced as long as credited to B.W. Leeson

Access: Access to the glass plate negatives is restricted. Please refer to the copy prints.

LC SUBJECT HEADINGS

Indians of North America
Indigenous peoples--Canada
Kwakiutl Indians

Collection Contents

B.W. Leeson collection (19 records)

Group of people posing on the stern of a supply vessel
Waterfront village with cabins and tents
Sal-Ah-Ke "Off Berry Picking"
Tom the sealer at home
Warcas & wife
Indian wedding come for the bride
Young child in rowboat
West Coast Van. Is. native Aunty
First Nations people with canoe at a beach
First Nations building with totem and canoes
Quatsino man, Cut-Tetsam standing at the edge of bay
Seven men in a canoe near a beach
Central Hotel, Limestone Island, Quiet Cove
Woman with large hat in rowboat with dog
Interior of building
First Nations waterfront village with buildings, ramps and drying fish
Rowboat on beach, ocean view behind
Group gathered on a beach
First Nations village with people, dock and canoes