A Passion for Mountains: the life story of Phyllis Munday

A Herstory Cafe presentation co-sponsored by the City of Vancouver Archives and the Women's History Network of British Columbia

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The legendary British Columbian mountaineer Phyllis Munday was the first woman to summit Mount Robson in the Rockies, she and her husband Don, together changed the face of coastal mountaineering in the 1920s and 1930s through their explorations and ascents in the uncharted peaks and icefields north of Vancouver, including their “discovery,” mapping and promotion of what was soon determined to be the highest mountain peak solely in British Columbia, Mount Waddington.

This lecture will be richly illustrated with archival photos from the Munday’s own collection and document the behind-the-scenes life of Phyllis Munday during her girlhood and later decades of climbing. Munday was one of the earliest women to combine motherhood and climbing, becoming a role model for women climbers everywhere. She was also active in Girl Guides, teaching generations of girls about the value of nature and an advocate for wilderness values.

Kathryn Bridge is an historian, author, archivist and manager of collections and research access at the Royal BC Museum and has written two books on Phyllis Munday; A Passion for Mountains: the Lives of Don and Phyllis Munday and Phyllis Munday: Mountaineer in the Quest Library Series of Canadian Biographies. She is the author of several other books on women's history including; Henry & Self, the Private Life of Sarah Crease, 1826–1922 and By Snowshoe, Buckboard & Steamer: Women of the Frontier (winner of the 1998 Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing). Bridge also curated the Emily Carr: Eccentric, Artist, Author, Genius Exhibition at Royal BC Museum, June 2001–March 2002.