

# Weston library has historical photo archive

By Erin McCusker

For Go! Magazine

**W**ESTON — The Weston Public Library is in a beautiful building in downtown. Over the years, the library has been dedicated to highlighting the history of the area, and they've collected a wonderful archive of historic photos. The photos are now digitized and available for all of us.

Weston Public Library Director Kathleen Schmidtgall answered some questions about the library's Historical Photo Archive:

**When did the digital photo archive begin?**

We converted our photo negative collection into a digital format in 2009.

**How did it come to be?**

The Weston Public Library Photo Archive was created from photos donated to us over a period of more than 50 years. In 2000, grant funding from Meyer Memorial Trust made it possible to restore the entire collection of historic photos. At that time, we created photo negatives, and



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cataloged and numbered the images. When the technology became available, the next step was digitization of the collection. Next followed the creation of an original DVD, "Our Home Town." In 2020, we formatted the collection for the internet, and the online Weston Public Library Photo Archive was created and linked to our website, [www.westonpubliclibrary.com](http://www.westonpubliclibrary.com).

**What would you like people to know about this collection and why?**

I'd like folks to know that the reason for the online database was to create easier and more widespread access to these historic photos. The collection contains 413 images, seven maps and 77 Weston Leader newspaper ads from our Weston Leader archive. These are indexed and searchable. This was a grant-funded project, with support at every step coming from Friends of Weston Library, AWERE (Athena-Weston Education and Resource Enhancement,) Wildhorse Foundation and Umatilla County Cultural Coalition. Jerry Gildemeister of La Grande has been the technical consultant for all Weston Public Library Photo Collection projects.

**What is your favorite picture and why?**

There are so many wonderful photos, but one of my personal favorites is captioned "Armistice Day on Weston's Main Street, Nov. 11, 1918." This image shows a large crowd of people, dressed in their finest, who have come out to celebrate the end of World War I. We can see the cars they were driving, the fountain



Erin McCusker/Contributed Photo

The Weston Public Library has a digital archive of historic photos online at [www.weston-publiclibrary.com](http://www.weston-publiclibrary.com).

in the middle of the intersection and some structures that no longer exist. This is one of many that we've enlarged to hang in the library.

**Are there any stories about who has accessed the collection?**

A number of former residents (mostly people who grew up here and moved away) have

reached out to tell me how much they appreciate the online access to these photos.

Find the archive at [www.weston-publiclibrary.com](http://www.weston-publiclibrary.com).

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