

**Mount Tolmie District circa 1925.**  
**(as remembered by Jack Merrett (477-2420 4128**  
**Longview)**  
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Not being entirely certain of what is desired, this summary is made with the premise that some of the information contained might be useful for a "Then and Now." comparison relating to the history of that portion of the Mount Tolmie area in which I was raised. Initially a physical description is made as development was entirely controlled by that element. This is then followed by the physical development pattern with respect to municipal and corporate services and of private enterprises. Following this some anecdotal accounts are related together with the appearance of the area and finally a summary of things I miss. In making preliminary notes I found it difficult to curb the details of the flood of memories which returned to me, so I did try to do some editing and trust it has been enough. Any part or all of this submission may be used or discarded at the discretion of those who review it, however it was enjoyable to refresh one's memories.

The accompanying sketch **[not attached]** indicates that portion of Oak Bay and Saanich municipalities contained within a circle the centre of which is at the intersection of Cedar Hill Cross Road and Shelbourne Street and with a radius of approximately 1.6 kilometers. In a rough description it is the area contained north of North Dairy and Lansdowne Roads, west of the Oak Bay - Saanich Municipal boundary, south of Feltham Road and east of the west boundary of Cedar Hill Park and Golf Course and its extension north to Mc Kenzie Avenue.

The stated area while containing considerable arable land also contains two NW-SE trending ridges being expressed by heavily glaciated rock outcrops over the major portion of their length. The west ridge was in 1925, known as Oak Hill but that name now seems to have disappeared. There is a break in the continuity of that ridge close to where McKenzie Avenue crosses its axis. The east ridge contains Mt. Tolmie and several small rock outcrops along its northwest axis. These ridges are notably delineated by the growth of oak trees along them.

Approximately 80% of the area is in the drainage basin of Bowker Creek. The areas west of Oak Hill and its extension to Mt. Douglas constitute about 10% of the total and are in the Colquitz River drainage basin. The remainder also about 10% of the total and may be defined as that portion north of Blair Road and its extension west to Oak Hill ridge.

The drainage here is to Mt. Douglas Park.

Bowker Creek is the only drainage expressed by a continually flowing stream rising in the swamp area of the University Campus at the northwest corner of Oak Bay Municipality.

**This drainage in 1925**, was open except for road culverts and extended westerly to cross Shelbourne Street half way between Mortimer Street and Ruby Road (now McKenzie). It recrossed Shelbourne at Kisber and then again at Donnelly. Almost every winter the portion between Kisber and Donnelly flooded. Sometimes the extent of flooding interrupted our attendance at Cedar Hill School. Currently, except that portion on the Campus the Creek is totally within culverts to the west extension of Knight Road.

The early settlers made no attempt to cultivate the areas supporting the oak meadows but used them for pasturage as the soil depth was too shallow. Where possible they removed the evergreen forest and tilled those areas. Late in the 19th century these farms began to be divided into small holdings for housing development. Logically those nearest to Victoria were first to be subdivided and sold mainly to individuals working in Victoria. Starting at this point I made a detailed survey of the above noted area, road by road, of homes in existence at the time and found the total to be approximately 200 but also noted a definite concentration in certain areas. These were south of Mt. Tolmie and close to the street car line; on Cedar Hill Cross Road east of Shelbourne; along Palo Alto Road and on Ruby Road east of Shelbourne. These were areas of good road access, or near transportation services, had access to domestic services, or in so far as water was concerned, where an adequate groundwater source was available for wells.

**Access to the area from Victoria was either by #10 street-car on Mount Tolmie Road**, (now Richmond) Road, as far as Mayfair Drive or by way of Richmond, Shelbourne, and Cedar Hill Roads, and internally by Cedar Hill Cross Road, Gordon Head and Ruby Roads, all of which had paved surfaces which would be considered very narrow according to today's standards. Incidentally the tar for the roads came from Trinidad, in wooden barrels. I well recall the large bonfire built on top of Mt. Tolmie at the end of World War I, where some of the wood was from such barrels.

Excepting sewers the rest of the various services were supplied as and where population density required them. Electric power was already supplied east of Shelbourne on Cedar Hill Cross Road by 1912. How soon

it was supplied on Richmond, I do not know but it definitely was there in 1923.

**I still can recall seeing a cloth sign with "Keep to the Right"** printed on it attached to a power pole. That was when driving was changed from the left side of the road to the right. Telephone poles were erected on the opposite side of the street to those bearing electricity. The number of individual wires strung between poles varied according to customer demand and party lines could carry several customers.

I do not know when this service became available but we were connected on in 1923. Should someone wish to receive the electric or telephone service and did not live where service was available they were required to pay the cost of the installation.

**Municipal water service was available to our home on Cedar Hill Cross Road east of Shelbourne about 1918** and to the old Cedar Hill School about 1925. Again, like the electricity and telephone services it was slow to reach isolated homes.

Open ditches were on either side of the streets, these conducted both surface runoff water and septic tank overflow water. As required at road crossings the water would be contained in culvert pipes.

Wooden sidewalks were constructed along one side of a road when pedestrian density dictated the need. These were usually three 12-inch planks in width although a few were only two planks wide. In some sections on steep grades, the design was changed to 6-inch boards laid transversely to minimize slipping. These sidewalks were travelled with caution during the summer months because of the frequency of wasp nests, particularly under elevated sections. Referring to elevated sidewalks brings back a memory which I always recall with a grin. Sometime about 1923, my Mother and I were walking up the sidewalk on the west side of Richmond Road en route to the street car terminus. We were on a slightly elevated section of sidewalk just below Donnelly. Adjacent to the sidewalk was a fairly dense growth of scrub wild rose bushes. When we reached that point several people were walking down the road and Mother turned to speak to one of them and while so doing walked off the sidewalk landing flat on the bushes. She wasn't hurt but not a bit amused at my laughing while endeavouring to regain the sidewalk and her composure.

**There were four schools in the area**, the largest being the University School for Boys (now St. Michael's University School and coeducational) located at the corner of Mt. Tolmie Road (now Richmond)

and Knight Lane (Now Knight Road). Cedar Hill School was located just west of the summit of Oak Hill on Bay Road (now Cedar Hill Cross Road). In 1924, it consisted of five class rooms, four in the main building, with only three being used and then a separate one-roomed building used for manual training. By 1925, all were being used as classrooms to accommodate the post-war [WW 1] baby boom. The third and fourth schools were housed in the Normal School Building (now Camosun College). It contained the primary, two-roomed Model School attached to the Teacher Training building. High School educational facilities were unavailable at that time in Saanich.

**Three small grocery shops serviced the area** and occasionally a unique truck brought out groceries from town. I do not remember whose truck it was, either Kirkham's or Copas & Young's. The unique feature was that the truck wheels were chain driven rather than by a drive shaft. Two of the stores were on Cedar Hill Cross Road and the third was in the old stage stop on Cedar Hill Road between Cedar Hill Cross Road and Church Street. It was also the district Post Office as the only part having postal delivery was that adjacent to the street car line. In addition there was a car repair garage and gas pump at the corner of Lansdowne and Shelbourne and a gas pump farther north at Cedar Hill Cross Road at Hunter's store. Adjacent to the store [Hunters] was a butcher shop. Intermittently both barber and shoe repair shops operated in the vicinity of that corner.

**Locally, close to the dairies, milk was delivered on foot but elsewhere by horse and cart or truck.** Bread was delivered by truck and Chinese delivered fruit and vegetables by truck or by an individual carrying two large baskets on a pole [across the shoulders]. I tried once to lift the load of one such peddler but couldn't lift even one basket.

**Local entertainment presentations were confined to three halls,** the Temperance, St. Luke's and St. Aidan's. The Temperance Hall was located on Cedar Hill Cross Road about midway between Synod Road and Cedar Hill School ground. It was perhaps the oldest but fell into disuse and was demolished in the mid-1920's. However I do recall concerts being held there toward the end of W.W.1 and early thereafter. Among the songs I heard there at that time were: "Keep the Home Fires Burning, Tenting Tonight, Charmaine, Lilac Time (Jennine?), Apple Blossom Time in Normandy." One frequent entertainer was a man with an exceedingly low bass voice. There was also on almost every occasion a black skit by someone always referred to as Mr. Bones. Less frequently used for similar entertainment at that time was St. Luke's Hall.

**St. Aidan's Hall was built by community volunteer labour about 1925** on the site of the old stable next to the old church at the northwest corner of the intersection of Cedar Hill Cross Road and St Aidan's Street. While being used in conjunction with the church extensive use was made of it for basketball and badminton.

Immediately southwest of the intersection of Cedar Hill Cross Road and Shelbourne Street and extending to Church Street was a triangle piece of land known as The Gore. It was established as a memorial to those Canadians who lost their lives in World War I.

At its midpoint was a tall flagpole. Initially Memorial Services were held there on November 11th and a flag was flown on all statutory holidays.

Not infrequently a few days earlier on the morning of November 1st [Hallow'een the night before], it wasn't unusual to see someone's gate swinging on that pole, and one year it was ours. With road widening and various other encroachments this park is now almost extinguished and very few are aware of its origin. McDonalds fast food is now very close to the site.

Another memorial made at that time was to rename Shelbourne Street as Memorial Avenue and to plant alternately, both sides of the street with Mountain Ash and Plane (Sycamore) Trees. The name change never floated and where planted, the Mountain Ash trees were removed. Today a few blocks of Plane Trees remain at either end and I am sure that in the Fall [with all of the leaves], many of the residents along those sections of the road feel the removal job could have been much more extensive.

**Having brought up the subject of changing street names** this is perhaps an appropriate time to record those of which I am aware. The first is Mount Tolmie Road. While it may have been gazetted as Richmond Road it was known by all as Mount Tolmie Road. Earnest Avenue was previously named Connaught Avenue. McRae Avenue's former name was Tennyson Avenue. St. Aidan's Street, the short north extension of Richmond Road was formerly called Dog Street. Knight Street was formerly known as Knight Lane and Pear Street was Green Lane. Melcroft Street which enters Cedar Hill Cross Road immediately west of Richmond was known as Third Street. Its new name was created by combining some or all letters of the surnames of long time residents; Merrett, Ellis, Lindsay and Croft. Arrow was know as Minkler, after the owner of the one residence on it. Farther north Grant Road was renamed Kenmore and lastly Ruby Road became assimilated in McKenzie Avenue.

**In the mid 1920's there were at least a least six, if not seven dairies** operating in the area each having at least ten cows and some close to twenty-five. Each dairy required considerable fenced pasturing areas. In spite of this there still remained a lot of cleared unfenced land much of which was undeveloped road allowances. However to the delight of all the youth were four, unfenced, abandoned orchards containing apple, cherry, plum and prune trees.

It was mentioned earlier that transportation was a key factor in the development of the community, hence some comment on this topic is appropriate. The earliest access roads to Victoria were Cedar Hill and Richmond and these two endeavoured throughout most of their length to be all-weather, all-year roads by holding to elevated well-drained routes. Shelbourne Street minimized hill climbing but was mostly a summer route until paved in 1916.

**At that time the traffic was entirely by wagon, buggy or bicycle,** but by the early 1920's most of the scant motor vehicle traffic during the week was small trucks freighting garden produce to Victoria. However on weekends, good weather permitting, the brass-banded passenger cars were not an unusual sight. I recall lying in a ditch at the side of Shelbourne Street and exploding a paper bag as one passed by. The driver stopped and got out to check his tires. Of course many of the residents used bicycles to get to town, or to attend Victoria High School. However by 1925, motor vehicle traffic had increased rapidly and wagon or carriage traffic had decreased to the extent that stables connected with both St. Aidan's and St. Luke's Churches had been removed.

I can stand to be corrected but I believe the Williamson Stage service from Gordon Head to Victoria was in operation by 1925, and Bill Edwards was operating Gordon Head Freight Service also at that time.

This seems to be the limit of my recollections of living circumstances in the mid-1920's of that portion of the Mt. Tolmie district in which I grew up. This review definitely invoked anecdotal incidents and I now include some here. Perhaps my earliest recollection is that of the heavy 1916, snowstorm. While in Victoria it is recorded as three feet, however a drift had buried the fence separating our front and back yards and that fence was five feet high. I thought someone had taken it. Another recollection which was probably about 1917, when I was at the corner of Cedar Hill Cross Road and Shelbourne Street and looking north, the wide, empty black pavement seemed to stretch into eternity.

**The initial Cedar Hill School** was right on the summit of the Oak Hill

ridge and at the east side of the property. It was a two-roomed building in which, at each desk sat two pupils. In 1919, when I started at the new school on the flat ground to the west, both the old school and the teacherage between it and the new school were still standing.

On the west and adjacent to the school ground was the home of Charles King and his sister Alice. They had a small fruit and vegetable farm in conjunction with a dairy. Their cows grazed in the area south of Cedar Hill Cross Road and west of Oak Hill. This pasture extended to just south of King's Pond, at the north end of the present Cedar Hill Golf Course. The west boundary was the rocky ridge east of Maplewood Road. Abutting the King Farm to the west was the Tolmie Farm, the home of Premier Tolmie. This farm extended west to Blenkinsop Road and north to the vicinity of Mt. Douglas Crossroad. The Offerhaus (sp?) home across the road from the old school and at the crest of the Oak Hill Ridge was the only dwelling on that side west to Maplewood, where Saanich Municipality operated a rock quarry and crushing plant.

It is now the site of the current Esso gas station. Returning to the above mentioned King's Pond, it was with Kingsberry's Pond one of the only two places in the district where skating could be done when there was sufficient frost. While I was not present on the particular occasion and I have no reason to doubt the recounting of the incident however, one well-known youthful character broke through the ice. On getting out of the water skated to where a bonfire was on shore, undressed and hung his clothes on sticks by the fire then went back to continue skating. ***[Ken Stofer comment - me thinks this must have been Reg Beaumont]***

Another incident involving King's pasture area occurred about 1922, when Jardine, their East Indian helper, fell an old, dead, hollow, oak tree. When cutting it up he found it had at one time held a bee colony and contained a large amount of honey. All the school children who had brought their lunch in lard pails or similar containers were invited to fill them with honey to take home.

Moving now to the south limit of Cedar Hill Road in the description area and at its junction with North Dairy Road was a low spot in the drainage to Bowker Creek and flooded frequently. This was the south end of the McRae farm which Cedar Hill Golf Club now occupies. It is my understanding McRae Road was named after this settler and not the other nearby McRae family also long time residents on the east side of Cedar Hill Road. A short distance north of the junction of Pear Street with Cedar Hill Road is a bedrock outcropping. George McMorran built a large home on the east edge of the outcrop and the family occupied that home for many

years. His son, also George moved to Cordova Bay where the fourth and fifth generation of the family reside.

About midway between the McMorran home and Church Street was an old farm house which to my knowledge was in the early 1920's occupied by the mother and sister of the late Lieutenant-Governor of B.C., General George Pearkes. His sister had a small farm specializing in raising purebred Jersey cows.

At the summit of the Oak Hill ridge and about where a lineal extension of Church Street intersects it was a small occurrence of quartz accompanied by some narrow stringers of muscovite (white mica). Many hours were spent by the writer and many other boys trying to extract some of that mica.

In the mid-1920's approximately half of the area of the next block was, on its east side, covered with a greenhouse and operated by Chinese. Continuing across Cedar Hill Cross Road and immediately across from St. Luke's Church on Cedar Hill Road, was the farm operated by Munro Miller. This farm bounded on the north by the extension of Earlston and on the east by Ophir was, except for a portion on the south side, largely inactive. The cultivated portion contained one of the early loganberry growing operations. As a side note hunting in this area was legal at that time and I remember watching a hunter bag a cock pheasant here.

Continuing westerly [NW?] along Cedar Hill Road, the land north of Mortimer Street (undeveloped at that time) up to Ruby Road and bounded on the east by Shelbourne Street was one large vegetable farm cultivated by the Chinese. West of Cedar Hill Road and east of Oak Hill the land was cleared but uncultivated except close to three separated homes. I believe this was part of the Irving family holdings.

Crossing the divide gap between the Colquitz River and Bowker Creek, Jack Irving built a large home with granite, on the crest but at the south end of the reappearing rocky outcrop. East of this and between Cedar Hill Road and Shelbourne were two or three homes on Ruby Road which abutted the old Whitaker farm. Most if not all of this is now contained in the Mall development area although in the mid to late 1920's most of the east half was a large greenhouse complex.

**Just north of the rock outcrop north of Arrow Road, Teddy Raper had a dairy farm west of Cedar Hill Road.** Continuing north the frequent rock outcrops made the land unsatisfactory for farming other than grazing, and here three or four residences were built. On the east side of Cedar Hill Road north of the old Whitaker home and extending to Feltham Road were at least two fenced but unkept orchards and an old abandoned house.

Returning now to the intersection of Shelbourne and Lansdowne and traveling north I will attempt to describe the land on each side of Shelbourne Street. On the west side a nursery occupied the area now occupied by Sears Mall and then immediately north of North Dairy Road was the home of Jack Alexander. Between it and Cedar Hill Cross Road were only two homes, one behind the other, approximately opposite Knight Road. The house farthest from the road was owned by David Williams, the uncle of Bert Pearson, who was a former Chief of Police in Saanich. The uncle undertook the raising of Bert after the early deaths of his parents.

Up to this point there were only a few scattered homes west of Bowker Creek and south of the McRae holdings on the east side of Cedar Hill Road. Continuing north to Rowan Street from the McRae farm and between the two main roads were scattered rock outcrops and small groves of oak trees with about eight houses in total built on Thistle and Rowan Streets. Again continuing north from Rowan and its projected extension to Shelbourne Street and up to Cedar Hill Cross Road, most of the land was under cultivation or used as pasturage. Between Cedar Hill Road and Shelbourne Street there were about 12 fairly scattered homes. Passing north of Cedar Hill Cross Road and extending to Mortimer Street the farm of Munro Miller has already been mentioned. The balance of the land in that block was cleared and mainly without fencing, except around a total of 8 homes.

As the disposition of the land on the west side north of Mortimer has already been related we will now return to the south end again and follow up from Lansdowne. At the intersection of Lansdowne and Shelbourne, Jim Mullard opened a car repair shop and filling station. This perhaps is possibly the oldest one in Saanich, if not Victoria too. Between the garage and North Dairy Road were three bungalows [the **Reg Stofer Sr. family briefly lived in one of them**] of much the same design. Traveling north to Knight Road there are only two houses on Shelbourne. With the exception of the land holdings of the University School for Boys most of the rest between Shelbourne and Richmond Road and except for a rock outcrop west of the Normal School was cleared, free of fences and with very few scattered homes. At this juncture I think it appropriate to mention that the University School was at that time operated on much more military lines than currently. The school band could be frequently heard in conjunction with their drill-master, Sergeant-Major Watson. In good weather each Sunday the pupils, lead by the band, paraded to St. Luke's Church.

The next block of land contained by Shelbourne, Knight, Richmond

and Derby was, except for three homes on Knight, part of the nursery operated by George Knight, although that easterly portion which rose rapidly to Richmond remained an oak grove. An interesting feature at the foot of the rapidly rising ground and close to the Derby Road allowance, was a substantial spring with sufficient water issuing to grow watercress.

The next block of land to the north contained between the two main roads and with Derby and Donnelly was cleared except for the oak grove close to Richmond, and about a half the area was fenced. The remainder contained two dwellings and three abandoned fruit orchards, one each of apple, cherry and plum trees.

Moving northward again from Donnelly the next road is Pear Street and except for three lots at the northeast corner the rest of that block was owned and operated as a dairy farm by three members of the Deans family.

The final and northernmost block between Richmond and Shelbourne Streets is flanked on the south by Pear Street and on the north by Cedar Hill Cross Road. An old but inactive farm occupying about a third of the total block area extended the full length of that section of Pear Street. The farm house at 3610 Richmond is perhaps one of the oldest in the area and is still occupied. Another interesting feature is the farm contained a flowing **well located about half way down Pear Street. The well is located under the dental clinic between Pear and Poplar Street.** Water is still issuing from it and is directed down the open ditch on Poplar. The remaining portion facing Richmond was a small farm **[Reg Stofer Sr. and family lived here for a couple of years - now site of Mt. Tolmie Nursing Home]**, occupying about a quarter of the remainder of the block.

The owner was Sam Terrell who, weekly in season, took vegetables and fruit together with poultry to the Public Market in Victoria. Sam was perhaps one of the first individuals to own a car in the area. He purchased a small Singer to transport his produce to market and as I recall it did not seem to have a hood on it. I did not see the incident but recall hearing that on his first trip home with it for some reason was unable to stop the motor or get it out of drive and circled around haycocks in an open field on the other corner of Richmond until the car ran out of gasoline. Sam also owned a tame crow called Bobby and I remember he had trained it to say "Mama". Bobby used to fly down Shelbourne Street following the Singer and wait somewhere along the way until the car returned, then followed it home.

Returning to the Lansdowne and Richmond intersection the land east

of Richmond and extending north to Cedar Hill Cross Road contains several rock outcrops straddling the Saanich - Oak Bay Municipal Boundary culminate in Mt. Tolmie. As the Oak Bay portion will be the easiest to describe this will now be done. It was known as the Hudson Bay Woods and consisted mainly of Garry Oak meadows with increasing evergreen growth to the north. It abutted the Uplands Golf Club to the east. There was no development of any nature in the Woods and Townsend's dairy on Argyl herded their cows there. To deter young boys from exploring the Woods rumor had it that a mean bull accompanied the cows at all times.

Between the Normal School and Mayfair Drive were several homes on tillable land between rock outcrops. Particularly noticeable in the Spring was the Dempster daffodil farm at the corner of Ernest Avenue. **[Ken Stofer as a lad,dug bulbs here, for 25 cents an hour]**

The first home on the south side of Woodley was one designed by architect Sam McClure. At Mayfair Drive and Richmond the street car stop was at the south east corner, although the tracks continued into the sand pit on the northeast corner where a large screening plant had been erected. Although the power lines remained in the pit I believe operations had ceased there, possibly before the 1920's. The reason was in all probability due to the lack of gravel in the sand. The inactive plant and the steep slopes on which to slide was always an attraction to exploring boys.

Proceeding up Mayfair Drive a fairly good road existed up to the first bench but beyond that very little work had been done on the wagon road built by the constructors of the now vanished amusement park erected at the summit of Mt. Tolmie in the 1880's. In many places the roadway was solid rock. The current road with parking areas at the top has all but removed or obliterated the bare rock surface with its splendid example of glaciation.

This occurrence as well as all other outcrops seen, would be technically described as intrusive volcanic with a high content of granitic rock material in various stages of assimilation. This would indicate a probable close association with an underlying granite mass. Indeed it is entirely possible some or part of the many outcrops in the area are granite and there have been three reported places on the Saanich peninsula where granite has been quarried. While on this topic a closely akin item is the existence of a shallow pit operation just west of the highest residence on the north side of Glastonbury Road on the north side of Mt. Tolmie. The excavating has

been made on a highly rusted occurrence.

Before leaving the mountain some comment should be made respecting the living attractions there as much as I remember. I will commence with plant life and the common usage name is placed in brackets following their proper name. Perhaps the most outstanding were the vast carpets of white Easter Lilies where there was sufficient depth of soil and shade for them to grow. In plentiful supply too were Fringe Cup (Star of Bethlehem), Peacock, Satin Flower (Bluebell), Seablush, Blue and White Camas, Blue-eyed Mary (Forget-me-not), Lupine. The following were somewhat less in abundance: Wild Tiger Lily, Yellow Violet, Yellow Monkey Flower, Spring Sunflower, Lupine. One prolific plant yet scarcely seen because it bears no leaves was the short purple Cancer Root or Naked Broom Rape. Probably bird life is much the same now except one rarely sees or hears quail and never sees or hears mosquito hawks. Probably the density of garter snakes remains the same and it would be very difficult to comment about the small rock lizards which were rarely seen when I was young. A final comment is that while I do not remember whether it was in the Spring or the Fall but it was not uncommon on a warm day to come across very large accumulations of ladybugs which literally numbered in the thousands.

Having previously mentioned the amusement park on the summit I will expand a little on this detail. My Mother's uncle, John Stonebanks advised he had worked on one of the two ongoing projects in the area in the late 1880's. A giant dipper was constructed from the summit of Mt. Tolmie to an outstanding knoll north of it. This knoll was removed during the construction of a parking lot in recent years. Apparently the dipper was constructed and in use but on some holiday some inebriate set fire to it.

I remember Uncle John making some comment on the racetrack in the Palo Alto area but do not remember what it was.

My first recollection of the mountain was attending a night bonfire ceremony there at the end of the first World War.

Each Easter commencing in the early 1920's, Dr. Clem Davies of the Victoria City Temple held a sunrise service there on Easter Sunday Mornings.

Returning now to Richmond Road and proceeding to the point where Mt. Tolmie Park touches it, Saanich operated a small rock quarry. When the operation ceased the blacksmith shop was removed but the piano-box tool storage was left. Finally my curiosity got the better of me and I went

over and opened it but dropped it fast as there in front of me was a large wasp nest and a cloud of angry wasps. I never read of the tale of Pandora's box without recalling that painful experience.

Shortly below the quarry the rock outcrop swung to the northeast leaving farmland and a few dwellings west of it. About midpoint along the exposed rock and below it there was and still is a small pond called Kingsberry's pond. A well constructed trail about four feet in width left Richmond Road at the quarry and skirted the west side of Mt. Tolmie immediately below the rock exposures. The fence along the south boundary of the property at the south end of Iona Drive prevented further travel along the trail.

The remainder of the whole discussion area is the northeast sector or that portion contained between Shelbourne Street and Cedar Hill Cross Road and for convenience sake will be divided into two zones by Gordon Head Road with the west part discussed first.

The area contained by the three foregoing roads and Mortimer Street and its projection extended to Gordon Head Road was perhaps the most heavily settled in the whole district although much still remained vacant being vacant because of undeveloped roads, empty lots and more rock outcrops. Apparently in the late 1800's it was planned to establish a horse race track in the vicinity of Palo Alto and Midgard streets. It is highly possible the old house at 3610 Richmond and the third to last house on the north side of the east end of Kisber Avenue were erected at that time. Two others that were standing in the 1920's but no longer exist may have been from that period also. The first was a three-storied dwelling on the north side of Kisber Avenue standing **[the old Frank Rendle house is now on that site]** on the top of the large rock outcrop west of Palo Alto. The other was at 1706 Christmas Avenue on the north side. This house was occupied in the 1920's by Madam Joubin, a French woman and her two sons, Franc. and Gerry. Franc., now deceased, attended Victoria College and graduated from U.B.C in Geology. He eventually attained Professional Engineer status and in the 1940's after considerable diligent searching rediscovered a long lost uranium deposit in the Elliot Lake area of Ontario.

This area became the site of extensive mining activity for several years. Franc. being fully aware of student education financing difficulties established a scholarship fund at either or both U.B.C. and U. Vic. (Sorry I lack the exact detail but inquiry at these institutions would provide the

information needed.)

Additionally, the old house near the east end of Kisber Avenue was at one time the residence of D.L. Tait (sp?) a lawyer who eventually moved to Vancouver and who in the late 1930's became interested in a gold prospect at Zeballos on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Their success developed a gold rush to that area and he was made president of the very rich Privateer Mine. Another one time resident of Kisber Avenue to achieve favourable notoriety is Dr. W. Gibson, former

Chancellor of the University of Victoria. For a short period of time in the 1920's the Gibson family lived at 1706 Kisber Avenue. On the south side of the same block and on the first lot fronting on it was the home of **Constable Robert Brown of Saanich Police**. My first recollection of him was on a large brown horse which sometime later was replaced by a bicycle. The Chief of Police Rankin was somewhat better equipped, he rode around on a motorcycle with an attached sidecar. About three lots further east on Kisber was the home of Albert Horner, at one time a member of the Saanich Municipal Council and after whom the nearby park was named.

Approximately 100 yards east of the east end of Kisber Avenue was the residence of Sidney Williams and family who owned and farmed most of the land east of Iona Drive and Kremlin Road up to the crest of the rise west of Gordon Head Road. Sidney Williams was a land surveyor and judging from the collection of African memorabilia on the walls of their living room, must have spent some time in Africa. However in the summer of 1936, I was employed doing photo topographical surveying in the Taka Lake area of north central B.C. and was surprised to find and climb an isolated mountain peak southwest of Taka Lake which bore the official title of Mount Sidney Williams. A few weeks later and some 25 miles to the northeast and on a mountain of lesser altitude, had occasion to make a triangulation observation on Mount Sidney Williams. I had leveled the telescope but found the summit was below the crosshairs! This gave me my first really practical demonstration of the curvature of the earth. Each time I pass along Kremlin this memory returns.

An anecdote of lighter vein involves the building of a house on Gordon Head Road approximately in line with Kisber Avenue. This involved a friend of the family who on returning from active service in W.W.I. was building a home for his English bride. They were living in the house but he had not built the stairs to the second floor and a ladder was used to get up there when needed.

On this particular occasion he had the ladder with him in the yard where he was digging a well. His wife wanted to go upstairs in the house for something and borrowed the ladder. She then forgot to take it back to her husband. She later made lunch and became quite annoyed with her husband for not coming to lunch on time. She went out to learn why and then the penny dropped.

Another story concerning this part of the district is to relate what I believe was the biggest fright I have ever experienced. About 1922 or 1923, at which time we had cows and I was delivering milk to a customer on Palo Alto. It was dark and I was traveling on the then unfinished Broadmead where St. Aidan's parking lot now exists. At that time the rock outcrop had clump of broom bushes on the west side. As I approached the broom a large greyish animal came slowly out of the bush toward me and I suddenly recalled having recently heard of a cougar sighting in the Hudson Bay Woods. I was terrified until the animal took shape. It was a Russian wolfhound that had strayed. When I said it was dark, I think some explanation is necessary and advise that there were only three street lights in the whole area. These were on Cedar Hill Cross Road at the intersections of Cedar Hill, Shelbourne and Richmond.

One final comment which may be of interest was an abandoned prune orchard located on Mortimer Street approximately where Stamboul intersects it. I recently noticed one of the prune trees still standing. [Ken Stofer note -actually there are still several prune trees in that area]

Abutting Mortimer Street on its north side and extending about 200 yards along the east side of Shelbourne Street was another Chinese-operated vegetable growing farm. North of this and with about an equal frontage on Shelbourne Street was the dairy farm operated by Jim Miller. This farm extended east right to Gordon Head Road and included the undeveloped land east of the Chinese operated garden. Locally this dairy farm was known as "The Forty Acres." The remaining portion of this block was subdivided into lots with their frontage on Ruby Road (now McKenzie).

Several of the lots were privately owned and had homes built on them. A similar subdivision was made on the north side of this road and a greater number of homes were built there than on the south side. About midway along the north side Will Jennings operated a greenhouse and establish a florist business there. Their nephew Art Knapp having lost his mother was brought up with the Jennings family. Art, now deceased, eventually established the well know Art Knapp Nursery business. [ this business extended into the United States]

Continuing north on Shelbourne Street to its intersection with Feltham

Road there were only two residences with frontage on that street. The first was immediately north of McKenzie.

Some time later and I believe in the early 1930's a large greenhouse complex was built extending about halfway to the next residence, recently removed, at the corner of Blair. Apart from this greenhouse there was no other development on the cleared land extending east to Gordon Head Road and within the area I first outlined, except perhaps one small old house on the west side of Gordon Head Road. In the mid 1920's a wooden sidewalk passed between two small redwood trees. They have grown considerably in the last 75 years.

The final portion of the district to review is the area contained to the northeast by Gordon Head and Cedar Hill Cross Roads. The south half, contained in the Municipality of Oak Bay was undeveloped and contained some oak meadows and evergreen trees. North of this area and with the empty farm buildings close to Finnerty Road was the idle Finnerty Farm. A little farther north and on the west side of the road was the idle Cadboro Bay School. The Cadboro Bay students were bussed to Cedar Hill School. The Finnerty Farm appeared to have abutted Gordon Head Road at one time, but subdivision and development now had two dwellings facing Gordon Head Road.

Having thus assembled a lot of detail which if read perhaps many would say "Thank goodness there's no more!" However I think it in order if I can add a few things I miss which perhaps all might enjoy. I miss the freedom to walk almost anywhere and not feel I am invading someone's privacy. Except for parks we are all channeled by fences or boundary lines of some sort. How often do we have the opportunity of hearing a skylark sing or hear the pheasants and quail calling? How many have seen the beautiful Steller's Jay, but stopped to wonder why it has such a raucous cry, or heard the dull booming of a blue grouse and spent several minutes trying to locate it somewhere high in a fir tree?

One bird stands out in my memory as been unique. That is the night or mosquito hawk, a bird perhaps slightly larger than a robin. It is the only bird of which I am aware performs aerobatics. In the evening before dusk one could hear its plaintive beeps as it circled around by flying until it reached a satisfactory height then suddenly plunged in a power dive. On pulling out a loud zooming sound was created by the wind passing through its wing and tail feathers.

How many can say they wakened on a spring morning to hear the cheerful call of a meadow lark or seen its yellow breast or on a misty fall

morning walked a field of jewel-bedecked spider webs and filled a bag of hours-fresh mushrooms. These are some of the things I do miss but I am luckier than most today because all are fresh in my memories.

As a final note I do hope someone can add a little about the liquor smuggling activities to the U.S.A. during prohibition in that area. I remember seeing moored in Cadboro Bay the Moonlight Maid a luxury class vessel painted totally dull black and used to carry liquor down to California to unload into smaller boats. Its sister ship Revillagigedo, named after an island in the Alaskan panhandle, ran the same route. I recall dimly that it was apparently seized by the U.S. Customs and charged with smuggling but beat the rap as its name was spelled incorrectly in the court documentation. Another story on the same topic is from Mr. Richards who operated one of the stores on Cadboro Bay beach [south end], who said that one evening he was walking his dog along the beach toward the Yacht Club when he came on a group of men loading a small boat with liquor. This group had an armed guard to prevent high-jacking and they detained Richards until the boat was loaded and under way. One further incident involving the Cadboro Bay area was the infamous Beryl G. high-jacking and murder, the details of which I am sure can be obtained by a visit to the B.C. Archives.

I trust the foregoing while lengthy, will be of some value to your project but thanks for refreshing many memories.

(1) Subsequent to completing this summary, Eric McMorrان advised that his father George Jr. and some other boys dammed Bowker Creek , possibly in the vicinity of Pear Street and he learned to swim in the pond thus formed.

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4128 Longview Drive,  
Victoria, B.C. V8N 2L1  
October 2, 2000

Dear Mrs. Caird:

Your recent message given to my niece was relayed to me and as I was unaware you were expecting an answer to your earlier letter, I had not

responded, but I did receive it. I am enclosing a copy of the article I wrote of which you read a condensed version in the Times-Colonist. A group based at Goward House on Arbutus Road and another somewhere over in west Saanich are endeavoring to put a history of the municipality together as a Year 2000 project. This group contacted several of us who might be able to help them inasmuch as we had spent our early years in different parts of the district. I put together the enclosed article, which however, is not apparently just what they wanted. One of the Saanich Councilors was at the meeting my submission was read. He asked if a copy could be filed in Saanich archives to which I agreed. The daily papers became aware of it, hence the abbreviated publication which you read.

Your inquiry made me think back on our next door neighbours so I am adding the following of which it is possible you may already be aware. These memories date back to about the end of W.W.1 and extend to about mid 1932. Your Father, Bob and I used to play together, during which time we gradually explored more and more of the area noted on the map. This included climbing many of the oak trees along the ridge behind and north of our homes, [this area now the home of Ken Stofer], catching polliwogs in Shelbourne Street ditch (We didn't know the correct name was Bowker Creek), sleigh riding when enough snow on Broadmead hill, [in Ken Stofers time this was referred to as Stofer's Hill] trying to pick bulrushes at Kingsbury's pond and frequently falling in while so doing. There are dozens more things I could relate but I will go back to describe his home as I remember it. Initially it was quite small, just two rooms with a woodshed at the back door and an outdoor privy behind the woodshed. With three growing children it soon became necessary to add to the house, so that portion extending from the small dining room was extended by the addition of the living room and two bedrooms. Standing at the gate and looking at the house one would see the following: two low well trimmed privet hedges running back to the house, with two large holly bushes (one golden leaf and the other variegated leaf ) to the right, with the path between them going to the back door. Straight in front were four or five steps up to an open porch leading to the front door, a short distance to the left. The open porch was screened to some extent with one of the most beautiful red American Beauty climbing rose bushes I have ever seen. In the border in front of the rose was a magnolia tree. Just a short distance north west of the northwest corner of the house was the pump and well beneath it. The area on the north side of the house contained an apple orchard. The yard on the north and west sides was contained in a close board fence.

Stamboul Street, just a grass lane then, was one of the last to receive water, light and sewer services.

In the summer of 1919 my Mother taught your Dad and I our A,B,C's and to count to 100, preparatory to starting school. We were in the same classes all through Public School. In 1927, the year we finished at Cedar Hill only about half the students went on to High or Normal School. This was standard practice at that time. Those who did not go on, then found jobs and started to earn their living. Your Dad found employment with the construction firm of Williams, Terrise (Sp.?) and Williams. A year or two your father started work he was in a serious accident at work and had his arm in a cast. You are no doubt aware of that injury. I do not remember if he was articulated to them as an apprentice. Inasmuch as we were now following different pursuits and on different time schedules, our paths rarely crossed after that, particularly as most of the time from 1932 to 1964, I was not residing in Victoria.

Inasmuch as your Dad's two sisters were older than me, I am not able to write much about them other than that Effie worked for several years in Spencer's Store before marrying Claude Belfrage and then moving to James Island where Claude worked for C.I.L. at the explosives plant. Effie was a member of St. Aidan's choir for many years. I do not recall if Daisy did too. If you would like to see a picture of them in about 1923 there is a picture of the cast of those in the play, "The Old Maids' Convention" in a cabinet in St. Aidan's Church.

Your Grandmother held onto a lovely Scottish accent up until the time she passed away. If I remember correctly she collapsed in Hunter's Store and died soon after. I can't remember for certain the exact cause but believe it was attributed to a very large stomach tumor. She made the finest scones I have ever tasted as often she would give one to your Dad and me. She had many superstitions, one of which I remember was it was unlucky to wear green. She had some special ways of overcoming bad luck, one of which was when something had been done which might be unlucky, was to throw a shoe outside the house where it was to remain the rest of the day. I recall my Mother telling me she went next door to see your Grandmother and on seeing a good shoe on the ground picked it up to give it to your Grandmother who insisted it had to remain outside for the rest of the day. The sorrow over the death of her son Archie while your Grandfather was working at Butchart's Gardens never left her and she often referred to him, in her Scottish brogue, "Wee Airchie".

Your Grandfather, whom you did know, was to me a tall, quiet,

gentle, soft-spoken man, probably shy too. Your Grandmother's death was a very hard blow for him and as often as he could, weather permitting, he would journey by bicycle out to the Shady Creek Cemetery to visit her grave. He did smoke, but not in the house. Each night after dinner he would stand in the woodshed doorway, pick up his clay pipe, cut off a piece of Irish Twist tobacco, put it in the pipe and smoke till finished then go back into the house.

The pain of his loss of Mrs. Lindsay was to a certain degree mitigated oddly by a photograph taken of him standing by the holly trees in front of the house. When the picture was developed there appeared to be a phantomlike image close to him which he was sure was your Grandmother. He showed me this snapshot and as this apparent phenomenon gave him joy and greatly reduced his loneliness it would have been cruel to try to materially substantiate that image.

I must apologize for not acknowledging your letter sooner and trust the enclosed together with this foregoing letter is of interest to you.

Sincerely,

[Jack Merrett]

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When the fence's last picket is painted and the brushes cleaned and dried,  
I'll cite my neighbors for sainthood for painting the other side.  
And the sight of what is done is a pleasant one  
But the part that is left to cover the grapevine smothers  
And to the fall we have set aside

#### THE CLOCK OF LIFE.

The Clock of Life is wound but once,  
And no man has the power  
To tell just when the hands may stop  
At late or early hour.

Now, is the only time you own,  
Live, love and toil with a will,  
Place no faith in tomorrow  
For the Clock may then be still.

Ms. Joan Wenman,  
Wenman Drive,  
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Joan:

On reading Valerie Green's write up concerning your family home I note the masonry work was done by Richard Williams. Dick lived on Palo Alto drive, one block north of the Bradshaw residence. He had served his apprenticeship in Cornwall and emigrated to Canada about the same time as my parents. Dick and my father worked together on most contracts. However in the early depression years during the 1930's he was a foreman on the extensive concrete work done on the highway alongside the Thompson River between Lytton and Spences Bridge.

During our conversation yesterday I gathered you thought the granite extensively used about the house may have been quarried on site. While it is indeed possible this may be correct I think the possibility greater it was obtained from granite boulders dropped during the last ice-age. Most of the earlier granite stonework done in Victoria at the time of the building of the house was done with granite obtained from this source. It was uncovered during road construction and the excavation of foundations, ditches, wells, and the installation of water and sewer lines. Boulders were frequently uncovered by farming activities, and beaches provided a treasure trove for them. It is possible your Grandfather had accumulated a store of boulders knowing they could be used on his planned home. If all or most of the granite used has the same composition, colour, texture, etc. then it is possible it came from the same source. To my knowledge, except for one possible instance, no quarrying was done for granite used on any of the houses built together by my father and Dick Williams.

To shape the pieces for construction two or three short holes are drilled along the desired line and in each hole is inserted three properly shaped pieces of steel with the centre piece acting as a wedge. Each wedge is driven in as far as possible causing the rock to fracture along the line of the holes. (This process is known as the Pin and Feather method.)

