

HERBERT & MAY CROFT

Saanich Residents

Record ID: 2010.036

Croft, Herbert and May

Saanich recollections [sound recording] / by Herbert and May Croft; interviewed by Caroline Duncan

1 sound recording (1 hour 4 min. 16 seconds) (wav, 665 MB)

Recording is part of the Saanich Archives collection of interviews.

Recorded on Ediol digital recorder, 18 May 2010, Saanich, B.C.

Herbert Croft was born in Saanich on August 18, 1920 (00:00:30). The family lived on Cedar Hill Cross Road near St Aiden's Church. His mother, Ethel Mottershead, was born in England and came to Saanich in 1908 to work on Madrona Farm, which Herbert describes as being at the end of Gordon Head Road. Herbert's father, Charles Croft, came from England in 1910 and worked for a minister on Saturna Island (00:02:20). Charles and Ethel Croft had two sons, Alec and Herbert. Charles served in Europe in WWI. Herbert's grandfather, Thomas Mottershead lived on Ruby Road and worked as a gardener at Mount Douglas Park (00:57:47). Herbert attended Cedar Hill School, starting in grade 1 in the small building that still stands on Cedar Hill Cross Road (01:00:54).

May Croft, the daughter of Mary Annie Beeston and Thomas Williams, was born on Delatre Street in Victoria, near Cedar Hill Road (00:04:40). Her father came to Victoria from England in 1910 to establish himself and May's mother and the family's four children came three years later in 1913. Four more children were born in Victoria, including May in 1923. The family home and farm was at 3054 Delatre Street. May describes the hardships her family faced. Her sister had cerebral palsy (00:06:30) and was eventually sent to live at Riverview. Her brother died at age 12 after being kicked at Oaklands School. The injury was a greenstick fracture which the family didn't realize. The boy's leg had to be amputated but he didn't survive the operation (00:06:50); May's father died six months later. May attended Oaklands School and then Victoria High School. As a teenager she had a job picking loganberries at the Clark's farm in Gordon Head (00:08:46). She was paid \$1 for a flat of loganberries and would make about \$25 during the month which would be used to buy clothes. After leaving school she took a secretarial job at Victoria Board of School Trustees in city hall downtown (00:07:45). May paid for the first telephone in the house when she went to work at age 18 (00:17:02).

Herbert and May met at Cadboro Bay Beach when she was 14 and he was 17 (00:08:30). They were married in September 4, 1942, at St Luke's Church on Cedar Hill Cross Road (00:22:29) and later that evening travelled to Vancouver on the CPR boat that left at midnight from Victoria (00:28:40). In Vancouver they visited Stanley Park and went to a

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club called The Cave for music and dancing where Herbert bought liquor from a bootlegger (00:29:30).

They moved into a small apartment on the corner of Stannard and Richardson streets (00:23:40) and later moved to May's mother house, the original homestead on Delater Street. As a wedding gift May's mother gave them a lot on a neighbouring property at 3014 Cedar Hill Road (00:25:25). Herbert built a house on the property over a three year period. The lot cost \$125 and the house cost approximately \$3000 to build. They lived at the property from 1947 to about 1959 then moved to a bigger house directly across the street. They describe the neighbourhood as very rural and pleasant and recall the neighbours – the Neils next door and the Cassilios across street (00:27:00). They later moved to Mount Tolmie and then further north on Cedar Hill Road before moving to James Heights. The Crofts were involved at St Luke's Church and Herbert's name is engraved on a brass plaque at the church in appreciation for work he carried out (00:28:00).

Other topics:

- Impact of WW2 in the Victoria area including rationing of alcohol, gasoline and some foods, blackout curtains, shades over the car lights, fear of Japanese shelling, use of horse meat during war (00:18:28)
- Wild quail and pheasants in the Cedar Hill area (01:03:13)
- Ellis farm on the SE corner of Shelbourne and Cedar Hill Road and Mr Ellis delivering milk by horse and buggy
- Hunter's Store on the NW corner of Shelbourne and Cedar Hill Road
- Naming of Melcroft Street (named after the local families Merrett, Ellis, Lindsay and Croft)
- Easter Sunrise Service at Mount Tolmie and the large illuminated cross that could be seen all over town
- Saanich Police Constable Brown who patrolled the area on bike
- Street car route which ended at base of Mount Tolmie across from the St Michaels University School (Herbert's father was a streetcar driver)

Related interviews:

- Jean Levis interview
- Jack Merrett interview
- Ken and Lynette Stofer interview