

**Dr. Bernard Gillie**

**Interview by Mary Jackson, 30 November 1987**

**Words in bold print are by interviewer**

**Tape #1 Side 1 (Family Background)**

I'm Bernard Gillie, speaking in my home in Strawberry Vale, the location of my birth also, and where my family have been for many years. I come from a pioneer family some five generations back. On my mother's side of the family, William Holmes, who was my great grandfather, and her grandfather, came to Ontario, originally from Ireland, his family came out to Ontario in 1838. After various moves some of them in U.S.A., and some into Canada, they finally settled in Goderich, which is in Ontario, on the shores of Lake Huron. There were four boys in the Holmes family, three of them owned large farms in the Goderich area, there is still a little community there, that I visited some years ago, called Holmesville named after the Holmes family. The fourth son, William Holmes, who was my great grandfather, he decided that he wouldn't settle down with the rest of the family. He decided, somewhere in the middle 1800s, to come out west, as everyone was wont to do in those days. And he came around Panama, the Ismus of Panama, and up the coast to Victoria. And then returned, after a short time in Victoria, returned to the gold fields in California, and spent some months in California, then finally came back to Victoria.

His first visit to Victoria was in 1858, and he tells the story of his coming into the city by sailing vessel. He speaks in one of his letters of a gentleman who rode out from Victoria Harbour out off Race Rocks somewhere, and met the boat, and climbed on board. It turned out that he was the editor and publisher of the then British Colonist, the newspaper. When my great grandfather came ashore, one of the first things he did was to subscribe to the British Colonist. And for some reason, the British Colonist and the Colonist, and now the Times Colonist, have been in our family since 1858, which is the year in which the Colonist was first published, so we have a long history as subscribers to the Colonist.

He spent only a short time in Victoria, then moved across to the mainland, then went up the mouth of the Fraser, and landed in what was then New Westminster, and became involved in some of the work being done by the Royal Engineers or the Sappers and Miners, as they were known in the British Regiment that was sent out to act as sort of developers for New Westminster. He went to a small community outside of New Westminster called Sapperton, and selected a site close to Burnaby Lake, what is called Burnaby Lake today, and Crown granted a section of land, and it turned out, that was the first Crown granted land issued in BC. It's lot 1, block 1 in the official records, land records of the Province. He built a log cabin close to the shore, not far from Burnaby Lake, in this little community of Sapperton close to where the Engineers were encamped. That turned out to

be the first house built, in what is now the Municipality of Burnaby. He had as his immediate neighbour Matthew Bailey Begbie, the famous first judge in British Columbia, and spent some brief time really developing his little farm there. It is on a beautiful site up above the river in Sapperton, looks out over the river, and of course it is now part of the Municipality of Burnaby, all built up. But there are still a few signs around indicating where his home used to be. He had a wife at that time back in Ontario, and at Holmesville, and he sent for her, she had six daughters, and she came out by way across the Isthmus of Panama, up the coast with her six daughters, and they moved into the little log cabin in Burnaby.

William Holmes, who was a very active Orangeman, he was head of the Orange Lodge, he was a very keen Orangeman, and of course that was not unusual coming from Ontario, because Ontario in those days was a centre for Orange organizations. As a matter of fact, in earlier days, in his youth, he was involved as just a young lad really, in the famous rebellion of 1837 in Ontario, when the political situation was boiling at that time, as many times since. However, from his home at Sapperton in New Westminster, he went up into the interior of the province, up to Barkerville, at the time of the gold rush in the early '60s, and did a good deal of hauling on the trails bringing supplies into Barkerville, and ultimately opened a store in Barkerville, and operated the store for several years, and coming back down to his home from time to time. That was in the quite early days of Barkerville before the big fire, and it happened that when the fire destroyed virtually all of Barkerville, his store was among the things that were destroyed. Unfortunately all the records, and other things that he had gathered at that time were destroyed in the fire and I've never been able to find anything in the way of a relic of any kind from that time. After the gold rush was over, he returned to live in Sapperton, he farmed his acreage there, and also bought acreage up the Fraser Valley in several places. He lived to a very ripe old age, and died, I'm not certain of the year, he lived to be 97 years old, and he was very active right up until very shortly before his death.

His connection to my family of course was through one of his six daughters, Eliza, who was one of the girls who came out to Sapperton with her mother, when they came to join him in British Columbia. They were brought up in Burnaby of course, and when she was a young woman, she moved over to Victoria, which was then of course the Capital of the Province, and while there residing in Victoria, I understand she was doing maid service or something of the kind in one of the Victoria homes. She met, and married, a Thomas Carrington who ultimately was my grandfather, as Eliza Holmes who married him was my grandmother. Thomas Carrington, his family had come from Nottingham in England originally, back in the 1840 period somewhere, first to the New England coast, not far from Boston. They had been involved in the lace business in Nottingham, and his father and mother with Thomas, and the rest of the family moved out to New England, spent some time there, the father died there, and after his death, the mother and Thomas, and the rest of the family moved back to Nottingham, were there for several years. By this time Thomas was grown up,

and they came out back to North America, but this time settled in London Ontario. In the course of his working in Ontario, he was a journeyman carpenter. He decided to come out to the west, and so followed in the footsteps of the others, and came around by Cape Horn, and up the coast to Victoria. Settled in Victoria in 1860, and the story goes, when he arrived in Victoria, he had twenty five cents in his pocket, that was all the money he had, spent the twenty five cents on his first meal in Victoria, and then started to look for work and a place to stay. Apparently he did very well, succeeded, and worked at various jobs in carpentry, and so on in Victoria, and during the course in which time he met this Eliza Holmes, and they ultimately married. And they raised quite a large family in Victoria.

He was involved in several different business ventures, and one of the family, the oldest boy in the family whose name was William, contracted what was called in those days consumption, which is of course now, referred to as T.B. and actually died in Victoria of T.B. somewhere in the mid-seventies. His father, Thomas Carrington, was very alarmed, as was typical of the reaction of people in those days because tuberculosis was a such scourge, he felt he should move his family away from Victoria, and in those days the answer to the problem of avoiding consumption, was to move to a dry climate. So he moved the whole family up into the dry belt, a country south of Kamloops in a little community of Merritt, and what was then, and is still known, although the village is gone, of Nicola on the shores of Nicola Lake. He went into farming, ranching there, in Nicola for a number of years, but for reasons I have been unable to find out, they decided to move back to Victoria, and he moved the whole family back to Victoria in 1876. By this time, he had some money, and had a little capital and decided to open up a business in the city to handle crockery, glassware, and toys imported from England. Seems like a strange concoction, but there it was, and he had a store on the corner of Fort and Government Street in Victoria called the London Bazaar, which he operated for some ten years where they did quite a brisk business in this crockery, glassware and toys, and that amassed a fair amount of capital and again this time in 1886, he moved the family back again to Nicola country. I never was sure of why they moved back and forth like that, but they obviously did. Their first trip into Nicola, when they first went in, had been over, what was known as the Ni-common trail, because there was no other way into that country. He and the youngsters rode into Nicola by horseback over the Ni-common trail. The second time they went in, they went in by wagon road, and they settled in the little Nicola community where he took on another cattle ranch, and went on with his ranching business until, by this time they had quite a large family, he decided to go back into commercial enterprise, and opened a general store in Nicola, and operated that general store up until very shortly before his death around about the 1920s, I'm not certain of the actual year, but I think it was about 1926 or 1927.

My mother, one of his children, was raised partly in Victoria, during the time in which the family was located there, and partly in Nicola. In Victoria during that

time, they lived in a home on the corner of Superior Street, and what was then called Birdcage Wharf which is now Government Street. Their house was on the corner of what is now Parliament Square where some of the remains of the old government buildings called birdcages were located. They lived there for pretty well all of the period he was operating the London Bazaar. And then my mother went to school at the Central School in Victoria up on the property where the Central Junior High School is located now, went through her public schooling there along with the other members of her family, then of course they were all moved again back up country to Nicola and it was during the time, that they were living there at this time, mother was a woman I guess in her early twenties, met and married my father, James Dawson Gillie, who with his father were cattle ranching in the Nicola valley. The ranch that he had was on the shore of Nicola Lake, was called the Lakeview Ranch, and is now part of the Nicola Valley Stock Farm owned by quite a large corporation. It is one of the oldest and best known of the ranches in the Nicola country.

The family, my father who married Mary Louise Carrington, that was her real name, although no one ever knew her by that name, she was always called Dolly, everybody apparently knew Dolly Carrington, and I never heard anyone call her anything else in all the years I knew her, but her name was Mary Louise. Anyway Dolly as she was known by this time was married to James Dawson Gillie, and they were operating the Lakeview Ranch on Nicola Lake. Now to pick up the threads of the background of my father, James Dawson Gillie, we have to go back to the British Isles again. He was born in Scotland, right on the border country of Scotland, close to the town of Berwick on the Tweed River on the border, and went to school, his father had a farm there, his father was Paul Johnstone Gillie, and he operated quite a large farm there, was what in those days was called a gentleman farmer, they had done I would judge pretty well, but for what I can learn, Paul Johnstone let liquor get the better of him, and he decided that he would leave the old country, and come out to North America which was in those days so often a pattern followed by people with a desire for wandering, as so many of them seemed to have, so he left his wife, not at their farm near Berwick, but in Edinburgh. My father, one of the family, he had three sisters, and the mother and the three sisters, and my father lived in Edinburgh while Paul Johnstone was out in Canada, and he had gone to Nicola valley, and in turn had bought the ranch on Nicola Lake which Thomas Carrington owned, and so the families became acquainted that way. Paul Johnstone came out in 1876 to Nicola. At that time Dad was only a young boy attending school. Incidentally, he was a student at, what became the famous "John Watson's" boys school in Edinburgh, a school which is still there, and is still very well known, but is no longer a boys school, they've gone in for co-education, but it is still apparently a very well-known school, this is some years ago when I was there myself.

Shortly after Paul Johnstone had come out to America, Dad, James Dawson, in other words Jimmy as everybody called him, left school and was apprenticed to

the plumber trade and spent seven, in those years, the period for apprenticeship was seven years, and he spent seven years in Edinburgh, living at home, but apprenticed to a plumber in Edinburgh. When he finished his apprenticeship in 1886, the first thing he wanted to do was to come out and join his father in British Columbia in Nicola, so he left his mother and three sisters in Edinburgh, and came out by boat across the Atlantic, and incidentally by train across the continent, this was before 1886, when the C.P.R. was just being completed, so he wasn't able to come by C.P.R., then he came across the northern part of the United States on the Northern Pacific and came to Seattle, and then to Victoria, and then from Victoria up to Nicola where he joined his father and assisted his father on the ranch in the Nicola valley at Lakeview, and of course as already indicated, ultimately married my mother in Nicola, and during the time that they were on the ranch in Nicola there, my brother Kenneth Gillie was born, and my sister Marjorie also born there in Nicola. They lived on the farm, on the ranch in Nicola until 1906, about a year before that, 1905 I guess, my father lost his eyesight, I think from what I can gather is in some way as result of T.B. and although the T.B. was cured, it did result in his losing his eyesight, because the T.B. had affected the optic nerve. So he felt that he could no longer carry on the work in Nicola on the ranch, and so decided that they would move down to Victoria in 1906, they came down to Victoria. And he sold the cattle ranch, the Lakeview Ranch up there, and they bought a small farm, outside of Victoria, in what was then, and is now still Strawberry Vale, and that was the farm where the Gillies settled, and where I was born somewhat later, a year or so later, on the old farm house in Strawberry Vale.

### **Interview by Mary Jackson, 13 January 1988**

#### **Tape #1 Side 2 (Family Background)**

The property, when they bought it in 1906, Hastings was known as Wellington Road, but sometime later that was changed. We used to get some satisfaction out of saying that we lived on the corner of Hastings and Granville, since that has a very special meaning in the minds of anyone who knows Vancouver. We used to always say that we would love to have that same amount of property on the corner of Hastings and Granville in Vancouver. However, they had there, to begin with 45 acres, most of it located on the northeast corner of what was Hastings, or rather, Wellington and Granville, with some of the property being on the west side also of Granville. The farm had been, when my people bought it, owned by people called Ferguson, who had not been long on the farm, perhaps four or five years, although I can't be sure of that. They, in turn, had bought it originally from a quite well known pioneer family in Victoria called Cavin, and there are still members of the Cavin family in and around Victoria. One of them, Desmond Cavin, was a teacher and principal of one of the elementary schools in Greater Victoria, until just recently, when he retired a year or so ago.

It was a mixed farm, in the sense that they had cows, horses, for all the farm work, and carried on a small business in terms of selling farm produce, such as milk and butter and eggs, and in season, fruit, because there was quite a large orchard in part of the farm property. Also hay, we grew hay, more than we needed for our own stock, so that in that way, Mother and Dad were able to, I guess you'd say, eke out a living. It was certainly very difficult, because of Dad's handicap, although he had enough sight that he was able to drive horses, and do much of the farm work and so on, and although I never knew him when he had his sight, he had his sight when I was born, but I worked with him on the farm for many years, right up until the time I left home and went out teaching in various parts of the province, and even then I always returned to the farm as home, and I never failed to marvel at my father's ability to carry on so much of the work with the very limited eyesight that he had. Of course, all transportation was by horse and wagon, and my father used to make a trip to town, and it took about an hour to go into town, and about an hour to come back with horse and wagon. My father used to do that once a week at least, to deliver milk, butter, eggs, and other farm produce of one type or another to friends and acquaintances that we had in the city.

My brother and sister were in school at the time that they came to Strawberry Vale. My brother was ready to attend high school. He had completed his elementary education up in the Nicola valley at Nicola, and my sister was attending the public school or elementary school and went to Strawberry Vale. At that time, the Strawberry Vale school, which had been built in 1891, so it was about 15 or so years old, a little older perhaps, was a one room school, with all grades from what we called the beginners, right through to what was known as "entrance class," which in today's parlance would be regarded as grade 8. My brother went to Victoria High School, which was located in the city. When he started, it was located on the grounds of what is today the Central Junior High School, and while he was attending there, they built the present Victoria High, what is now called Victoria Senior Secondary School, and he used to travel from Strawberry Vale into high school, back and forth every day, usually by bicycle. It was roughly 5 miles over a gravel road, in all kinds of weather, and so on, it was a pretty arduous kind of existence, but they did very well, and everyone else did the same thing, and it was not regarded as any great feat, to be getting their education under those circumstances. I sometimes wonder what our young people of today, what their reaction would be if somebody suggested that they carry on a performance of that kind. There are still of course in some parts of the province and some of them on Vancouver Island, that do pretty much the same thing, so when you add it all up, it really hasn't changed all that much.

Mother and Dad were interested in the community. Although they were Presbyterians themselves, there was no Presbyterian church in Strawberry Vale, so they sort of circulated around for a time before they found, perhaps I guess what they wanted. They went for a while to the only Anglican church in the neighbourhood which was known as, I can't remember now. Anyway, they went

for some time to the Anglican church on West Saanich Road, which was known as the Lake Church. Then a church was built on the Burnside Road in Strawberry Vale, and that was an Anglican church, and my father, along with others community, assisted in the building of the church. Dad hauled some of the lumber that was used, and other neighbours in the community did the same thing, so they built the church which became known as "St. Columba's", and is still in operation today.

My father, Jimmy Gillie, as he was known by most of the people in the community, was very interested in municipal politics, and he at one stage, ran for the school board for Saanich, was a member of the Saanich board, and was interested in education, both because at that time, my sister and I were attending school in Saanich, although the oldest son, Kenneth, was attending high school in town. But being a Scot, he had a special respect for education, and felt that it was his duty to give such assistance as he could. He was a man of limited education himself, having only spent about 5 years in regular schooling in Edinburgh, where he attended a very famous boys school in Edinburgh, "George Watson Boys School", and when he left there, of course he never returned to formal education, went into an apprenticeship with a plumber, but never lost his keen interest in education, learning, he just had the kind of mind, that no matter what the circumstances, was keenly aware of the world, and all the things that were going on, despite the terrible handicap of not having enough sight to be able to read.

One of my earliest recollections is, when I started school at Strawberry Vale, and I was just beginning to learn to read, the great thrill, so much so that still sticks in my mind, sitting on my father's knee with a book, of which we had a good many in our home I'm glad to say, trying to read one of the stories in the book to my father, and he was helping me, I was spelling out the words, and so forth, it must have taken us at least half an hour, to read one paragraph, but at least it gave me a great sense of satisfaction, and he had unlimited patience to go through that kind of thing, and to encourage me. From that beginning in reading, I, along with other members of the family, developed the family habit of reading to Dad. We read the daily newspaper to him, either I did or my Mother did, or my brother, or whoever happened to be home. In fact, there were some of the neighbours who used to come in from time to time, and read whatever was current at that time to him. We always had a newspaper, we always had some magazines, and we always had books, so that at a very early stage, we became very conscious of the world around us, and something of some sense of history, which otherwise I'm sure we never would have had.

On the farm, as I've already indicated, the resources were really very limited, in that it was a veritably small place. We had milk cows, oh, I think the most we ever had, if I can remember correctly, was about 12, and usually less. We had a team of horses that did all the farm work, and provided us with transportation such as it was, and Dad used every possible opportunity he could to make a little

money to keep us going, over and above what he was able to make by the sale of farm produce. He took a decided interest in the school board, he was also interested in municipal politics to a wider degree, and participated in a number of election campaigns when they were electing Reeves and Councillors and so on. Over the years, he became quite well known, and quite interested in the development of the municipality. On our property, was located quite a large gravel pit, which we for years, sold gravel to the municipality, which was used for the gravelling of the roads in and around Strawberry Vale. And, also some later years, when I was in my teens, Dad worked with a Mr. Kneale, spelled K-N-E-A-L-E, who developed a wood business in the Strawberry Vale area. Kneale's end of the business consisted of getting property where there were trees available, and cutting these trees down, sawing them up, and splitting the wood, and selling it to the people in the Strawberry Vale neighbourhood, and my father undertook to deliver this wood to various people around, and I can remember so well, him building a special box on one of our wagons, which the wood was carried to peoples' places, he used to be able to deliver a cord, took him all morning to load and deliver and unload one cord, and then he would do another one in the afternoon, and at the rate of six dollars a cord, so he made 12 dollars a day, which in those days, was regarded as a very respectable kind of payment.

My mother was of course first of all so busy, trying to keep the farm business going, helping out Dad. She did all the book work, and so forth, not that there was very much, but Dad couldn't. And she wrote letters, and sent out bills, and all the rest of it, as well as looking after the house, and so on, we used to have, depending on the season, hired men who came to help us with the farm work, haying time, and so on, busy periods, and mother had all these men to feed, certainly lunch in the middle of the day, and with very limited facilities, in the home of that day, it kept her very much occupied, so that she didn't get out into the community to any great extent, really don't think, thinking back now, she wasn't a very gregarious type you would say. She felt that her place was at home, in the home. She was always home. She had remarkably good health. I can only remember once, in all the years that I knew her and was here at home with her, only once, did she ever stay in bed, because she was ill, one day, when she had a very heavy cold. That was over a period of about 25 years, 25 or 30 years, so that she was remarkably regular in her habits, in her work, and in everything she did, superb house keeper, good cook, and all the rest. In many ways, we were very, very fortunate. She was a tremendous help to my father, and he thought the world of her. Couldn't possibly have operated without her. I can always remember one of the things that stuck in my mind, was when Dad came to plough in our fields, of course you ploughed you had a team of horses, and to begin his ploughing, what they then called to strike out, the ploughing in the field, he wanted of course to plough the first furrow in a straight line, but he couldn't see the other end of the field, or anything on the field, so that he couldn't trust the horses to go in a straight line, so he used to get my mother to come down to the field, she would take a white towel, and walk to the other end of the field, and stand, holding up the towel, and Dad could see that. Then he would



drive the horses and the plough down to where she was, so that he got a straight line, and the people in the district used to marvel at Dad's ability to plough a very straight furrow being a blind man, but it was with mother's cooperation that made this possible. For many years, mother refused on principal to learn to milk. She said she knew, if she ever learned to milk cows, that she would be expected to do it, but if she didn't know how, then no one would expect her to do it. However, there came a time when we had more cows than Dad could milk by himself, about 12, so mother, bless her soul, gave in on her stipulation, and learned to milk, and so for a good many years, in the latter part of the years on the farm, mother and Dad did the milking together, and during that period, much of the time, I milked also.

### **Interview by Mary Jackson, 18 January 1988**

#### **Tape #2 Side 1 (School and Social Life in Saanich)**

Some of the things I remember rather vividly about living in Strawberry Vale, in my youth, and the time that I was trying to acquire an education, prepare for teaching, and so on, might be of interest to anyone, who is trying to get a flavour of Saanich, and the district say 40 or 50 years ago. People living today, especially young people, really have absolutely no idea of what life was like in the community in those days. The developments in terms of so-called modern conveniences, modern inventions, and so on have totally transformed the way people lived from day to day.

I have mentioned already, something about the struggle to get just from home into high school, or university, or normal school, or wherever it might be, which today, people by and large, people would simply not tolerate it if they had to go through that, they just simply wouldn't bother, in our days when I was doing it, and I'm not foolish enough to suggest that we thought it was fun, but there it was at the time, but it was the only way, if you wanted to get on to do something of that kind, then you had to be prepared to do some rather difficult and trying, uncomfortable, boring, things like travel on street cars and automobiles, and so forth under all kinds of weather conditions, day in and day out, just to get the way you wanted to go, so that some of these features of life in Saanich community at that time, were dominated by the absence of what we today would call good transportation, good communication, in terms of telephones, postal service, and so forth, there were rudimentary forms of these services, but today we would find them totally inadequate. I was living on the farm in Strawberry Vale, I can well remember the first telephone that we had in our house. I was then going to Normal School, and I was about 19 years of age, so, and my family had been in Strawberry Vale over 20 years at that time, and there was no phone anywhere near. And when we got our first telephone in our home, I can remember it was a nine day wonder, one of the old kinds, that had two bells at the top of it, and a crank at one side, and you cranked it up, and hoped that you would get the operator -- not only the operator, but you usually got two of the other people in

the neighbourhood as well. But it transformed the way people lived, and the way people thought.

Entertainment, amusement, so forth, was very limited. To a great extent, we made our own. In the winter time occasionally, doesn't happen very often in and around Victoria, but occasionally, we would have a snatch of cold weather which resulted in ponds and lakes and so forth freezing over, and we would have a period of a week, or two or three weeks, of extremely good skating. I can remember something, perhaps people today would find hard to believe, I remember at least two occasions on which we all skated, dozens and dozens of us on Portage Inlet. Now Portage Inlet, as most of you will know, is salt water, it's true it has a high content of fresh water as well, but I don't think Portage Inlet has been frozen over now for some probably 20 or 25 years. And yet I can remember very well going down to Portage Inlet in the afternoon, or even in the evening, we used to build bonfires on the ice, and the ice was, oh, five or six inches thick, which in Victoria's time, was thick ice, and we skated all over Portage Inlet. There was a certain amount of hazard, because there were springs in various places, but most of us knew where they were, and they were usually marked. And in the evenings, when the cold weather was on, there would be literally hundreds of people skating on Portage Inlet. I can remember them skating on Elk Lake, I never skated on Elk Lake, my parents were a little dubious of the wisdom of that, so I didn't get the opportunity, but hundreds of people did skate on Elk Lake on one or two occasions when we had a particular cold spell, and some parts of Prospect Lake as well, and then of course there were big areas of low swamp land, we had some of it on our own property which used to flood in those days as it still does, would freeze over, and the water was only six inches to a foot deep, and so as long as it was there, and the ice was level, why, it was tremendously good skating. Many of the young people who later went into playing hockey or other ice games, took it up seriously, learned their skating on the lakes and farms in and around the city.

The schools was of course were small. The youngsters for the most part played the usual school yard games, but little by little even in those days, we were beginning to look at inter-school competitions where you went from school to school with pick up teams, soccer, baseball, basketball, and so on, playing, there were no school gymnasiums, so if we could find a community hall, such as there was one in Strawberry Vale, another one in Marigold, another one at Royal Oak, these were the places that we gathered, in order to play things like basketball and football in the farmers field or whatever. In the summertime, swimming was a very popular pastime, as it is today of course, and the popular places of that era were the lakes such as Prospect, Elk Lake, Beaver Lake. Oh, to some extent Thetis Lake, although Thetis Lake was not accessible as it is now. Then we went to the salt water beaches, such as, what is now called Island View, and Cadboro Bay, Cordova Bay, there was always a certain degree of reluctance then as now, because the water was extremely cold. It was the hardier ones that got the most out of it.

School picnics were a feature of school life in those days. I can remember very well, my father who had a cousin, he moved a lot of hay on our place, and had a team of horses, taking the Sunday School classes from the Strawberry Vale community, particularly from St. Columba's Church on Burnside Road, and taking them for a hayride, for a picnic, from Strawberry Vale, out to Cordova Bay, what is now Mount Douglas Park. I think it was in fact the first time that I ever saw Mount Douglas Park, and it hasn't really changed very much, even up to now I'm glad to say, they've left most of it natural. But I remember going to a picnic out there, on the auspices of Sunday School, my most vivid recollection was that it poured rain from the time we left home in the morning until we got back at night, and riding in an open hay wagon, most of us covered only with a piece of canvas or an overcoat or whatever. We were absolutely soaked when we got home, but happy as clams, because we'd had a picnic. That kind of thing would be regarded as a pretty reluctant enterprise today, I don't think you would find any youngsters, who would go out on a picnic on the circumstances of that time.

Common games in the schools, the school yard games, have almost completely disappeared. I find that youngsters in the schools don't play the same school games. We used to play games with strange kinds of names. There was one we had, we called Prisoners Base, another one was called Palm, Palm, Pull Away, you wonder what on earth these names... but I won't bore you with the details of how they were played. Then there was another one called Ante-I-over. That one consisted of, at school we usually stood in the middle of the playground, and it consisted of throwing a ball over the school with a team at each side, and you threw the ball over and if somebody on the other side could catch the ball, then that whole side tore madly around the school, and tried to capture as many people of the opposing team as they could. Then marbles, we all played marbles. My mother objected strenuously to this, I remember, because I used to come home, with hands, with dirt ground into them from playing marbles in the mud. There wasn't such a thing as a black top playground at that time. Those are some of the games, the kind of games that we played. They required no equipment, outside of the marbles to play with, perhaps a ball, the ball was not supplied by the school, it was supplied by a generous parent who was willing to buy one for his or her boy or girl, and let them bring it to school. We played with it until it was lost and that was the end of the game.

There was horse chestnuts, yes that's right! I didn't play it, but I can remember, we did play a lot of it in Strawberry Vale, because there were a lot of horse chestnut trees in those days around the Strawberry Vale School. I often wondered where that game came from. I remember them playing it there in the fall, when the chestnuts were coming down, and the shells were breaking off. There was another game called Run Sheep Run, which earned an evil reputation I can remember because, it consisted of dividing up, everybody wanted to play into two teams, and one team was on one side of the playground, and the other team was on the other against the fence, and the idea was, that you had to

capture people from the other team, and whichever side could capture the whole of the other team, you had them all captured, you had won. You couldn't touch them as long as they were staying hanging on to the fence, but if they ventured forth from the fence, then you were free to tackle them, anyway you could, and drag them across to your particular side of the playground. It was incredibly rough, rough on our bodies, and even rougher on our clothes. The parents took a very dim view of this as an exercise, but it was a host of fun. Then of course, there began to be some signs of organized games coming to the fore. I well remember the very first time I participated in an interschool track meet, which included the schools of Saanich and Victoria, and the meet was held out of what was the Willows race, the Willows ground, the Willows race track it was. In those days, long since gone, but out in, what is now Oak Bay, and it had a track where the horses used to run for horse races, and this was turned into a track for running. I remember very well going there to represent Strawberry Vale school at a -- bicycle race, that was it. I think back of it now, I didn't even own a bicycle, but I managed to borrow one from somebody, and I went to the race to represent the bicycle riders of Strawberry Vale, and there were similar bicycle riders from all the various schools around, and the race consisted of once around the race track, and if you can imagine the result of turning 20 or 25 youngsters on bicycles of various sundry descriptions starting off to ride madly around the race track, usually in most cases not more than two or three would finish, the others were left at various forms of disarray around the track, bicycles broken, sometimes arms broken, heads cut, goodness knows what all. It was a rough and tumble kind of business. I remember that particular one, because to my knowledge, that would have been back around about 1918-20, just I would think just after the First World War, somewhere in about there.

The social life of the community, quite aside from children, was again pretty restricted. Transportation was difficult, facilities were not often available. But in many of the smaller communities, like Strawberry Vale, people got together, particularly if they had a building in which they could gather. For instance, Strawberry Vale had a hall, which is still there by the way, Strawberry Vale Hall. It's the original hall which was built I would guess around about the turn of the century. It has been remodelled, and repaired, but it's still the original building. They used to have dances there, and sometimes the school, or the community association, would put on entertainment, concerts, or musicals, and so forth. I can remember participating in a Shakespearian play, the Merchant of Venice, at Strawberry Vale Hall, when I was about I guess at the grade 8 level, at Strawberry Vale School. I remember very well the teacher, a Mr. Butterworth -- no -- sorry -- his name was Butterfield, Mr. Butterfield, was very interested in drama, and in our developing some kind of a taste for Shakespeare, and he undertook to have us put on some excerpts from the Merchant of Venice. I think back of it now, it really was a tremendous undertaking, because the facilities were very limited. Most people, adults as well as children, knew absolutely nothing about Shakespeare, it was just a name. Yet when the play was put on, and I'm sure it was not a particularly outstanding success, from a dramatic point

of view, it certainly was a success from the standpoint of the interest that it created in the community. The place was packed, I can remember very well. I was frightened out of my wits, I can also remember that.

Whist drives were a great source of entertainment, which gradually disappeared. Their place was taken by 500 drives, there was a card game called 500, which was very, very popular, before the era of bridge. 500 was a rather more elaborate, and intricate game, than Whist, although many people of that era thought that Whist was for intellectual people who knew what they were doing, whereas 500 was sort of a fly by night operation, intended for people who couldn't be bothered to learn how to play Whist. But 500 drives were, again, very common. And I know that the same was true in most of the other small communities of Saanich. There were many community halls. A number of them were built by, or sponsored in some way by, such organizations as the Women's Institute. There were a number of them throughout Saanich, some of them incidentally still in existence. They provided an outlet for the social interests, and entertainment activities, of the adults of the community. Not particularly well organized, I suppose, although some of them did some very fine work, because it was not only – the Women's Institute was certainly not only for entertainment, they did a great deal of community work, of a more serious nature – service kind and so on. And they were a very powerful, quite a powerful influence in many of the communities, not only in Saanich, but right across Canada. The Women's Institute was a very powerful organization. There are certain communities now where there is still a Women's Institute, and where the Women's Institute still receives a small grant from the government for their activities.