

## **Reverend Herbert Oldfield**

**Interview by Mary Jackson, November 25, 1988**

**Words in bold print are by interviewer**

### **Tape #1 Side A**

**I'm talking to Reverend Herbert Oldfield and its November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1988.  
Reverend Oldfield, perhaps you can begin by telling us something of  
yourself, when you were born and something of your family background?**

Well, if we begin at the very beginning we better start with my grandfather because he was an Oldfield who began things out here. My grandfather's name was John Henry Oldfield, and he was born in Norfolk, England in 1862. His family owned a sugar plantation in Bermuda and he was supposed to manage the sugar plantation, but when he got to Bermuda it didn't agree with his health and he was very miserable then and didn't like it until one summer he made a holiday trip to Canada and Canada was just a country in the world for him. He was a great shooter and he found hunting Prairie chickens was just his life, so he dropped the Sugar Plantation and he came to Winnipeg where he opened one of the first real estate offices in Winnipeg. His office was on Portage Avenue and he was there so early that one morning an elk walked through the plate glass window of his real estate office so he can call himself a pioneer. He was a successful real estate person because he would go back to England and talk up land and farms and he would come back to Canada with 15 or 20 young people that knew him and he knew that he would settle them all on their farms. Then a year or two later he would go back and do the same thing again, and he not only settled them, but he kept in touch with them, and I can remember when I was a boy that these people, now quite old men, would come back and their eyes sparkling and talk about the old days on the prairie and the times they had when they got started and came up from England to the country here.

**That must have been quite a radical change coming from Kent and around that area to the prairies to Winnipeg.**

I think he was just a great prairie chicken man and if he could walk to the fields and shoot prairie chickens, it was just as good as shooting sniping in Kent and Suffolk. Yes, he was the one who bought the property on Oldfield Road, where the Oldfield house, Norfolk Lodge is standing now; he bought this property without seeing it. Somebody had told him that it was an outstanding property, a great place for houses so he bought it. Later on built a summer residence there, and then a few years later when he decided to move out to British Columbia to live, he enlarged the original summer cottage which is now part of the house was called Norfolk Lodge. He first moved out to Pemberton Road where Sam McClure built a house for him which is still standing there, and then when Norfolk

Lodge was finished he sold that and moved into present Norfolk Lodge. My Dad was a prominent Saanich person, Saanich Oldfield and Saanich was the oldest of John Henry's four children and he was a rebel of the family. Dad went to school in England because it was the only place to go to school according to my grandfather and he had no good feelings about school in England at all, he didn't enjoy it so he wasn't a great athlete and so he didn't shine in anything like that, and didn't enjoy life very much not only that he wasn't allowed to come home for the summer holidays because it was too far to go by boat so they farmed him off to different Oldfield relatives in England. One he liked the best was Henry Simpson who was a partner in Simpson's Auctioneers and several summers he spent the summer going round the different farms auctioning cattle and animals and so he enjoyed the country life and really liked that. One summer he went to another cousin's George Oldfield who was a cousin of my grandfather's and lived there for the summer and one of George's daughters, George's youngest daughter, Doris, was just getting through school at that time and when my grandfather came to pick up Terrence, Doris thought this Canadian life, and this Canadian cousin was just the greatest thing, and so she said I'm just about out of school, and I've got secretarial skills, would you give me a job in your office, and my grandfather said certainly. He said come to Winnipeg and you'll have a job, so Doris turned up in Winnipeg to have her job in Uncle Johnny's office. Meanwhile Dad contracted Infantile Paralysis, what you called Polio at that time so he got a curvature of the spine and the Doctor said that the best thing for him to do was to live an outdoor life, and get away from the city and so that was when Dad came to British Columbia. Before he came, in the course of his education, he had attended London Polytechnic Institute and took a course in Geology because he had a sort of feeling that BC was a place to dig gold under the ground. Then he was always interested in Wells in Barkerville and in Leechtown and made trips to those places, but he never really carried on with that, because once he came up to Victoria it appeared that cousin Doris' ideas and being in Canada with nothing particularly to do with the secretarial work, and so she moved out to Victoria and went to work for Mr. Twig, the lawyer, and before long Dad came and they were married on this very day many years ago, and Dad bought a piece of land on what is called Sunny Hill on the other side of the valley across from the big house and built – he and Doris, so Dad and Doris were both Oldfield when they got married and they were sort of cousins. Doris actually was my grandfather's cousin because of the way families were those days, so they build their house, Sunny Hill, there, and lived on what was then Giles Road. Giles Road went around their place is now called, more or less called Oldfield Road. It used to follow the creek that runs into Elk Lake and originated on what used to be a lake on the Barker's property up on the Old West Road and the road followed the course of this creek which is somewhat winding and as Dad was there clearing the land, he agreed with the Saanich Council to give them a straight right-of-way right through the land instead of having this winding road and so Giles Road was abandoned and Oldfield Road began. Both roads got interesting it was quite a straight line through these and in the depression times Dad was a councillor in the Municipality, and he used Oldfield Road as a make-

work project. You were allowed to work for a day a week, and made a day's wages to make some money in those days you see for the Municipality and so

**What dates are we talking about? What date would this be around?**

That's in the 1929s and 30s yes, and so people would come and they'd work for a day and they'd get a wage for it, so it took a couple of years to get that road all fixed up, and it's a solid road there because there's lots of rock underpinning and that's why it is one of the roughest roads in Saanich still, because it hasn't disintegrated like some of the other roads. Dad bought – I don't know who my grandfather bought the property from, he bought 300 acres on the west side of the Oldfield Road and Dad bought 30 acres on the east side which ran down to Elk Lake from a Negro man, black man called Caesar and I've still got the original Crown Grant of the land that he bought from Mr. Caesar in the safe deposit box somewhere. He was a great big tall good-looking man and I can remember him walking, sometimes, he used to walk in once in a while to see how Dad was managing his farm, and he'd stay for lunch and we were always glad to see him.

**This man Mr. Caesar, have you any idea how he came by his money to own this land in the first place?**

A lot of black people came here after the – from the States after the abolition, and there were a lot of black farmers around in Saanich and they were quite common quite a lot of them. Farming wasn't their job I don't think because they gradually moved off, there was quite a colony of them on Salt Spring Island and they seemed to live there longer, quite a number of them from Saanich. I think the Alexanders among them moved over to Salt Spring, and into the community they had these, one of the Alexanders, was a Minister and a school teacher, I think both in Saanichton also on Salt Spring, and they were quite fairly good neighbours. There was a couple of families who were charcoal burners, you don't see that anymore nowadays, but they used to do – they used to burn charcoal and they were charcoal burners in the old days.

**What was a charcoal burner, what did they do actually?**

Well, they used to char to burnt wood in a limited draft you see, and so that one completely burned and the charcoal was like coal.

**Oh, I see, almost like, not coke but it was fuel.**

Yes, that's right.

**Oh, I see and they would sell this.**

Oh yes, and Dad went out, Dad's purpose in coming out was to shear the forest off the Oldfield land, and so, he spent a couple of years there, he built a one-room cabin, and he and a Chinese man named John Quinn were cutting down the trees and to use the wood they had a contract with the Victoria and Sidney Railway, the V&S and they cut wood for the locomotive which was a wood-burning train, it had a great big basket – smokestack on it, with a spark catcher on the top of it, so it wouldn't light the trees and it came right through Clarence's Place so he supplied wood for it. I remember riding on the V&S there. It was when I was young. Mr. Shane was the conductor, and he was always very polite and welcomed us on the train. He had a little woodstove in the passenger car that he kept warm to keep the passengers comfortable, and we used to think he owned the train. He was always so welcoming and hospitable to us. In those days there were 5 railroads running through the Saanich Peninsula.

### **The BC Electric?**

Yes. Yes, the Interurban went out to Butchart's Gardens and there was a power plant, burned coal, from Nanaimo they used to provide electricity for that, in fact the Interurban ran just west of our property, they were just east of our property and the V&S ran just west, no the other way, the V&S ran just east and the Interurban ran just west of our property, and I've ridden on both of those trains and it makes our present bus system look rather inefficient.

### **They were quite heavily used were they the trains?**

Yes, quite heavily used.

### **Who would use them, just people going out to visit relatives?**

Well, I guess it was the automobile you see that brought the changes on the trains because when you had to travel by horse, it took too long to get out to Sidney, and you could go by train in a couple of hours or something like that, but to drive out would take you know, all day, and then you would have to rest your horse, and you would have to come back the next day so that the trains were pretty useful in those days. One of the trains went to Deep Cove where the Deep Cove Chalet is now and in fact, that house was there in the days when the train went, and it was a watering hole, there was prohibition for a few years in Canada but you could usually get something to drink out there and there were no roads there either so that when people were drinking it was hard for the Police to get there and in fact when anybody knew the Police were coming, the place would be completely innocent by the time they got there, so that the trains had quite a past in Saanich's history there.

**The people living in town, it really was a boon then, they didn't even need to own a horse, they could just get on a train and get into the country.**

Oh yes, I'm sure, you know people used horses as a major transportation but it was not for long this transportation that's all, you would go from one place close by to another with your horse and buggy but you couldn't take a long trip, well that was by the Prairie Inn you see was a stopping place between Victoria and Sidney and it's still got rooms in the second story, which in the old days, if you went to Sidney you'd stop and stay one night and then you continue on, and there were a number of small Inns about that far from Victoria in fact and stopping places for Victoria. There don't seem to be many left in Saanich, but if you go out towards Metchosin and Sooke, you'll find a 4 Mile House and a 6 Mile House and I think there is one out farther out by Sooke still there, and they were stopping places for people who, you know, you can go that far and then your horse needs a rest.

**I didn't realize that's what the 4 Mile and 6 Mile House. I didn't know that's what they were really.**

Oh yes, they were, they were resting places, stages you see that's one stage of the journey what you call stages.

**Get your horse changed or whatever.**

Yes and have a drink.

**Just like the movies.**

Yes, that's right.

**I see, so the trains then, I can see why the trains would be a distinct advantage in terms of getting around and the ability, allowing people to move around more freely.**

Yes, so we see Mr. Caesar once in a while coming through to our place and John Quinn used to come back, and Chinese New Year, he always turned up at our place there and he'd stay for Chinese New Year's dinner. We used to look forward to him. He and Dad were great friends and we really enjoyed the company, and it seems nowadays we don't seem to be so free with people, you know, different people as we used to, but in those days we worked together and lived together so they enjoyed their company, one another's company, and that Sunny Hill was where I came into the picture so perhaps I'd better tell you the story of my birth.

**Oh, I was going to ask you a little bit more about your mother too, Reverend Oldfield. She must have been quite a woman, quite determined woman to leave home like that even although she was coming out, to work for your Uncle, was still a major step for a woman in those days wasn't it?**

Well, she was not a very determined square-jawed person. She was a slight, very beautiful person, and romance is what spurred her more than bravery I think. You know because she just depended on my Dad all the time, in fact Dad – he could make a fire go, and she couldn't, and Dad could make a cake better than she could, and he cared for her, and she was quite satisfied that way. Dad attended – so Dad gave up his ideas of digging gold out of the soil in British Columbia when marriage came into his life you see, so he decided that life on the farm was going to be for him, so he went to Vancouver to UBC and was a member of the very first Agriculture course that was ever given in UBC. It was given by Doctor Clarence who was later on the Dean of Agriculture and Doctor Clarence and Dad were great friends because they associated during the year. Dear Clarence was an Aggie Economist and his whole stress was that growing food is very important, but marketing what you grew is also important, and there was no use growing something if you couldn't market it, so Dad began to run this farm Norfolk Lodge Ranch for my grandfather who didn't move out to the Island until 1920, he managed his business in Winnipeg until then, and then moved out here in 1920, but still commuted to Winnipeg for a while before he died in 1923. Dad looked after the farm, he was quite a good farmer, he believed that you have to farm everything, so he had a long letterhead, Norfolk Lodge Ranch printed in green ink with all the things that he supplied. He sold gravel for 10 cents a load, tent posts for 10 cents each, we had 2,000 chickens and Berkshire hogs, and Ninedots hens and he had Jersey cattle, we – of course – we had horses, but Dad tried to grow what he could for the feed, so we grew our oats for the horses, we grew our wheat to feed the chickens with you see and we had a Holly Plantation, so that there was something coming on all the time, he felt that a farm should be able to be something, that you could make a living from in any month of the year. Dad was a great farmer, and mover and shaker, and about 1912 or so he and Maurice Devane who lived further up the hill from us, got together with a number of other people and they formed the Saanich Fruit Growers Association which is probably the oldest Coop in British Columbia, and their idea was if you wanted to grow fruit, the association would help you to sell what you grew. Nowadays, at least last year, there was a very small relic left there which was just a place to display fruit for sale, but Dad was not inclined to stop at that, Dad spent his time in February and March and April, first of all going round to see how many people were planting fruit and how many people had strawberries and cherries and what the crop was going to be, and then try to sell it, and usually by the time the fruit was ripe, Dad had got it sold.

### **Were the farmers having problems because they didn't know to market their produce properly?**

It's almost impossible to market individually, you see if you've got a few boxes of strawberries, what are you going to do with them you see, especially if you're remote from somebody. But if you've got a group that says we need a ton of strawberries to sell in Winnipeg you see, then the Growers' Association can say, we can sell all your fruit you see so bring it all in and the fruit growers sold

hundreds of tons of fruit, you can make a living on farming in Saanich in those days, in fact you still could if you can market it, they even sold strawberries to New Zealand once.

### **What about refrigeration and things like that?**

Oh yes, steamers had refrigeration and of course there were refrigerator cars going east.

### **What about the individual farmers – did they have any way of preserving their fruit up until the time they joined the Fruit Growers Association? Or did they have to think about selling it very soon after it was harvested?**

When it's ripe, you have to get rid of it you see. When you start growing it yourself that's self-sufficient, but if you want to make a living you've got to be able to see the surplus and this is where the fruit growers came in, so before long they not only managed to export fruit, but also they had purchased the old jam factory at Lake Hill which is now where the Keg is. The Restaurant.

Yes, so the surplus fruit that they had could be made into jam and it wouldn't be unsaleable. Then later on in about the early 1920s - Dad was quite the mover in a lot of these things and JJ Young was the treasurer of the fresh fruit growers for many years - and Dad and JJ Young worked very happily together, they knew what they were doing and knew how they were going to do it you see. The Association was a great group and they were a very friendly group. They had fairly regular meetings and what they would do was to plan what they were trying to do and if they found it was hard to sell strawberries one year, they would say perhaps we've got too many, so this is what started a lot of farmers growing Loganberries.

Then the loganberries started the idea of having a winery so that they could make wine, so they got the winery going which is a first winery in British Columbia. This really upset because they had to sell shares and get the company going, and they had to make wine for 2 years before they could sell any, because they wanted to make sure it was drinkable, but it was a great success. They sold loganberry wine, logan wine for 95 cents a bottle for many years, and everybody could sell their loganberries you see, so that was one of the ways in which they could use the fruit that they had.

### **Like creative marketing.**

Well, you have to have ways to use your fruit see, nowadays it's hard to make a living on the land here, not that you can't grow things, you can't sell them. The nearest one is Mr. LeCoteau who's really got the next door place from our old place and he didn't have very much land, he only has, I think he has got 20 acres as I say but he really farms it. He farms every inch of it and he's got greenhouses, he does it all with marketing you see, so he not only farms but he

sells what he farms, and he says that he makes \$400,000 a year out of his land by extensive farming so that it's possible to farm, but it's not possible unless you can market what you've got there.

**So your father then must have been very well respected in the community for this kind of contribution. He must have saved the skins of many farmers.**

He was a great old pipe smoker you know and talker and he just loved getting together and talking with different friends. He'd talk up something and his idea was that when you got a great idea going, instead of dropping it there, to go ahead and do it because it is no use having an idea you could do something with. So he was sort of an executive person you see and as he'd pick up the ideas, they'd all get together, Dad would spearhead it, and he got a lot of support from people because it was a matter of working together you see and he would do this and usually well. He was the President of the Saanich Fruitgrowers for a long time, off and on for 40 years I think and several times he resigned and said you know, 'you can do it just as well as I can', but they didn't do it as well you know. They didn't see the whole picture, and they couldn't keep everybody together because Dad would very seldom have a dispute going on at a meeting you know. If there was anything came up, Dad would say 'close this down' and he would go up to that person's place wherever it was and sort of find out what the trouble was and get things straight, then come back and tell them what they needed to do. And so, he was sort of a peacemaking guy and he was prominent because he felt that it is our place, he said to me, to act different. He was one of the original school commissioners and then when they had a school board, he was one of the trustees, then he was a councillor and he was a Reeve for a brief time which was like the Mayor in Saanich. He was behind getting the Royal Oak Burial Park going because the Ross Bay Cemetery in Victoria which was the centre of the main one was really for Victoria people and they had the feeling there needed to be something in Saanich. Dad felt rather than have separate Burial Park Cemetery, it should be something that was publicly seen more or less so that it would not run for project so that he got this company going and they built the Burial Park there and I can remember when that was going ahead. Saanich was a great community then, it had, it was just sort of like a picture book place. There was an East Road on the east side and the West Road on the west side, and then it was connected by cross roads that went over a mile or 2 intervals, and they sort of change the names a little bit. Reeds Crossroad turned into McTavish Road, and School Crossroad turned in Mills Road nowadays, and Butler Crossroad turned in to McKinney's (Keating? Mt. Newton?) Crossroad. I don't know why they changed the names but they did, and we lived on the end of Brookleigh Road and went along the end of Elk Lake.

**End of Tape #1 Side A**



## **Tape #1 Side B**

Dad's first car was a huge old Chalmers Special about 1908 or something like that vintage, and when he first got it, he couldn't even get it to our farm. The roads weren't wide enough for it, so he had his garage some two miles away and he parked the car there, locked it in the garage and walked the rest of the way home when he went to Victoria there. And he used to walk – he would walk through the woods and what was the old West Road then, there were a couple of bachelors who lived near the corner not far away where the car was and the custom was that, you know, you'd exchange a greeting as you went past you see. Dad told us about one day when he was on his way home, and he went past this house so he turned in and gave a knock on the door and there was no answer, so he set off you know the rest of the way, and when he turned back and looked, he saw there was smoke coming out of the chimney. He thought it terribly unfriendly of them, so he quietly went back and climbed on the roof and put a board on the top of the chimney and then went back, almost smoked his friends out. Saanich – there was the East Road and the West Road and our crossroads, and Saanich was like a story book land. There was Cedar Hill, and Strawberry Vale and Cloverdale, and it was almost as if the whole thing had come out of a picture book in those days.

### **What about the families, were they quite large families?**

They were smaller than the predecessors you see, my grandfather was one of ten children, and one of my great uncles who came to Canada with his whole family to celebrate the opening the Cross Canada Railway, he had 17 and he brought the whole 17 across Canada, and my cousins at Prospect lake, Oldfields, belonged to his family. They were Great Uncle Fred's family, and so they grew up along with us as cousins there.

### **Did most of the families - well, I imagine they did - know each other?**

Oh yes, you knew everybody on the road, and a lot of people walked back and forth, they'd walk miles you know, and if they dropped in there was always a meal you know. So we had good company and people were normally welcoming and friendly and they would – people – Dad would miss a sack of grain sometimes out of his granary, and it would come back again you know a year later when people had enough grain they'd bring a sack back. But they would be looking for one and if Dad wasn't at home, they'd just borrow one, and I don't think they do this nowadays. But those days it would happen once in a while. Our farm had a lot of people living on it. There were different houses, we had a teamster who looked after the horses and there was a gardener, they each had their houses, the chauffeur - my grandfather never drove until a couple of years before he died - and they all lived on our place, and the Poulterer looked after the chicken farm part, they all had their separate houses, and the farm was almost like a little colony that way, and there were 3 Chinamen who had their own little

house and they did sort of the general work, looked after the gardeners and things.

**Did those houses belong to the people or did they belong to you as part of the property?**

Yes.

**It was, so they were sort of tenants in the houses were they?**

Yes, the house went with the job, and when they got the job, they got the houses, and they're all still standing there, they've been changed and redecorated and repainted but they are still there, and people still live in them.

**What about where the present day Mr. Hull (Houle?) lived?**

He was right next door to us you know, our next door property, their Pat, their son Pat now owns the main part of the Oldfield Valley Farm, and still runs it. Pat, like Dad, was a Jersey cattle person then they ran Jersey cattle so as long as he could manage it. Now he is a sheep farmer so he still lives on there.

**Suffolk sheep he has.**

Yes, South Downs probably, yes, and Mr. Hull (Houle?) is quite Irish. He was political as well and he ran for office once or twice. Didn't quite get elected but he was a great talker and full of fire and he was all ready for a political argument. I can remember when Jimmy Watson, my brother Jim were out one fall shooting, and looking around for shooting, anyway they managed to shoot a pheasant and the pheasant dropped down across the fence. So they started running up to catch this pheasant that was over on, across Mr. Houle's fence and just as they got to the fence, Mr. Houle walked out of his house and walked over and picked the pheasant up and Jim said 'hey that's our pheasant, we just shot it.' And Mr. Houle said 'yes, I saw you do it but this is my property and if you cross this fence, I'll have the Police' so they went home and they collected half a dozen fresh eggs and they just saved them till Halloween, and then one of them tiptoed back and when the door opened, there was half a dozen ripe eggs came in. They were satisfied they got their own back for the pheasant.

**Tell me about that section of the tree that is in Saanich Municipal Hall now, that came from the Oldfield family.**

Yes, that is one of the original trees and why it was left I'm not sure. I can remember it standing up by itself because we gradually started clearing in that direction and it was a huge tree, there's pictures of it somewhere, all the family pictures were left at home when I moved off you see, so I haven't very many of them and Dad decided that the time had come to cut this tree, it was quite tall,

and would have been a menace you know and to cut it required – you had to find somebody with a 12 foot crosscut saw because it had to be long enough to go through this tree, and they finally found somebody to do this, and he was a tree feller and a very impressive person, and he started to saw and he walked out to about 100 feet away something like that and drove a stake into the ground and said it was going to fall there, and sure enough the tree fell right on the stake there. We were just young fellows by then but we were interested in this and they said come on young fellow you got to pull a saw so we had to pull a saw for a while so we could say we had a hand in cutting down the huge tree. It was quite a stump. You had to – in those days you didn't stand on the ground and saw - you had to cut a notch in the side of the tree, and you put a spring board in it, there was a board with a sort of a – just like this and you stood on the springboard, and then you cut another notch that was further up and then you'd put another spring board in, and you stood on these boards when you sawed the tree because the lower part of the tree spread out quite quickly to the ground so that you wouldn't have to cut so much if you were higher up. The tree was a 100 feet to its lowest limb, and these days it would have been great timber, but they cut it all up for firewood in those days.

**It was a Douglas fir wasn't it?**

Yes, and it certainly was the biggest tree around and Dad got the ring out from it and put it in the Municipal Hall and it had a varied career I expect. I counted rings originally, and I really think it is older than they say it is. I have to go down there and spend an hour counting the rings again to see if I'm right and they are wrong.

**Where exactly was it located?**

It wasn't located right on the road, it was something like a quarter of a mile west of Oldfield Road, and it was on the north, nearly on the north end of the property, it was in a valley there I expect that's how it came so tall, not been blown down.

**There's a very nice, I believe a McClure house, off Oldfield just as – you know where Brookleigh comes into Oldfield if you just continue up the road you can see it. It's up on that little knoll – do you know whose place that would have been?**

Where's that – on Brookleigh?

**No, not on Brookleigh but where the junction is between Brookleigh and Oldfield and Oldfield continues up, if you go up a little knoll up on that little knoll up there.**

That's Sunny Hill which is on – that's the east side of Oldfield Road.

**That's right.**

That's my Dad and Mother's house.

**That's the house we are talking about.**

Yes, that's right.

**I see it sold recently about a year or so ago.**

Yes, that's right.

**Oh, so that's the house, it's lovely.**

Yes, that's the one east side, that side of Oldfield Road.

**That's right.**

It's a very convenient house. It was lovely to grow up there. Dad and Mother had quite a lot to do with planning it and Sam McClure began to draw it, because some of the drawings were in the Museum of that particular house and it was built with all the electric wiring in it, but in those times there was no electricity there so it was wired for the time. I think we were 5 or 6 when the hydro came out more than that perhaps, and I can remember Dad screwing light globes into the fixtures when the first time we turned the lights on, and I can remember Mother lighting a candle, taking us to bed forgetting that she could turn the light on in our bedroom till the first time or two there. But it was a nice house there to live in and certainly nice proportions. Mr. McClure's houses had nice proportioned rooms in them and were nice places to live and that's where I was born.

I'd better tell you the beginning of my life here, because it's very interesting, always interesting to me anyway, I'm sure. You – not many people remember that far back you see but anyway that's where I was born in that very house. A Thursday morning in June 1914, and my mother decided that she was about to give birth you see. Now not only was there no hydro, there weren't any telephones there wasn't any B.C. Tel but Dad had put his own telephone from Sunny Hill across to the Norfolk Lodge which was about ½ mile I guess you see. For quite a little while there we had two telephones hanging on the wall you know the BC Telephone when it finally did come McMickens then it was and the private telephone. So anyway when Mom decided the time had come she phoned up you see to say look the baby's coming. Well it was an awkward day because my grandfather had gone out with the chauffeur so there was no car, Dad was no where to be found on the farm, so my Aunt Kathleen had to rush off and saddle Polly the mare to the buckboard and my grandmother got there that time and they galloped over to the house where my grandmother took charge and so she – and I have the story from my aunt. My grandmother said get the fire going and

get the kettle boiling you see and she rushed into the bedroom, and my aunt said she tore up a petticoat whatever that was for – I'm not quite sure, anyway, so my aunt had to get the fire going and get it hot and get the water going and finally boil the kettle, and when she got it boiling, she turned up at the bedroom and I'd already arrived and they were very proud of themselves I'm sure and my aunt said 'the kettle's boiling what will I do now' and my grandmother said 'make the tea silly', so I've been addicted to tea ever since.

**Were you the first born, Reverend Oldfield, in your family?**

No not really, no they had another child who didn't live but I was the first of the family that lived and he died before I was born and all our children had problems feeding, we couldn't feed on our mother's milk, and the first born was just impossible, he was allergic to milk like that and from then on all our children lived on prepared baby foods to quite an extent when we got started because there was a difficulty like that, but anyway they all turned out to be pretty healthy babies so – there were 2 of us, then 2 more, all boys. Were about 8 years younger, the two of us, Dick and I sort of grew up together and then we decided we'd have another family that Jim and Toby came along and they grew up together.

**I see, all boys.**

All boys yes, Mom really wanted a girl, and the Amoses who lived nearby Tom and Aggie Moss (Amos?) lived nearby and the Amos boys were the same age as we were and Mom and I used to talk about – they all had boys you see so the time they got three boys they decided they'd had enough you see but they talked themselves into having one more tried out and Aggie had a girl, she and Amos (Tom?) and my Mom had a boy, Toby, so anyway decided that was enough so Mom gave up after that.

**Who were some of the other people that lived around about in the Oldfield Road, some of the older families that you can remember?**

Well, across the road now I think it is BrookHill Home or something like that for Senior Citizens.

**Brook Manor.**

Brook Manor that's right that belonged to Willie Stone. Willie Stone like my grandfather was a Winnipeger and Willie Stone owned a fashionable grocery store in Winnipeg. People would phone up and he would put the order together and deliver it to them and he was very accommodating and all the best people knew Willie Stone.

**It's a lovely house.**

It's a lovely house, yes, and he built this house and came to live there with his wife and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Hacking. Mrs. Hacking and Mrs. Stone looked almost like sisters. They were very beautiful and looked very similar to one another of course in age, quite an age, Mrs. Hacking was a great age, she was a great needle woman, she did tatting and I wasn't quite sure whether she was Mr. Hacking doing tatting or Mrs. Tatting doing the Hacking there, but we used to visit back and forth with them quite a lot. Then they were all such a neighbour people there which we just grew up, we grew up with the Ferns who were in the gardener's cottage and the Graingers who were the teamsters and we played with them as kids and we went to school with the Barkers who lived up the road, the Thomsons and we saw them everyday as we went to school and back.

**I'm just thinking of that house, the Stone's house now that's on present-day Bearhill Road.**

Yes.

**Was that road in there then? Bear Hill Road?**

No, there was no approach to that side, it came out down by the little creek that runs into Elk Lake.

**I see.**

At that time,

**And that area hadn't been cleared out very much because there's still a lot of trees in the back up there.**

No, it was completely forested, the Edwards lived up there. Adam Edwards lived up there and he was almost like a hermit because there was no road into his place at all, there was just a path and he just walked in and out and he was the only one who lived in that area for quite a long while.

**Was that further up, above the Brook Manor where it is now?**

Yes, and the path went into Brook Manor. He went in on Willie Stone's Road and then walked the rest of the way into his little cabin and he lived on the road a long time, and he may have had a wife who died, but then he had a succession of housekeepers so finally married one of his housekeepers who was quite a neat person, she enjoyed living there, Mrs. Edwards, and – I don't know – when he died, he had just let his insurance lapse for some reason, and maybe because he was not so well you know in getting older, and it looks as if she wasn't going to have anything from his estate you see from his insurance, but the insurance

people, it had only lapsed for one year, something like that, and they agreed to pay her the policy, so she had some money there.

**What about where Lindburn Farm is now, that property where the highland cattle are, do you know anything about that property?**

I can't tell you the subsequent history of it exactly there.

**I remember hearing from someone, that it was a Negro who owned that property as well.**

Yes, very likely, there were quite a few around there. My Aunt Kathleen the one who boiled the tea at my birthday there, was a great organizer herself, things were different in the old days you know, one of the sugar plantation's Oldfields had married a black girl from Bermuda you know and when he retired, came back to England where he found that black people were not so acceptable in society, so he moved to Holland and when Aunt Kathleen got to a certain age, 17 or 18, she went over to Holland to live for a couple of years with Aunt Polly who lived there and finished off her education. I expect and Aunt Polly spoke several languages and was quite a charming person, and they had a nice friendship going in those days. When she came out – my grandfather was really the centre of the family, my Uncle Herb was going to be the business man and carry on the Real Estate business, but he was killed right at the very end of World War One, and that's why I'm poor instead of rich, because he was going to make a lot of money I'm sure. Dad was not interested in Real Estate at all, then here was Uncle Ed who was the youngest member of the family who was the black sheep of the family and Ed was a great traveller, if he could travel anywhere, he did and he loved the tropics, he spent a lot of time in New Zealand when they were first opening the land up building roads, and he'd come home when he was short of money you see and he had a raspberry plantation at the end of Oldfield Farm that he called himself a Raspberry King at that time, he was an ideal Uncle because being the black sheep of the family, he was the one who taught us to chew gum and also tell us things we weren't supposed to do, and he was very serious about this you know.

**He took the name literally did he?**

Oh yes, he did all this seriously you know, because he would come over to our place you see, and he'd say, look you boys I'll see you outside the back door, you see, you know, then he would talk away, and then after I'd come rushing round outside he'd produce the gum, juicy fruit gum you know he'd say 'here you are don't let your mother know I gave it to you' you see and he'd go back in, it was as if he seriously had to do this for us you see and we learned oh such wicked things from Uncle Ed there, he was quite the person and Aunt Kathleen was quite an organizer and a great social worker she was the person later on who put Dad on the Christmas Hamper Campaign in Saanich. I can remember

when, you know she said "Oh we gave 14 hampers away you know and we're probably going to have more than that next year" well that began something - quite the thing you see. When the first war was on, she managed to rush around the neighbours, and they managed to get three sewing machines in the conservatory room that they used for a sewing room in Norfolk Lodge and they used to have great sewing bees there for the Red Cross and Maurice Wilkinson, the chauffeur, would go out and he'd pick up these different people. Violet Barker who is now Violet Losse remembers Wilkinson coming round with the great Packard you see to pick up these girls to do the Red Cross sewing and Bumble the bulldog would be sitting on the running board of the Packard, they lived differently in those days. My grandfather still loved hunting and shooting. Mr. Jones ran the Royal Oak Game Farm and he used to raise 5,000 pheasants for the gentry to shoot at in the game farm in those days.

**You told me about this game farm – where was this?**

It was just about where Royal Oak Burial Park is now that's more or less the site of the game farm and he used to raise pheasants and quail and things like that, but they were mostly for the people to shoot at, so my grandfather, one of his favourites, he entertained a great deal as I said you know. He kept in touch with these people that he brought out to Canada, and he loved entertaining, and the house had several spare bedrooms and there were frequently people there and he had this huge table. He had a great Chinese Chef Joe Hing was an outstanding chef and he used to have wonderful meals there, there were 2 cut glass decanters of wine, red and white, at one corner of the table and two at the opposite corner of the table, Grandfather used to say that Joe was the best chef in Victoria, in fact the Lieutenant Governor make an approach to Joe to try to get him to go to Government House and my grandfather paid him some more money to stay where he was, so that he was bragging he had the best chef in Victoria there, and these people would come out from Manitoba you see all business associates you know, and these people that my grandfather settled on farmland earlier you see and were taught. Gramp made his own wine, he had quite a nice wine cellar there were rows of small oak casks so he could season his wine, make cherry wine and plum wine and loganberry wine you see. Perhaps his loganberry was what started off on all the winery I don't know. Nellie McClung came to British Columbia and she was quite a celebrity in those days you see, and of course being a Manitoban, you see, my grandfather had to invite Nellie McClung to dinner one night. Apparently Nellie gave him a serious talk about drink *when* she saw the wine decanters on the table and that was the last time she got invited out.

**Well she was very strong in the Women's Christian Temperance *movement*.**

Oh yes, she was, that's right, so she crusaded against the wrong person that time I guess.



**How did your grandfather feel about that sort of thing - the WCTU and the women after the vote and one thing and another?**

Well he was interested in these things you see, he didn't really believe in the WCTU because he was reported to have said once that he had never touched a drop of water for 40 years and he thought it was quite right you see and so he made his own wine in those days when there was prohibition and you couldn't buy any you see, and so there always was wine on the Oldfield table as he always made his own. Cora Hind was a great Manitoba Women's person in the old days, she was a notable former reporter and she worked for the Winnipeg Free Press I think it was in the early days. Well, she visited out here several times, and she and my grandfather were quite good friends really. With Dad, these people you know, these Winnipeg people when they got together they immediately grabbed (*gabbled?*) and talked business you see, and talked Winnipeg and talked all things and the great grins on their faces when they talked about the old days and all things and what is happening down ..... They were in touch and they were manipulators you see and so they were just glad to get together with these people, he had quite a cross section of people went through the old house.

**Sounds like it.**

Yes.

**I didn't realize Nellie McClassen *McClung?* had associations with the Oldfield House.**

Very brief yes, because my grandfather was slightly disillusioned when he. Between giving up Nellie McClassen (*McClung?*) and giving up wine – there was no question.

**That's wonderful.**

**What was it like for you as a young boy going over to the big house?**

We had to behave ourselves and we had to dress up, we had to go to ..... first of all we were educated at home, because Dad and Mom thought that we could be educated at home, and we learned to write and read. Whenever we wanted to, quite early, I read all of Macbeth before I was 5 you know, enjoyed reading. I used to love it and we didn't go to school till I was 8 and Dick was 7, then *when* my grandfather decided that we had to go to a private school, so we went to St. Michael's School then which we rather enjoyed there, it was very interesting and sort of a child life of its own and so in those private schools, the teachers and the pupils had a sort of running battle going – you see and you all knew what you were contending with you see and it was a matter of doing our best and having a bit of fun trying to get a rise out of the other ones, so there was much more competition in school there. We didn't go to learn so much as we went to be sort

of organized with one another and construct a lifestyle I think and we were there for a while, so interesting, all the things that you do at school you now, we used to dig tunnels in the playground and crawl through these tunnels, see how long we could make a tunnel underground, and crawl through it, and when you crawl through the tunnel in your grey flannel suit, certain amount of damage is done you know, and I even managed to crawl the sheet of dirt in the old boarding house right from the dormitory to the furnace one night in my pyjamas of course it got quite dusty about that, and that really upset my bedclothes.

**It's amazing how you managed to do all that tunnelling.**

Well, oh yes, we used to do desperate things there, and then my grandfather died really quite young about the age of 61, something like that, he was asphyxiated by the exhaust from the pump. They had this huge pump that pumped the water up to the Lodge you see and he had the dog? dry? hose and he had put a muffler on the exhaust pipe and the muffler of course had ripped the exhaust pipe loose a bit and so the exhaust fumes were coming outside the pumphouse, and so unfortunately my grandfather died then which was really quite a blow to the whole family and that, that day we were collected from the school and that was the last we saw of St. Michael's school. I think my grandfather probably paid the school tuition for one thing, but also Dad was not really in favour of schools at all because he had unfortunate experiences with schools in England you see, and of course it was the same thing at St. Michael's school, he wasn't the private school type you know, a lot of open warfare going on and so the next week we were going to the public school in Saanich because Dad couldn't very well be school trustee and his own kids going to another school so we went off to Royal Oak School which was so different. I had no respect for Royal Oak School you know, because in the private school you see if someone does something wrong – like kicks a football over the fence and goes and picks it up you see – nobody has even seen it happen. If they say 'who put this football over the fence?' nobody knows. Who saw anybody do it? Nobody saw it you see. Well, in the public schools, quite different you see. 'Who kicked the football over the fence?' 'He did it.' 'I know who did it.' And they all turned up as little traitors as far as we were concerned, you see, and they would tell tales on one another.

**End of Tape 1 Side B**

**Tape #2 Side A**

**Reverend Herbert Oldfield, December 2, 1988. (Interview #2) by Mary Jackson**

**It's December 2<sup>nd</sup> today, 1988 and I'm back again talking to Reverend Oldfield in his home on West Saanich Road and we are going to continue**

**from where we left off on the last tape, and today we are going to talk about some associations that Reverend Oldfield had with his life in Saanich.**

All right, well it seemed we were talking just now before about the change in different associations you see, because in those days I think it was a pioneer atmosphere, and people really believed if they got together they could accomplish what they wanted and so this was why you know Dad was involved in the Fruitgrowers Association and not only in the Saanich Fruitgrowers, but he was also involved in spreading it out with different associations through the Province and he used to make trips to the Okanagan and back to get the tree fruit associations going there and BC Fruit Growers Association was one of the outcomes of this you see. And Dad was – because he did this – I suppose because he was a political type of person and he used to go to all the political meetings of every kind and thoroughly enjoy them, and he didn't take much of a prominent part because he really was a shy retiring person and he didn't like publicity and he was a quiet person and he didn't like attacking people either, but anyway he'd come home with these stories about the speeches different people made and he'd have a good idea about the opposing facts that were going on around them.

There was Women's Christian Temperance Union which was quite an effective organization and there were a number of Temperance Halls built around here in Saanich. I expect it was a good enough movement to become effective, they lost esteem because I think a lot of the work had been done, and the main number of these halls were taken over by Women's institutes who then became the next women's group you see. Aunt Kathleen was a great Women's Institute person and she belonged and sort of was a key person in the Royal Oak Institute for many years. They bought the Royal Oak Hall and they decorated it and brought it up to shape, that's where I learned to dance, they used to have old time dances there ever second week and then the weeks between they'd have a dancing class and they used to teach people to dance one week and then they danced the other. Shane's Band used to be the players and Duncan Lidgate was the caller of the dances and George Cason living around here, and we just had a really nice time there. They weren't drinking places, nobody did, they put on coffee and refreshments half way through the evening, and it was just a great time. Aunt Kathleen's birthday was January 1<sup>st</sup> and of course they always had a New Year's Eve dance you see which was a great affair and everybody came to it, and they would really mob Aunt Kathleen as soon as midnight came, they'd rush around and they left presents and she'd get kissed by everybody and get fairly pink in the face, so it was quite an affair there, and so now most of these Temperance Halls have come into a second or even a third life of their own. I belong to the Lions Club, and the Lions now have the Temperance Hall that used to be on the East Saanich Road and they are not Temperance people themselves but you know it still their community place and I often look at the Lions who are not exactly what the WCT would approve of, but they are the movers and shakers you see, and they do a tremendous amount of good in the

community, anything that needs to be done and there's no money for, no help for, the Lions don't even think twice, they just jump in and go and do it so in a way they are now still addressing their needs you see, and so, it's a different group of people, but they are still looking at the needs of the people – I guess, you see, of the day. We used to have Captain Griffin *who* used to live on Brookleigh Road. And Captain Griffin was an old sea Captain on the Canadian Pacific, Vancouver and Victoria run, they had great boats those days, and went from Vancouver to Victoria and when I was going to the University still, we travelled back on these boats, they went from Victoria harbour to Vancouver harbour. They weren't expensive and the midnight boat was just a great one, you could have a state room and when you got on the boat you went to bed, and it went slowly, it took 7 hours, arriving in Vancouver at 7 in the morning without having woke me up by unseemly haste you see.

**It seems a much more civilized way of doing it, rushing over the way we do now.**

Yes, and they had a dining room with real linen and nice looking silver on the table you know, and in the bow of the boat there was sort of bunks in place which had something like 30 bunks and they were double tier bunks and you could get one of the bunks for 50 cents so we poor students would go out and get one of these 50 cent bunks and then we would sleep in the bunks in the boat for 50 cents and wake up in the morning in Victoria. It was a good way of travelling. Captain Griffin was a real old sea dog, and he was a very rugged looking individual and his huge voice like a foghorn. He never drove a car, I don't think, and he used to phone us up and want a ride into town and he'd give us the old tales. I remember once seeing Jerry Vantreight riding down the road with great speed with his hands in his pockets you know, on his bike you see, and my Aunt was driving, saying that was pretty dangerous to do on the main road and Captain Griffin saying well, yes it is, he said, but I can't complain because once I rode all round Stanley Park without taking my hands out of my pockets you see, so he must have been quite a chap and he had a record for the fastest crossing from Victoria to Vancouver.

One of the old boats, the old Princess Patricia, was a very narrow fast boat, and really speedy and he determined that he was going to make the record crossing, and he used to tell us this, at the cast-off at 10 in the morning at the regular time you see and he had everything ready, he told the whole boat they were going to break the record and he had the fireman keep a head of steam up you see and he stood on the bridge at 2 minutes to 10 and 10 seconds to ten, he rang the bell, and said full speed ahead you see and he had a man with an eye on each of the mooring ropes you know where the ropes are you see, and exactly at 10 o'clock he said cut the ropes with a huge voice, and these men cut the ropes with the axes and he said the boat leapt forward, and they made the trip to Vancouver in 3 hours and 22 minutes, and no boat of that kind had ever did that record. He had two daughters and Kathleen was a tremendous athlete, she was a great

winner and used to swim right across Elk Lake and back you know, and I'm sure. I'll tell you facts if I can, but if I want to make something up, I'll make it up you see, but I'm pretty sure that she aspired to do the Port Angeles swim and I'm not sure whether that she didn't – either try to accomplish it, I'm almost sure she set out on the ship (*trip*) to Port Angeles, and whether she made it or not I'm not sure, but she was probably quite capable of doing it as she was a superb swimmer.

### **Now whereabouts on Brookleigh did they live?**

They lived just about the high part on Brookleigh Road there was a funny little house, built like a little cabin, and then he put a second story on the top which didn't make it look big enough to hold it, and it was the high part of Brookleigh Road that looked over Elk Lake, you see, of course he was the bread winner so Mrs. Griffin and the girls grew up you know, their Dad did very little really, you know, they kept the garden. Kathleen was the first President of our Anglican Youth Group, the Church youth group there. Maybe you could come along – do you want to hear about churches now for a while?

**Yes.**

All right, well when you go to Church you don't often church crawl that is, go to different churches a lot you see, because usually you tend to pick one and you go to that one, so that you don't really see the inside of other churches very much, then I don't think anybody did much, and I don't think they do much now either. We used to be rivals I suppose with the Anglican and the United Church be sort of rivals and the Roman Catholic Church was quite outside of it, and I think our United Church would like to see you come in because they thought they might grab you, but a Roman Catholic Church wouldn't want you there at all, because they didn't think you had any business there, so the churches had different attitudes towards one another than we do now. Churches have really changed during the years that I've been involved with them, and I've been fascinated with the changes, because you couldn't believe them you know. They've almost changed completely in some ways you see from one side to the exact other side there, and we used to have .... At first when I grew up we had Mr. Nixon was our Rector at St. Michael's and he was very exact with the students. He used to ride a high bicycle and he just had a great reassuring conservative look about him you know that reassured everybody, and you knew that you were respectable when he was at the church you see and what was particularly interesting, we would just go and it was like part of a dinner you know, it was the first course, and went home and had the rest of it you see there, but it was all right, his 2 sons went off to school, used to go on the school bus with us, Esmond and Paul, and they were great fighters, they usually had some sort of an argument which erupted into a fist fight about bus time, and they'd get into the bus fairly dishevelled and spend their time cleaning themselves up before they got to school there. Then we got the Bishop Sexton who was just a

dynamic Australian and he was the youngest bishop in Canada and most probably one of the youngest in the world when he came here at quite an early age, and he really made his presence felt. One way making his presence felt was to make sure that the clergy and diocese were all recognized you see and the policy had been in the old days that you just got into a parish and you just stayed there as long as you lived you see, and this is very discouraging for a lot of people and it didn't really make for a lot of innovation of progress you know you just find things staying the same way. Well Bishop Sexton wasn't going to have none of this you see, he felt that people should go from one stage to another and from one place to another you see, so he very soon started to shaking the Diocese up.

### **How long did a Minister usually stay at a parish at that point?**

Well, the Nixons have been as long as I can remember – 10 or 15 years I suppose you see. Well, Mr. Bartios who was the Minister here at St. Stephens was here for 32 years, he was the longest Rector here for quite a long time you see. Anyway Bishop Sexton centralized a whole Diocese you see. Parishes used to pay their own Clergy as well as they could, and if they couldn't pay them nobody said anything about it you see, well this really upset Bishop Sexton and so he said from henceforth, I will pay all the Clergy from my office you see and the Parish will send the money into me, and if you don't send the money, I'll be out to find out why you see, this was very helpful really because all of the Parishes felt this was an awful intrusion and were afraid of him, it actually helped them to see – you know to do their part better you see. The story is that when the first cheques went out from the Diocese office, two of the Clergy threw them in the wastepaper basket, as they usually used to throw their Diocesan mail and not opening them and had to apply later to get their cheques reissued you know because they were used to throwing all their mail in the wastepaper baskets that came from the mission. Anyway I really admired him very much, he had a great sermon, he wasn't a tremendous preacher, he was too dynamic to be a preacher, but one of the things about his sermons was they were all very short and he told you what he wanted then stopped you see, but he had this great sermon which consisted of three parts, one was the Diocese of British Columbia as I found it, and the Diocese of British Columbia as it is now and the Diocese of British Columbia as I intend to leave it, you see. And this was his dream you see, how the church should be.

So one of the first things he did was to move Fred Copley (Copley?) from the Church of Alert Bay down to our church (St. Michaels) and Fred I suppose being at Alert Bay for quite a while was nearly 60 I think when he came down here, and we all thought that he was probably an old person, but he was not old in spirit, he looked round and for the first time in his life he'd got a church with a lot of people in it you see, and quite a lot of young people, now he never had any young people's activities at St. Michaels' before so Mr. Copley (Copley?) who was a pretty practical person got sizing people up and picked out Dora Young who was

a school teacher, and said look we need a young people's group here and you are going to start it, and so she started this young people's group, and as I said Kathleen Griffin was the first President, and we had quite a number, sort of made up ready made members you see, and we had a good group there. The church was ever so encouraging, whether it was Mr. Cobby's (Copley?) influence or whether it was general in times you knew, because we formed another group of young people in the church which was just about as effective as the Women's Temperance Union you see, because we felt that here we were in hand 60 members at one time in that church you see and we felt we were a significant part of the congregation, so we talked this over and decided we should go to a church annual meeting and elect one of our members to the church committee you see, and of course about 20 of us, came there, there was more of us and hardly anybody else, so we elected who we wanted you see, so I was on the church committee when I was 17 you see in St. Michael's there, and we did a lot of work we ..... What I can first remember, there was a great big wood-burning stove that up in the morning on a winter's day, and when the service was going on you see during the hymn before the sermon, somebody was supposed to go up and throw another log on and get it all going for the sermon you see, so it would be warm enough. Then we finally decided that this was a bit primitive and we should have a furnace and so of course the young people decided we didn't have any money, we'd dig out underneath the church for the furnace, so we started to dig out and found out that right in the middle of the church where the furnace was going to be, there was a 4 ft in diameter tree stump that had been cut off and left there, so we dug all round it and we had to get a tractor to pull the tree stump out. We had a little parish hall that was used for the Sunday School and we thought this was a wasted hall, so we built, first of all the church people built an addition on one side with a kitchen and a small meeting room on it, and then we decided we kids decided that we'd like to put on some theatrical productions and some plays, so we wanted to build a stage. Well the church hall was on a little bit of property that was not part of the church property, it had come from Dick Devin who just lived down the hill, so we asked the church committee if we could do this, and they said how are you going to get some land they said you see so we had to go down to Dick Devin's place and ask him if he would give us 20 feet of land on the end of the hall, and he was ever such a nice old man and he said 'who's going to build a hall?', and we said 'we are going to build a hall ourselves' and he said 'good for you.' He said 'I'll give you the land for nothing', and so he did and so we built the little stage on to the Parish Hall there. Well the churches were growing in those days you know, there seemed to be quite a lot of churches especially North Saanich because they were sort of put up in the days when there were no cars you see, so that you could either walk or go by horse and so you got St. Andrews at Sidney, and Holy Trinity only a couple of miles from one another and St. Stephen's which is the oldest Church in Saanich, and not very far from either of them, and then St. Mary's church is just a mile from St. Stephen's which is not very far in the country and it was built because people would like to walk to church rather than ride you see, and so when this happened, and they built these new churches you see, they were very small, and

they also took away from the support of the existing churches you see. St. Stephens was not pleased when they go to St. Mary's, because the Saanichton people wanted their own church nearby instead of going to St. Stephens, well that all meant, not only their money didn't go to St. Stephens but also meant that they didn't have enough money to have a Minister of their own so the St. Stephens poor old Minister had to go over there and run their Church as well which made him work harder you see, and St. Michael's was allied with St. Luke's Church at Cedar Hill in the beginning. St. Luke's and St. Michael's were built on the same style, and were probably identical churches when they were built and Robert Connel who for a while was the leader of the CCF party in British Columbia was the Minister in charge. He was an interesting person, he was a great naturalist and quite a great teacher and he had great moral feelings you know this was why he was interested in politics and when he went into politics he was very definite but when he was in the pulpit he was very indefinite. He used to rabble (ramble?) and preach great rabbling (rambling?) sermons which was completely philosophical, but he used to ride from St. Luke's, he used to take his services to St. Luke's then he used to ride out to St. Michael's and because he was shy, he would time his arrival and go into the church vestry and he wouldn't come into the church until it was time to preach, and then he would walk out the back and drive off so hardly anybody ever knew him very well that way. St. Columba's Church at Strawberry Vale was a little offshoot and much the same as St. Mary's was to St. Stephens and the people who lived over there felt they needed a church, and there weren't enough people to really support a church there, so the Diocese and authorities put their thumbs down on it, but anyway they built their church you see, being rebels, and Percy James whose daughter married my Uncle Horace was one of the great leaders of this and Percy James had been quite an influential person in Bradford, England, he had been a Post Master of Bradford. Anyway they got this church going and lay people took the services quite a bit, and because they weren't big enough to have a Minister of their own, poor old St. Michael's guy had to go over there and take services too, so I was confirmed in St. Columba's which was ..... And they were constantly battling one another you see. When I was confirmed there were, one, two, three, five of us I think being confirmed and nobody from St. Columba's Church being confirmed, but it had to be St. Columba's time for the confirmation so we had to all go over there to this other church, and we'd never been in our lives before, and have our confirmation there and all these things, shaped your future career you know because it was such a strange and rather deadly fear that I resolved when I got churches of my own that confirmation be grand and glorious affair and the sort of people with lots of life and colour in themselves, and they were you see, and so St. Columba's was still half way on its feet in the assistant Parish you see, and so this was the way the churches gradually grew, now we got this young people's association – we used to have a lot of fun together, because the people who entered were really geniuses I think, and we had all sorts of ---- Well we put on a play, we had work to do you see, which meant that we'd got to raise money and so we always had something on the go and if you don't keep people busy doing something you know, they soon drop away you see. We had lots on



and I can remember once one of the strange things we had was treasure hunts you see when you all jump in your cars and you go off after a Clue A and that leads you to Clue B and so on you see, and we used to go all over the country. Oh once we landed at Island View Beach and had a wiener roast and a swim you see, but I can remember one evening when we started this treasure hunt, and went all over the country and from one place to another and getting further and further away from home and wondering just where we were going to end you see, because we were always trying to guess the ending, and finally ended up on Johnson Street in Victoria on a deserted piece of sidewalk you see, and the note said here it is, and where was it, so we waited for the other cars to come and all of us were standing around there saying what's happening and it was nearly 9 o'clock at night, half past 8 or 9, and there was nobody at all there, and all of a sudden a door of one of these little Chinese stores opened and a group of Chinese young people came out. They had wanted to form a Chinese Anglican young people's association, and so our leaders had said we will come over there, and we'll have our regular meeting in your church, so you can see what having a meeting is like you see, and we'd been advised our regular meeting was going to take place there so we should all be there you see, so we all went in there must have been about 25 or so of us, and there were about the same number of Chinese young people you see, and we had our own meeting, our regular meeting, and they could see what we did and how we did it, and how we made motions and what our considerations were you see and how we'd done with the Church Committee, and then they served us Chinese food you see. Then I can remember, we had a local Council of young people and St. Columba's young people were very prominent you see, and some wonderful people, the Fosters, were just great people and they were born leaders, they were charismatic because when they went in, and did something, everybody naturally followed them and they are still like that there, and so we'd meet once a month with this local Council, and coordinate the work of our Church Youth Groups and the Anglican Church all over round Victoria you see, and one of our activities was to hold a regular dance, so we'd hold a couple of dances in the fall and a couple in the spring at McMorrans' Pavilion, McMorrans' was exactly the same today, as it is now. I don't think they've even put a coat of paint on it you know. Beautiful place to dance. And a wonderful dance floor and good music, and this Fred McMorrans used to walk around you know two or three times during the evening with his tux on and his white sash and make sure everything was just right you see.

**It was very popular.**

Oh yes, didn't have any trouble with us young people anyway and we would have you know, 100 or 150 people at the dance because we had good church groups those days, and I remember the day – the night we went there, when the Chinese young people turned up you see and then they turned up about 20 or so of the Chinese kids you see and somebody said to me, isn't this great you know, the Chinese kids are here you see, and I looked over there, and there they were

all sitting together and I realized we'd been dancing for an hour or 2 you know, that none of them had ever danced with a white person and none of us had ever danced with one of them all night you know and I said look, this is awful you know, what are we doing you know so I said, come on fellows, so 3 of us went over there and we picked out Chinese girls you see, and immediately the Chinese boys smiled and went in and asked the white girls to dance you see, and it changed the whole atmosphere of the whole thing and we had a great time there.

**That's one of the things about youth groups that you can get those kinds of things going.**

Oh yes, and they really, ... once you take on something like that they really take it on and they are pretty good. We didn't very often go to different churches you know, but we used to have young people's church services, which we would go to at different Anglican churches, and one of the things that we did was in order to get to know the different clergy better, we'd have an evening service once a month in our church you see in which we'd invite the Minister from a different Anglican Church to come to preach you see, so we could get to know each other better and this was very valuable and the whole congregation enjoyed it, because clergy are very interesting people and they are completely different from one another you see, and we not only had this, we used to put them on the griddle you see because we would say, we not only want you to preach, but we are having a Fellowship Hour afterwards and we all want to ask you questions you see, and so they'd all come out and they were really good sports, because they enjoyed young people really you see and they'd come over and we'd not only have a service with a different minister there, but we'd also have a great debate going on afterwards which everybody enjoyed, in fact the .... You know the Adult rest of the member congregation thoroughly enjoyed these, so it brought our churches together. St. Andrew's, Sidney clergy used to come and ... well all the churches would come round and they used to have several things, so occasionally we would go to different churches.

**What sort of things might you debate?**

We just pick the service pieces you see, what they were talking about you see, or else talk about the churches here, or something like that, they would talk about some aspect of the faith you see, and of course when you really hear what people think about what you say, you're surprised, because it's completely different. You say one thing; the people hear something quite different because of the set of their minds, so it must have been very good for everybody's preaching. I thought this myself, but you often preach about something, you lay it on people, and then you find out that people have been thinking about something completely different alongside of what you are saying and this has been important to them you see. Some of the people were United Church people, because we just happened to have a youth group in the area at the time you

know, then so, we did go to the United church once in a while you know with different people to see what it was like, but it was a strange thing you see, we weren't used to going to a church with a different denomination you know and my aunt, I remember, .... My aunt went to the wedding not really because she was interested in going to the wedding, but because she wanted to see what the inside of Wilkinson Road United Church looked like you see, and she .... Because when she came back instead of saying what the bride wore, she was telling us all about how the church was constructed and what the service was like you see, that was what she was interested in.

**End of Tape#2 Side A**

## **Tape #2 Side B**

Somehow, matter of fact, men's groups seemed to be the effective ones most places, the women's groups in the churches were the effective ones and the church gave the women a chance to really organize, and so the main Anglican church group was the Women's Auxiliary which was really the Women's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Church, and they were a tremendous group, right across Canada, they supported missionary work like the Columbia coast mission on the coast of Vancouver island and the Northern Missions where there wasn't a congregation that could support a church, they would do their best to support them. They provided all the pensions for all the missionary workers of the church for many years, they also worked on the Canadian Anglican Church Missionary work that was in China and Japan and India, and they sent out missionaries to India and hospitals, they built hospitals and they'd even seek and send out Doctors and Nurses you see, so that they'd be staffed and our schools there and so many of the missionary people in those countries were Anglicans and people we knew.

**These people could have come from the local communities could they?**

Oh yes.

**If one had wanted to become a missionary how would one go about that?**

Of you'd just get a bee in your bonnet you see, you know ..... now there is a Philippine missionary you see and she runs her precious Jewells (schools?) on the garbage dump in Manila you see, and she just felt that something had to be done, and the church helped her to get a visa and go over there, and she went into this old house and they sent out enough money to help her get going, she has a helper, and they are running a school and soup kitchen and trying to do this. Well this is now, this is going on right now you see, and in Vancouver we used to ... I kept up my AYPE connections when I was going to the University you see, and so I just dropped into the scene in the mainland in Vancouver where there's still strong force there. They don't have these groups so much now, it was a real church group you see, they were involved in the work of the church itself, and they were part of the church, and they grew up naturally to be leaders in their own churches, so they were very welcomed in the church. What they wanted to do they did. Alfred Wilson was the youngest Alderman elected in Vancouver, he was elected at the age of 22, but he was a member of the AYPAs and his AYPAs and St. Michaels decided the church should have something to say in the running of Vancouver City Council you see, and so they got together with all the other church youth groups you see, and said look everybody, we have got to elect Alfred to be an Alderman you see, and so they elected Alfred, well he was a super Alderman and he was never defeated, and he probably could have been Mayor but he was from 22 until he retired something over 70 you see. He was continually an Alderman in Vancouver, but he got his start in the

AYPA and it was quite a group and I had quite a lot to do with them always because ... when I was in British Columbia in the churches, we always had youth groups which affiliated with it you see, and they had a yearly conference which varied from Victoria, Vancouver, Nanaimo, Prince George you know and places like that and we'd gather our groups of young people and shoot up there or drive them up there you see where we would have a great conference you know, and they used to talk about you know their place in the church, and where the church was going and when they thought it was going right or not and what they said had a lot of influence, because young people see new necessities before older people do, older people like the church the way it is because it's their church, they built it you see, and yet people have got some new things completely you see that need doing, so they are quite an influential group. Then they committed suicide. It took them a couple of years to do this and I saw them through it there, and there was quite an interesting process. They felt they were completely inward looking – that they were very satisfied with running the church, but they had no connections at all with those outside the doors - and they said from now on, we have got to look out instead of look in. They had this neat play that came along with about 6 people you see, and they had this little play that turned the lights out you see. There is one person comes along with a candle and he will light the candle you see, and this is supposed to be Jesus you see, then these other people came in and they all lighted a candle off his and said this is the AYPAs you see, we take our light from Jesus, and they said we are very satisfied and they all got around in a little circle with the light inside you see, the whole place got dark you see and they said this is what the AYPAs is right now you see and then they said this is what we want it to be and they all turned around and of course the whole room became a lot lighter because you could see the light you see, and so.

### **Very effective.**

Oh yes, they said we have done enough for the church you see and all kinds of objections you see, saying we've got commitments you see, the church depends on us you see, and so the answer was, well if the church can't do without us, then it's not worth saving you see and if the church can't stand on its own, it's too bad, we've got work to do and our work is not inside the church, it's outside, so the new modern Anglican Youth Group movement is this kind of movement, completely outside the church, so it doesn't have so much publicity value in the Church itself but it does surprising things where there is a need all over the place so this has changed quite a lot the way the church youth group is working.

### **Interesting how that evolved.**

It's really interesting oh yes, and the thing is, these young people themselves you see were really raging about it, they were screaming at one another and say, you know, we got to drop all the things we are doing now you see, our job is to look out and to work outside. Oh they sent a number of young people for training in

Ministry, schools for Ministry and Chicago and places like that, where they do a lot of slum ministry and ministry with people in need you see, and they really had influence in revitalizing the church and about oh 5 or so years ago they had a great AYPAs reunion 40 years afterwards in Vancouver in St. Michael's Church. Now there are no AYPAs left you see and so they put out this notice and said they were having a reunion so I went along of course I knew all the people there you see, there were not too many about 60 or 70 or something like that you see and they all met and talked about old days and singing the old songs you see and things like that and we'd been pretty good friends and I managed to go around and talk to nearly all the 40 people and it was very interesting because I said – my question was – 'Where are you going to church now?' you see and I found out not many of them are going to church in their own parish where they lived, and they'd given up their own church because they weren't doing anything and some of them weren't even Anglicans, they were going to the Unitarian Church rather a Gospel Church or something like that because it was doing something that they felt needed to be done.

### **They had that conviction.**

Yes, so all these people felt that the church's job must have been doing something and they were going to be involved in it. Many of them had changed to different Anglican Church which had a programme going on and they were very active in it.

The AYPAs began in 1915 in Toronto and in the same year they had one in Victoria, in St. John's Church they began an AYPAs. Mrs. Gail who was one of our neighbours, on old West Road, was one of the original members of St. John's of the first AYPAs in Victoria. She was much older than I was you know, and she wasn't active any longer you see, but they – St. John's Church – had a huge branch, they had 60 or 70 members in there for a number of years, and there was a chap called Stan Harkins who was sort of the granddaddy of the AYPAs. He'd been the President and things like that, but he sort of you know stood behind and made sure things were done right you know and then when the AYPAs sort of subsided, he still was an influential member of St. John's Church until he died. I'm sure you know, and – oh all sorts of interesting people were AYPAs people. George Bennett the silversmith was a member of the AYPAs and when the Bishop was looking out for some new churches, and he built St. George's church for him, got to get St. George's Church going in Cadboro Bay. They had a mission church to begin with you see, a little building, and as soon as the congregation was built up, they built the churches that are there now. Well, George Bennett's contribution was to create the community step, community step for St. George's Church and he made that you see.

### **Is he a local chap, this George Bennett?**

Oh yes, born in Oak Bay and he worked for Carmichael's Silversmith and his Dad had been a silversmith there, and George learned from his Dad. George was a wonderful silversmith, did all the work for Carmichael's and when Mr. Carmichael died, he gave his shop to George which was a mistake because George was a great silversmith but no bookkeeper and in about 2 years, he lost it. Then he went to Vancouver and worked for the Acme Silversmith people over there on a salary which suited him much better you know because he made money and he happened to land up in one of my parishes and I saw this name – so I went to get some cleaning done and there was George you see, and I found he lived in my area not in my parish, but the next door parish you see so we resumed acquaintanceship. Now this was 30 years after I'd known him in the AYPAs you see and our friendship still – well now George has died now, came back to live in Sidney and when he was still living in Sidney, and Winnie and I are still friends, so our acquaintances from the old church days are really solid.

**Were there any from around the Central Saanich, Saanich, North Saanich area who came out of the AYPAs who went on to be into public life that you can think of, because it seems to me that they are people with that kind of conviction who might have gone into Public Service.**

Oh, I'm sure, yes, but I can't really tell you just now.

**I just wondered if there were any that you could think of.**

No, I can't think of people by name exactly right now, but I'm sure there were, because they were .... Leaders you know wherever they were, they'd jump right in, roll their sleeves up and get to work so they were a practical bunch, and they expected to be, you know, they expected to take a lead see. I'm known mostly in the church circle you see, but I would expect to find them everywhere and as a matter of fact I'm sure . . . well for one thing I know I always find them in the Scout and Cub groups you see, they'd all be people I'd recognize as being in the AYPAs there and I'd know them because I came in contact with them. Now I've been away from Saanich you see since 1939 you see so I don't know what happened to them. I lost track of them quite a bit, but you know it's 30 years before I came back again, so I sort of lost track of them.

**What about the Cubs and the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides. Where were they organized in this area?**

Well, when we were kids we joined the Scouts briefly when I was little, but very briefly because we did better scouting at home. It was a sort of an outdoor hiking and trail deal you know and we did this on our own property more, so our connection with the boy scouts was rather small. Our family thought it was a glorious thing you see and they'd take us off to Jamborees and things like that when we'd see what was going on and inspect. When I got into the ministry we felt, my wife and I, felt that the Scouts and the Guides had better programmes

than the churches had for young people you know and so we would tend to encourage to have scouts and guide groups in the Church not that we hadn't a real good programme, that was all worked out and was very good and in the church group it was rather difficult to find a suitable programme you see and so you often find scouts and guides it in with churches in fact they are the most satisfactory ones because the churches care for them you see and instead of saying you can use our hall, the church would try to provide leaders and would give them a good deal of help that way, so, the Scout association says that those groups that we fit in with the churches have a longer life. In fact, my last parish, I was very proud of my last parish in Coquitlam, because we started off with Scouts and Guides in the Parish Hall and then they became too numerous for the hall and so the Guides decided they would go through the ..... school and we would have the Scouts you see and by the time I left there we had Beavers and Cubs and Scouts and Rovers and Venturers which were the complete 5 groups of the Scout movement and we were the only single group that had them all in the Burnaby area. This in fact is rather unusual to find that many you see, we helped to get leaders you see, we'd give them the premises you know, we gave them help if they needed it, but they didn't need very much because they stopped generating, but the main thing was you see that they really gave a really excellent absorbing helpful activity for a lot of young people you see we would have you know something like 200 young people in that one area you see who weren't all church people, they were community people you see, getting that extra programme which was far better than hanging around the streets you see.

**That's right, you know at Royal Oak next to what is now Chantecler's, the Thatch, there's a parking lot there and it has the Old Boy Scout's Hall there, do you know anything about that, the Scout Hall?**

Yes,

**Now a Park and Ride.**

Yes, that's right, that was where we used to go to our scouts before the hall was built, we used to go to Boy Scouts down there. We used to have to ride all the way down there and back; it was about 5 miles you see, each way. They had a really good group and as a matter of fact there was the Goddards who ran the poultry farm, he was a great scout enthusiast, he was in the scouts when I left in 1930, and I'm sure he was still in there in 1970 there, and they had an excellent group there, they were very dedicated.

**Oh, these are the people who ran the Claremont Poultry Farm?**

Yes.

**Oh I see.**



He was a member of St. Michael's Church. We used to know him in the church there.

**I didn't realize that.**

Well, the church is, sort of a, you know, it's a cross-section of everybody you see. I remember Dad getting into trouble once when he walked out of the middle of a communion service and the church you see, and the rest of the family were wondering whether they were going to have to walk home or not you see. Anyway, somebody else had left early because they used to ..... in those days you could leave early if you were not to receive the Holy Communion you see, and so somebody would get up and walk out early you see, well Dad saw one of his neighbours walk out early and he had just had a new calf, and he decided maybe his neighbour would like to buy a calf, so he went out to make a deal with him, so he got the dickens from the family at dinner time after that.

**He was always the business man.**

Yes, they were afraid they might have to walk home and then they thought he was doing something rather ungodly on a Sunday.

**End of Tape #2 Side B**