

ESTER CARMICHAEL QUICK was born in 1890 at Cordova Bay, daughter of James Rutherford Carmichael. The family came from Edinburgh in the 1880's to Saanich.

About the time Ester was enrolled in the one-room school at Cordova Bay Road and East Saanich Road, her father served as the first Justice of the Peace (1898), and also as a teacher at Elk Lake School in 1899.

Eventually, Ester was to attend the North Ward School and Elk Lake School. Some of her classmates were Bert McKay, Hugh Campbell, Lena Campbell, Frank Freeland, Maude & Reggie Hedley, and Arthur Leune. School hours were 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with a 10-minute recess, one hour for lunch and 15-minute recess in the afternoon.

Ester married William Jack Quick, a native of Auckland, New Zealand. He had emigrated in the 1890's and settled on Wilkinson Road. Quick's pond on the corner of West Saanich and Wilkinson Roads was named after William. Mr. Quick was instrumental in establishing the community hall at Royal Oak in 1911, as well as founding the Saanich and Suburban Baseball League. Mrs. H. Quick was the president of the Royal Oak Institute in 1915.

They had a dairy farm, where they bred some of the first Jersey cows in Saanich. Their son, Fred Quick, was Reeve of Saanich and had East Saanich Road built.

Material collected by Anita Newberry  
from interview (?) with E. Quick  
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Written by: S. Manson

QUICK, ESTHER Interviewed in July 1977.

When we came to Victoria my father went and bought this farm, he came from Iowa you see? My brother and sister, the oldest ones, were born in Iowa. They were married in 1882 and then they came here in the late eighties. He bought this big farm, it was right from the top of the hill there, where you go up from the Lake you know, theres a road.. whats the name of that road runs up off the Saanich Road? It goes right up that steep hill off Saanich Road? Off the Highway now, before you come to Pat Bay Highway? Oh that's foolish...

Q. Is it Sayward?

A. No, its nowhere near Sayward Road. The present road that is there now, its the ~~third road been raised up out of...~~ the third Saanich Road what is now the Pat Bay Highway. It used to be the East Saanich, the West Saanich Road. The West Saanich went out Royal Oak that way and the East Saanich went out this way.

Q. Were there many farmers in the District when your father, John Carmichael, came?

A. Speak a little louder will you please, I'm getting a little hard of hearing.

Q. Was there many farmers around your father?

A. No, very few. There was only a handfull. There was not many on the East Saanich Road at that time. There was an old Captain lived up there. Haliburton!  
You know that road?

Q. Is that the road you were trying to remember?

A. No that road was put up afterwards. There was nothing there at all. There was only a few houses between the Lake and Royal Oak.

Q. Do you remember whose houses they were?

A. No. One was an old sea Captain.

Q. Captain Butler?

A. No. I forget his name. There were very few houses there and there was only one other family living between us and Cedar Hill. There was Grays farm there and he owned a big farm and then he was the one neighbour and Wilson Brown had the other big place what was later Saywards place and we used to go through the bush from our place to his, but there was no road up there at all. The road stopped at our gate.

Q. Where exactly was your property?

A. Well, now there is a school at one side, but we had right down to the sea.

Q. To Cordova Bay?

A. Yes, from the top of the hill right down to the sea. That was all our property and that was all.

Q. What kind of farm did your father have?

A. Well, just the regular farm. Hay and growing farm produce. He had some cattle and different things. Animals. He had sheep and cows. They lived in a log house and they brought the lumber to build the house that he built, it was all brought around by scow and landed down at the foot of our place. And we came in ...there was high rocks there and there's a nice little cove there underneath where the house was built. The lumber was brought in there and he had a trail up from the beach to the house, to the place where we were living. We lived in a log house.

Q. Isn't that unusual? A log house?

A. Oh well it was the only thing there, a log house. It was beautifully warm.

Q. Was it?

A. Yes and it was there for years, as long as we lived at the Bay that log house was there and an old friend of ours, a friend from the Old Country, a friend of my fathers, he used to come out and live over weekends. He had his place there, his things there. He worked in town. That was the only way we had to go to town, was horse and buggy. There was no phones or anything like that. We were six miles from St. Lukes Church. That's where we used to go to church. I was christened at St. Lukes. I was born in Cordova Bay. I was born in 1890 at Cordova Bay.

Q. What school did you go to?

A. Well, laterly when my brother and sister got old enough to go to school my father moved to town, because there was no school there to go to. He was a Chartered Accountant from Scotland.

Q. Did he sell the farm?

A. No. He rented the farm and he built a house on Gorge Road. You know Gorge Road, just up above the fountain. It's still there as good as ever. An unusual place. We had two big lots and nice gardens.

Q. Was it a log cabin?

A. No it wasn't a log cabin. It's still there, a nice house. Big bow windows in the front, it was really nice. And then the church was there. The Centennial Church. I started Sunday School just as a little tot, because I couldn't go so far. He was a Presbyterian, you see. And mother was an Anglican. So sometimes they went to the Presbyterian and sometimes the Anglican. The script above the alter in St. John's Church is now above the alter in St. Michael's Church. That little church out on the hill on West Saanich Road.

That church was there but that was put up when St. Johns was torn down. It was laying in a pile of stuff to be burned. They said if it was wanted it was alright because it was only going to be burned. And that was the church sent out from the Old Country by Burdett Coutts.

Q. What exactly did your mother take from that old St. Johns?

A. The script that was above the alter. The writing above the alter of the church. Its there now, it had been broken, a piece of it and a friend of hers who was a painter, filled it in and fixed it up. It's still there. And that was the old church, that was there in the eighties. I don't know that it wasn't there before because one of my aunts who came out with mother, at least came out later with her father, was married there in the 1880's. But we had to go, if we wanted to go that church, we had to go to town and out by the Saanich Road. Out the West Saanich Road to St. Michaels.

Q. There were no bridges in Esquimalt at that time?

A. Well this isn't Esquimalt, this is in Saanich. That church up above, you know where the Municipal Hall is, well you go right out the West Road and the church is up on the hill there. That church was level with the road when it was built. That was built by the people that lived there, Black's Hill they used to call it. It's still Black's Hill as far as I know, and the shingles, the shakes on the roof, were cut out of the bush by the men themselves. The church was built be a "Bee" all of the different ones belonging to the church, there weren't that many, they got together. The women came and them made the lunches and they built the church and the ladies of the district provided eats. They cooked it and fixed it up for them. And they had it cut out of the bush.

Q. How long did it take them to build it?

A. I don't know just how long it was in building it. But it was so well built that a few years ago when some of the newcomers come in and they wanted to do away with the church and they had somebody out to look at it because the old timers wouldn't hear of it, and they won out. Because they said it was built on stones and it was built as well as it could be built. So it spoke well for the builders didn't it?

Q. Yes, it did.

A. It was just the farmers around that built it.

Q. Do you remember what families those farmers were?

A. Oh yes, Goyette and Black. There weren't a great many farmers out there to tell you the truth. But they came from further out you know. From the West Road. That was the only church there you see, except the next one was out at Mount Newton.

Q. Shady Creek?

A. Out at Mount Newton, Mount Newton Cross Road, Thompsons.

Q. Was that Slugett Memorial?

A. No. Slugett Memorial, no., that's Thompsons little church. It's down in the field off West Saanich Road. Towards the West Saanich Road. He was one of the settlers that came out there.

Q. That's St. Stephens then?

A. I don't know what they call it now. Its on the Cross Road and you go down a little lane to it. Mr. Thompson came there you know, he went down and got his bride off a ship and they got married and she rode out on horse back. There was no road, there was just a trail. You couldn't take a buggy out or anything. She rode on horseback out all that distance and he walked beside her. That was on their honeymoon.

Q. I wonder how long that took, it probably took them all day.

A. Oh it would you know, that's miles out. I don't know just how many miles it is. And his family was all raised out there. There were all Indians.

Q. Did you ever see the Indians at Cordova Bay?

A. No. There were Indians there in the early days. We found lots of Indian spear-heads and things like that you know, in stone. I have a bowl, a big rock, and its smoothed out, its just ground out, that's what they used to mix in. And I have the big thing they used to grind it with. That was another big stone about ... long and you held it in the middle and there was two bulbs on the end and that was what they used to put the stuff in, the hollow and ground it like that. They ground stuff down between two rocks.

Q. Like a mortar and a pestle?

A. Yes. They used worked it you know, ground it. And you'd be surprised how smooth it is. Just rubbing the stones till they got it how they wanted it. I have a number of things. And arrow heads, the Indian arrow heads you know, that they used to use. I had a number of them, I've given most of them away.

Q. Were they on your property?

A. Oh yes, all over our property we used to pick them up. The Indians used to come out and fish and they'd have their fires on the beach and cook their stuff and camp on the beach and go out fishing in boats. They were there all the time.

Q. And they fished? Did you ever buy the fish from them?

A. Oh sometimes, they didn't need to buy them, because they fished. There were lots of fish in the Bay. My father, I've seen him go out and stand on the big rock, one of those big rocks, and fly fish. I've seen him catch seventeen trout one night.

Q. Trout?

A. Little Salmon, small.

Q. Oh, Grilse.

A. They were lovely.

Q. They were very plentiful?

A. Oh yes, there were lots there and latterly they were thinned out when I was that big, campers used to come out there and camp. When I was bigger, after they built the school. We went to town and then we built there you see and rented out our farm. My mother's mother and father came out and built a house and we had two houses then. They had the one down by the beach and it was burned down a short time ago, and then on the other side of the road was where my father's house was. It was on the corner of .....and Walema. Right up on the corner, a big house. There were four of us youngsters.

Q. Did you go to Elk Lake School?

A. We did, but Elk Lake School wasn't built until long after that. The school in town, I went to the school in town. North Ward School in Victoria. From the Gorge, you see we lived just above the fountain, where that green place is. There used to be a big trough there and water and that's where all the farmers coming into town from Saanich used to water their horses there. So that was it. We lived there and moved back out to the farm in 1888. I was eight years old and there was no ...they had just built the school out there you see.

Q. Elk Lake School?

A. Some of the youngsters used to walk four miles every day to come to school and four miles to come home again. They just had enough to have a little school there. It was in an old house.

Q. Who was the teacher?

A. Miss ...she was a teacher from Saanich. What was her name? Oh I have forgotten. I've forgotten a lot of names now that I had remembered.

Q. Was it Blanche Coutts?

A. No. Blanche Coutts was the teacher who taught at Elk Lake School.

That was right at the end of the road. In 1888 the road was put through from Cordova Bay to Elk Lake. That was a much shorter way for us to go to town then. And then Blenkinsop Road wasn't built until long after that. I was practically grown up when Blenkinsop Road was put through. Yes, I was up in my teens when that was put through from Cordova Bay to Blenkinsop to Victoria. We had to go all around the other way until then. And then they put up that road..Cordova Bay Road was 1887 I guess. And then we went back to the farm and we went to the school there. And latterly it was built right up at the top of the hill.

Q. Another school?

A. That was a house. We just had it in a house down there at the end of the Lake. I believe that the house...I heard that it was burned down or something lately. But there has been people living in it after that. We used to have some wonderful times in that old school. All classes..the teacher had from start class right up to the top. She had quite a job.. Some of them were great big boys you know. Some of them were half breeds.

Q. What was the school day like? How long was the school day? The hours

A. Oh, I don't know when the new school was built at the top of the hill. There's a road goes in from there, into the back. Well it goes right through now to that other road that I told you goes up from Saanich.

Q. Is that Claremont?

A. Past Claremont. Goes right up through there and goes right up to that road that goes down through Saanich. Of course there's a lot of roads that go down there now. That road that you go up in that division is ...Rithets! Rithets Farm was a great big place. The Post Office ... when we lived out there we had to go up to Royal Oak to Heals Place, where our mail...Dad used to go up once a week when he went to town.

Q. That was Isabelle Heals job, wasn't it? Do you know Isabelle Heal?

A. Oh, there was a family of them.

Q. She was the Post Mistress.

A. Yes, that was Mrs. Heal. Mrs. Walter Heal.

Q. That's right. She played the organ for the church, I think.

A. Well, I don't know if she did or not. She may have, that was before I knew who played the organ. The church was very small until latterly. In latter years it has gone right ahead.

- Q. I have a list here of some of the people who went to Elk Lake School. Can you tell me if you remember them?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Bert McKay?
- A. Oh, yes. I knew all the McKay family.
- Q. Where did they live?
- A. They lived down in the McQue Valley. The McQue Valley was further out. You know where, oh whats that road that comes up from Elk Lake and comes down to Cordova Bay? Down in there is McQuess Valley. And McQue lived down there. You read the names off and I'll see.
- Q. Hugh Campbell and Colin Campbell?
- A. Yes, well they were up on the road between Cordova Bay Road and Royal Oak. Campbells. He was caretaker of Elk Lake Waterworks. Oh yes, there was Lena. We all went to school together.
- Q. Where did you get your water from in Cordova Bay?
- A. Out of a well.
- Q. You had a well?
- A. Yes. Got to have a well. We dug a well. We had a lovely well right up at the gate. It was a little store there. It was beautiful spring water. We just packed it up in buckets to the house, right at the top of the bank. It was all wells, you see and then latterly, well I was in my early teens I suppose, when my father sold the piece below us. The road called Cordova Bay Road, after that was put through you see. We lived in our house and the other house, my grandfather came out from the Old Country and they lived there. My aunts and uncles. There was a corner store of some kind there and our well was up there at that corner, the corner of the two roads. The road down to the house was just our own driveway you see, down to the house below. Latterly my grandfather lived there and we lived up at the house on the corner of Gordon Street, I think they call it now, and Walema.
- Q. When did the cottages start to appear in Cordova Bay?
- A. Oh they didn't start to appear until the 1900's.
- Q. Who would build them?
- A. Well, there was one..J.J.Elliot, he was there. There was an old man lived next to us. We had from the church down there at Cordova Bay, the Anglican Church, that is built at the corner of our old farm, we had right up to the road that goes up the hill. We had all that. We went right up that steep hill. We used to have a trail



up there and we used to walk up to the top like where Claremont and those places are. We had some people come...Campbells lived up there on the East Saanich Road. And there was Captain Nelson, he was there. Oh, there was a number living there latterly, but there was very few house there. You know there was not very many .. there was only six or eight voters in the early days. That was before my time. Voters at Royal Oak. It wasn't very big was it?

Q. Do you remember who those people were? Those eight voters?

A. No, I was only a baby you see. I was born in Cordova Bay and then I lived in town. Oh I don't know how old I was, I was just toddling....my brother and sister had to go to school you see. So we moved to town and they went to North Ward School. We lived on the Gorge Road there, just up from the fountain. 100 Gorge Road. We were between the two bridges.

Q. Did you know the Juene family? Arther Juene?

A. Juenes? Yes, we went to school together.

Q. What did their family do?

A. He was a farmer. You know where all those houses are down there in Cordova Bay? That was all his property to the beach and way up around. He was the only one there. We used to visit together and, oh yes, we were great friends. We went to school up there and sat together.

A. Mr. Quick bought on the corner of Wilkinson Road and the West Saanich Road. There was only a few houses there then.

Q. You went there when you married?

A. I went there when I married, you see that was his farm. He was a pure bred Jersey breeder.

Q. Mr. Quick? He was one of the first Jersey breeders wasn't he?

A. He was the first Jersey breeder on the Island.

Q. Where did he get his cows from?

A. Well, from the Mainland or wherever he could get them. He brought them over from the Mainland and he used to take them over there to Vancouver to show. He had boxes and boxes of medals he won from Vancouver and around. They used to come all there, up Island and everywhere they had them. He used to go with his herd of cows over and with some of his men and there was that little house, Thomas's. They built up there and Kinnaird, they were there when I was married.

- Q. Do you remember when Royal Oak Community Hall was built?
- A. The Municipal Hall was built around .. between 1910 or something and the dance hall, my husband was one of them that built the dance hall there. That was being built the same time as the Municipal Hall. And that was in 1913. No, 1911. Because my son was six months old when the hall was finished. And my brother-in-law was Reeve of Saanich and my father was the Secretary of the Municipal Council.
- Q. That was when Saanich had Wards. That was when Saanich had just started out?
- A. That was really when Saanich started to boom, yes.
- Q. Do you remember the Wards?
- A. The Municipality was started in 1906 and my father was appointed in the office, to run the business. He looked after all of it. It was in a little house on Glanford Avenue that they had the office. In the house where Lavenders lived. Up near this place and what was those other peoples names? He had a ranch, cows. Oh, I'm so foolish, I simply forget the names lately.
- Q. Do you remember Mr. Turgoose?
- A. Oh, Turgoose, yes. Well they were way out at Saanichton.
- Q. He was on the first Council
- A. Yes, you see it was all of Saanich and then they broke up and its South Saanich now. Different Municipalities. Oh, yes he was on the Council and Joe Nickleson, and Dunn. I had a lovely picture of my father and my brother-in-law, Fred Quick was Reeve. He was the one who had the road paved from the City limits out to the Sidney limits. The first paved road in Saanich. That was when he was Reeve.
- Q. What road was that?
- A. That was the East Saanich Road. It was in the early days. There were only six or eight voters at Royal Oak. I helped to make up the history of Saanich. We had a book on it. The Institute I belonged to. There was Mrs. Clark and there were three of us, I think. Mrs. Clark just passed away this year. She was a lovely person. I was very fond of her. She was a famous writer. She had a prize for the best children's books.

- A. So there weren't many people out in Saanich to begin with. And they used to have that, well it was just a trail, out to Saanichton. Then there was Browns that lived up opposite to the church. No, Blacks. Black gave the property on which the church was built on. St. Michaels Church.
- Q. Was life hard then, did you consider it a tough life?  
Was it hard? With so few people.
- A. No, everyone was happy and we had wonderful times. They'd come from miles. We'd used to go out to Saanichton to dances when I was bigger. The road was put through you see, from Elk Lake. That road that is there now is the third road past the lake. It came down the lake road and took over the first road and they built another one further back and then that was taken and this is the third. They had to come out more still.
- Q. Is that because they put a dam in the lake?
- A. Well that was the city waterworks and all that property was waterworks. All where the picnic grounds are. I think they would have shot anybody if they had caught them walking on it. And all up around Brookleigh Road, that was all city property. Marks Crossing, that all belonged to the city, and people weren't allowed on it for fear of polluting the water. And now there is swimming in the water and they are using it all over Saanich. Saanich is getting their water from Elk Lake.
- Q. Not any more, I don't think.
- A. Well they have been talking lately about other ways of getting it, but that was all the water they had. They took it from Elk Lake. Out to Saanich and all around there.
- Q. Do you remember when Beaver Lake was a swamp.
- A. Well it was a swamp to begin with but then they added the water, you see. They took it from the City water and water was pumped to the pumping station. You know Quadra Street? There was no Quadra Street. There was only the Saanich Road.
- Q. Was the pumping station there?
- A. The pumping station was where the Winery was latterly. I don't know what is there now. And the fruit place, canned fruit and things like that. It was just there and that used to be where they took their berries. When they had huge farms out there. Logan berry farms, acres. Now I don't think they have any. I don't think you can buy loganberries out there now.

Q. Yes, I saw an ad in the paper where you can go and pick.

A. Oh yes, strawberries and other things. It's a great place for strawberries.

Q. Do you remember any of the strawberry farms?

A. Yes, there was Tupmans. They had a big strawberry farm out there. Oh lots of them had big strawberry farms, and loganberries. Acres of them.

We had to go right around to Cedar Hill to get to town. It was Cedar Hill then, now its called Mount Douglas.

Interviewed by Anita Newberry

on July 1977