

## **Fred and Tillie Quick**

**Interview by Mary Jackson, 16 February 1988**

**Words in bold print are by interviewer**

### **Tape #2 Side 1**

Saanich bought the last 40 acres of the old farm. The rest of it had been sold off in 5 acre chunks, all along the West Saanich road, up Markham, right up to the top. They bought all the bottom land and also bought some of the surrounding bottom land. They bought 40 acres off my brother and I. We kept the house and 3 acres. Mother lived in there until she had to go into a home – I don't know the house now – it belonged to the Yales and all this property up here was Hudson's Bay land. At the present time I live on the other side of Wilkinson Road. I bought 2 acres eventually at the start, then subdivided off 5 lots. Still have a garden and a place to keep my junk. That's about all that's left of the farm land now.

### **How did Quick's Bottom get its name?**

I don't know. I phoned up one of the Aldermen I know pretty well and I said "I'm not too keen on the name you've given our swamp, you call it Quick's ass now". "Oh no, Fred, no, no" he said, "no it's Quick's Bottom"... but I don't think much of it. But anyway, at one time when they first bought it they were going to make a lake out of it and put fish in it and everything else. The bottom soon dropped out of that.

### **Why did they want it? I mean, were they developing part of the road or something?**

No, actually they wanted 100 feet at each side of the creek from Beaver Lake right down to the Gorge. If you go down Interurban you will see what they call Colquitz Park. That is what they wanted, they wanted all the swamp land around Elk Lake, or Beaver Lake – a friend of mine owned a place up there and they were watching that pretty close, I don't know whether they ever bought it or not. That was why they wanted it. They bought our piece then they bought a piece off Moss... next piece of the swamp, they bought that. I don't know why... one time we got flooded and we had a judgement against the city, they opened the valves up at the thing and flooded us out. We had a crop of barley in there. We lost it all. We had a judgement but whether that was somewhere in the \_\_\_\_\_, I don't know.

### **You used to grow root crops down there?**

Barley, used to grow barley for grain. Then when we got into the cows, into the dairy business, we grew \_\_\_\_\_, we grew sunflowers, they grew pretty good but the trouble was they grew too tall and the wind used to blow them down, they didn't have footing

enough, roots – peat soil y'know. We used to grow green oats. They used to grow 5 feet tall. Good crop.

**So this was feed that you were growing.**

We'd put it in a silo and chop it up.

**But didn't you tell me the other day that that creek, that Colquitz creek, that was one of the reasons why you ended up with this property in the first place, was because of the water, and that there was a water shortage in Gordon Head where you...**

When the folks were in Gordon Head they dug about 10 wells and never got any water. They were hauling it from a property ½ a mile down the road where they had water. When they stopped to give the team a drink in the creek, they decided that was the place. It worked out good. They put a dam in, had a little bit of a pond there. Made a waterfall, would run a ram. Ram, a thing that worked just off the water pressure. Never quits and it don't cost anything, just chug, chug, chug. And they had a big tent out and we had a tank up on the water tower. That's how we got running water into the house, out in the barn. Quite a difference from hauling it up from the well. In the next farm on the other side of Markham, it was the Black's farm at one time then Dick [Laverne?] took it over. Fifty-three acres there. In the back, a Chinaman rented it and they had a bunch of wells to irrigate. They had a system just like in China. They had a pole up and a big pole across it [...] with ropes at either end and they'd pull it up and down [...].

**All manual labour.**

**Is this your dad here, Fred?**

No. My uncle.

**Your uncle. And he was Reeve? Reeve of Saanich.**

Ya. He was Reeve. That one is old Mannix. Joe Nicholson – he owned all the property at Christmas Hill.

**Nicholson Road and up around there.**

That was my grandfather right there, Carmichael. And these other two...

**So this one here...**

That's my uncle. I was named after him. My dad and my uncle, they all sold when, in the big price scramble, \$1,000 an acre. Then they were all kind of \_\_\_\_\_ rich. They thought they had the world by the tail.

**Your family had quite a connection then with the local politics?**

Oh yes. Always monkeying around.

**Weren't you on the Council?**

No, I steer clear of all that kind of stuff. I never liked that kind of... I was in sports, coaching. I stayed out of politics.

**Was there any particular reason that you know of why they went into politics?**

Oh, I don't know. They were there at the right time. They were the big instigators of getting Saanich brought in as a municipality. See, when they first come out here they were under the Government and they got the thing and I guess it was just automatic that they got on the first Council and they just took it from there. He was there until about 1916 I think.

**What was it like, what were sort of the sports, you said you were quite active in sports. What sort of sports were available to you then?**

Oh basketball was one of the big ones. Football. [...]

**Did the schools promote sports as much as they do now?**

Oh yes but nothing like... but we had no place to play.

**Did you have a gym, or?**

We had two basketball hoops in amongst the rocks on the gravel [...]

[Tillie Quick:] May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1980 was the reunion.

**The Old-timers' Saanich and Suburban Basketball League Players. Mr. and Mrs. Bud Mitchell were there, I see. Were they fairly active or was he fairly active?**

Oh ya. Bud played for the senior's team. His brother Ralph.

**I see Claude Sluggett was in here and Clarence Sluggett?**

Ya, they all played for [West Road?].

**But you had no gyms or anything like that at school.**

No, we had nothing.

**You just had to make do with what was available.**

We had a one room, two room school. We played outside, stayed in the classroom. Now you go out and they have these big gymnasiums like up here at Royal Oak. You know you give them these things and it makes you feel as though you missed something at school. Oh, I enjoy seeing the kids play some kind of sport – something to do. That's the trouble for the kids now, they have nothing to do – they haven't even got the wood box to fill. No chores – they come home and that's it! [...] Leads to a lot of petty thieving. I don't remember when we were kids any twelve year old kid getting into trouble for breaking and entering. [...]

**You said, though, that you had a lot of chores to do when you came home. When did you find time to play basketball and football?**

There was always time. You made time. Sometimes you would slack off on your chores a bit. [...]

**Was it pretty well organized within the community, sports?**

No. There was the 3 schools here, Prospect Lake used to come down to Royal Oak [...]. We'd get a game going with them at lunch hour or something like that. Strawberry Vale, they'd come up. I think Prospect Lake came in the afternoons, Strawberry Vale in the mornings. You pretty well had to organize your own sports.

**Was there much travelling done? Or were kids not really able to afford that sort of thing.**

Once you got bigger you travelled. When I was 17, 18 I was playing on the men's team and we'd go as far as Jordan River, Salt Spring Island. Eventually I started coaching. I lost 2 fingers and quit playing ball, I started coaching younger ones. Then we travelled quite a bit.

**What was it like coaching in those days?**

Oh I guess about the same as now.

**There would probably be quite a difference in the money I would expect.**

Oh no! No money. You had your hand in your pocket all the time. In the baseball, in a home game, you have to supply a new ball. Most of the time that came out of the manager's pocket, the coach, somebody had to divvy into it. If you didn't have enough, spectators would pass the hat.

**Did you get a lot of community support? I mean, a lot of spectators come?**

No, basketball was the only thing. Every Wednesday there was a game, sometimes three games, and a dance after – all for two bits. Quite a crowd. An old couple lived

up by the cherry bank there, Nicholson's, he had a big white beard, he looked like Santa Claus – they used to walk down every Wednesday night game and a lot of the time walk home afterwards. I've seen him coming in with the rain and his beard looked like snowdrops, sparkling on his beard. But they wouldn't miss a game.

**Did any of the community halls or church halls offer their facilities for games?**

Well Lakehill Community Hall did, they were all set up for basketball, carpet bowling, and that kind of thing. The Royal Oak Hall. The Church halls most of them were more or less kept for their own young people. [St. Michael's] had a small hall. I think they played badminton but it wasn't big enough for basketball.

**I was talking a couple of weeks ago to Mr. Doug Peden. Do you know the name Doug Peden? He's a sports editor.**

I played ball \_\_\_\_\_ his brother Torchy.

**That's right, yes. Do you remember them?**

Torchy was the clumsiest man on his feet, but if you got him on a bike, you couldn't catch him. I asked him one time – we were short a referee. I said "How about you referee, Torchy". "Oh sure", he said, but he pretty near killed half of them running to get the ball. He knocked over a couple... He was a big man, could sure ride a bike! We were coming out from town one time – we had a Model T Ford, come along flat, Torchy was riding along there. We pulled up alongside of him and he was riding along, talking, coming out that railroad crossing. We talked for a while then he said, "Oh, I gotta go home" and he just pulled out and left us! Ford couldn't catch him. They were good bike [riders].

**Doug played basketball, didn't he?**

Ya, they all... Their father Bill was a good ball player. His brothers... Tommy Peden, he was a good basketball player.

**What about the ladies, what sort of things did the ladies used to do? What about the Women's Institute and places like that?**

My aunt and my mother, they started the Lakehill Institute. My aunt, she was paid by the government to go around...

**What did they do, sort of go around petitioning membership?**

Well, getting it started, looking after it.

[Tillie Quick:] They worked for the solarium, the children's hospital. Even now they do a certain amount of...

See at one time, the Women's Institute, the Farmers' Institute – both my brother and I belonged to the Farmers' Institute – there was a certain amount of good out of it. [...] It's been long gone, the one down here. I guess it still runs at Keating. Mitchell, Willie Mitchell, he was the president of the Farmers' Institute for years. [...]

**So the ladies, their lives were mostly around the home, around the farm?**

Oh, they baked the cakes for the dances.

**What about the Saanich Fair? Can you tell me anything about the Saanich Fair? That was a big thing.**

[Tillie Quick:] Oh not so much with us.

Ya, we used to go to it every year. I don't know too much about it. The oldest fair this side of Ottawa I guess. Been running for years and years. Too bad they got this property down there and they can't get permission...

**You were telling me about the picnics that they used to have out at Cordova Bay, out at McMorran's.**

Ya. All the schools, the farmers went down. Many times took them down. The team, [my father] he'd take them down. The Sunday School and the schools, have a picnic in the summer.

**So it was really an all-day affair, wasn't it?**

Leave at 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning and get back before dark [...]

**How about on the Gorge, that was quite a place for leisure and recreation.**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> May everybody went to the Gorge.

[Tillie Quick:] They had the Japanese Gardens there.

Kinsmen Park, they had the Japanese Gardens. One time they had a big roller coaster there. One kid jumped out and got killed, that was pretty well the end of that, they dismantled it.