Neighbourhood Timeline: Gordon Head Part 2

Above: Aitkens family farm looking east from Torquay Drive, 1938 (2018-014-001)

Below: The park at Mount Douglas beach, 1920s (2015-002-002)

1909

William Williamson opened **Gordon Head's first grocery store** in 1909 beside the driveway at his Tyndall Avenue home. He sold the business to Mr. and Mrs. John Sadler in 1918, at which time the small building was moved north on the property and dwelling quarters added. With the Sadlers came the added convenience of having the grocer call at customers' homes twice a week for orders, these being delivered later that same day. At first, the groceries came by wagon, later by Chevrolet. When Mrs. Sadler was widowed she hired two young men, Billy Tucker and Alec Pearson, to drive the truck. A gasoline pump was later added out front. The store went through several owners and was still in operation in 1975.

FOR sale—Horse, harness and covered wagon, cheap. W. J. Williamson, R.M.D. No. 4; or ring up Gordon Head Exchange.

Above: W.J. Williamson's store, 1916 (1980-006-023)
Middle: Daily Colonist, 2 December 1915
Below: Jack Williamson and 1915 Ford used for the mail service (2020-002-039)

1910

William Williamson was also responsible for successfully contracting Gordon Head's **first rural mail route**. 6 days a week, Williamson travelled to the main city office and picked up four sacks of mail, one each for the Lake Hill, Mount Tolmie, and Gordon Head offices, and the fourth for the rural route. At 6 am he harnessed Blaze, Teddy, or Buster for the drive to Victoria. On the outward run, delivery at the Lake Hill and Mount Tolmie offices came first, then across Cedar Hill Cross Road to the southernmost end of Gordon Head Road for the start of his route. Those who wished the convenient personal delivery had to purchase a galvanized metal mail box and install it at the gateway to their farm. Williamson then stopped at the Gordon head office to deliver its sack of mail, then down Tyndall to stop at home for lunch. While William was on the mail route, his wife Wilhelmina "Minnie" and sons John C. "Jack" and William Jr. ran the store. In 1913, **Jack** and **William Jr.** took over the route and in 1915, they traded in the horse for an automobile.

The longest-serving Gordon Head mailman was **Jack Lowe** who worked the route for 21 years. Then, around 1955, the rural route came to an end when street numbers and door to door delivery made the mail run unnecessary.

1911

Mary and Francis **Aitkens** arrived in Gordon Head in 1911 with their two eldest children (youngest daughter born later) and settled on a farm on Tyndall Avenue. In 1943, their eldest daughter **Alice Maude Aitkens** married Henry Hope, then a real estate agent. Maude, with the help of family members, ran a series of businesses during her lifetime. She had a wholesale bulb business called Victoria Bulb Growers Ltd, which sold daffodils, hyacinths and gladiolas. After WWII, she ran Hilltop Bulb Farm, and from 1950 to 1978, she operated a bridal flower business called Country Gardens from the Aitkens family property, in partnership with Marjorie Goodwin (nee Watson).

Above: Alice Maude Aitkens on Tyndall Ave Property, ca. 1924 (2015-031-013)

Middle: Charles and Alice Maude Aitkens in front of newly planted fruit trees on Aitkens farm, ca. 1912 (2015-031-160)
Below: Dwelling of Chinese worker Lee on Aitkens farm, 1930s (1981-002-002a)

1913

In 1851, John and Jessie Irvine arrived in Victoria on *The Tory* as servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1862, they acquired about 300 acres in the Cedar Hill area that they named Rose Bank Farm. John Jr., known as **"Long Gun Jack"** was born shortly before the family moved to Rose Bank. At age 16, he began working in a grocery store/saloon, and when he was earning enough to support a family, he married Alice Whitaker in 1883. In the late 1880s, they rented Braefoot Farm from the Tolmie family and ran a dairy for 20 years. Jack then worked as a road foreman for the District of Saanich for 21 years, and during this time, he supervised the building of Shelbourne Street in 1915. Around 1913, he and Alice built a house on Cedar Hill Road in Gordon Head which they named **Mount Thule**. After Alice's death in 1939, Jack moved to Cordova Bay where he completed his memoir *Early Victoria: Reminiscences of Jack 'Long Gun' Irvine* at the age of 80. Jack Irvine died in 1948.

Above: Mount Thule house, 1910s (2008-008-036)

Left: Jack and Alice Irvine, before 1939 (2011-024-154)

1913

In addition to operating Gordon Head's first grocery store and mail route, the home of **William Williamson** was also the site of Gordon Head's **first telephone office**. The neighbours had applied to get a telephone service and, thanks to one man offering to pay double the fee, they had just enough subscribers to open the office. The telephone office opened in 1913 and had one switchboard with ten lines. Williamson was the agent for the telephone company and his daughters worked in the office. On 1 June 1924 a new telephone office opened at the corner of Feltham Road and Tyndall Avenue serving 97 telephones. Williamson's daughters **Alixena ("Bee")** and **Agnes**, were both employed at the new telephone office. Bee worked as a telephone clerk for her entire career. She died in 1992 at the age of 89.

Left to right: Bee, Ruby, Edith (nee Spouse, married to Jack), and Minnie Williamson, ca. 1920 (2020-002-016)

1915

Strawberries had been a popular crop for Gordon Head farmers since the 1890s when word got around that W.C. Grant was earning much more for his berries than his neighbours were earning for their cordwood. As more land was cleared, more farmers turned to this profitable crop. This shift also resulted in the value of the land increasing from around $5 per acre to $25-30 per acre by the end of the 1890s. By 1914, production got so far ahead of demand that growers were receiving only $1.56 per crate, so in 1915 Thomas Walker, a businessman and farmer who owned land near today's San Juan and San Pedro Avenues, started the **Gordon Head Fruit-Growers' Association**. The cooperative managed to stabilize the market by regulating pricing, but it was not until 1926 that 100 percent of the district's fruit growers were members. Thomas Walker was the group's first president and his board of directors was made up of Geoffrey and Sidney Vantreight, George Watson, F.E. Aitkens, William Tucker, and H.H. Grist. The following year, W.T. Edwards and A.E. Cameron also joined.

Saanich representatives of the Fruit Growers Association on Parliament building steps, 1915 (1983-011-003)

Pictured: John Fullerton (hand in coat), W.T. Edwards (hand in pocket), Geoffrey Vantreight (4th row from front, next to building), Mr. Somers (round faced man near Vantreight), Mr. Watson (7th from Vantreight), Mr. Grist (with peak cap near lamp post), Sidney Vantreight (next to Grist), Mr. Aitkens (2nd from right from Grist), Mr. Evans (in front of Aikens), Mr. Strachan (extreme right).

1917

Construction on the branch of the **Canadian Northern Pacific Railway** (later the Canadian National Railway) from Victoria to Patricia Bay near Sidney began in 1913 but was not completed for several years due to delays caused by World War I. The line was opened for freight and passenger service on 30 April 1917. When the Victoria & Sidney Railway closed in 1919, businesses in Sidney found themselves without a direct rail connection to Victoria, so in December 1919 an agreement was reached for the CNR to purchase the Bazan Bay-Sidney section. The passenger service was withdrawn in 1921, but freight lines continued to be expanded into southern Vancouver Island well into the 1930s. By the early 1980s, most tracks had been abandoned.

CNR tracks from Vernon Avenue to Mount Douglas, 1960s (1984-003-033)

1916

Shelbourne Street, today a major artery, began life as a narrow, somewhat insignificant road to market for the early farmers of Gordon Head. By 1912, settlement in Gordon Head was growing and farmers needed a good road to transport their produce to market in Victoria.

In 1915, construction started on a thoroughfare that would extend from Cedar Hill Road at Mount Douglas Park to connect with Victoria's Shelbourne Street south of Cedar Hill Cross Road. Shelbourne Street officially opened in Saanich in November 1916.

Opening of Shelbourne Street, 1916 (1984-008-007)

Construction of Shelbourne Street through Todd farm, ca. 1915 (1980-017-002)

1915

William Trevelick Edwards sent his first shipment of **daffodils** to Calgary from his home on Ferndale Road in 1915. Edwards started as a fruit grower in Gordon Head, but later sent to his brother for a shipment of bulbs from their home farm in England. His first sales of daffodils were to local florists like A.J. Woodward's Fort Street store.

By the autumn after his first shipment to Calgary, the daffodil industry was booming. Other farmers hearing of this soon became flower growers too. By the 1920s, the Victoria directories showed that many Gordon Head fruit growers had changed their category to flower grower. One of those early flower producers was Geoffrey Vantreight, whose descendants continued to farm daffodils into the 21st century.

Above: W.T. Edwards' daffodil fields, Grandview Road, 1930 (1980-006-004)

Middle: W.T. Edwards, ca, 1920 (1980-006-031)

Below: Swim meet, probably at Margaret Bay, early 1900s (2014-008-094)

1916

The first meeting of the **Gordon Head Athletic Club** was held at the **Gordon Head Community Hall** on 31 May 1916. W.T. Edwards was president and Mrs. Marie McNaughton secretary. The athletic organization was founded earlier that year and one of the club's offerings was twice-weekly swimming lessons given by Edwards at Margaret Bay. Edwards was also the leader of the Sea Scouts during the heyday of the Club.

Mrs. McNaughton can be credited with starting the Athletic Club, and along with Dorothy Beales, she was also the leader of the first company of Girl Guides in Gordon Head. The Gordon Head Athletic Club's first project was to construct tennis courts behind the new two-room school.

George Watson, a Gordon Head resident who was active in municipal affairs, provided singing lessons at the Community Hall, and student concerts held there helped raise money for the Red Cross during WWI.

1919

In 1918, **Edward Raper** and his wife Sarah (nee Rippon) bought property at what later became the north end of the University Heights Shopping Centre near Hopesmore Drive. Some of their land had once been part of Peter Merriman's 19th century dairy farm. In 1919, they moved into the house that had been built in 1890 at 3990 Cedar Hill Road. Over time, Edward continued to buy more property and soon had enough acreage for a herd of 60 cattle. He sold his own milk by travelling the neighbour-

hood on a cart, often accompanied by his eldest daughter Edna. Edward died in 1966 and much of the farmland was then sold for development. Sarah was very involved with St. Aidan's Church, and was well known for her annual St. Patrick's Day tea. She also held teas in aid of the Young Ministers' Fund. Her famous teas were a tradition in the neighbourhood for 60 years. Sarah died in 1982, and the old Raper farmhouse was demolished in 1983.

Above: Raper farmhouse, 1972 (1984-010-005)
*Right: Mrs. E.T. Raper and family, 1960s (1984-002-003)*

1920s

Prior to the 1920s, pioneers who owned large tracts along the seafront near Cormorant Point were content to allow the children of the district access to the beach through their property, but an increasing population made this a burden and local children were finding old paths closed. To create access to the widely-used **Margaret Beach**, Dr. Kenneth Campbell purchased part of Sarah Finlayson's property, which had been owned by her mother's family since 1858, and set aside a strip of land extending from Ferndale Road to the sea for public use. This later became Balmaccara Road.

Above: Eustace Estlin at Margaret Bay, ca. 1923 (2016-017-008)

Below: Maude Aitkens and Mollie Tucker on the rocks at Margaret Bay beach, ca. 1923 (2016-017-125)
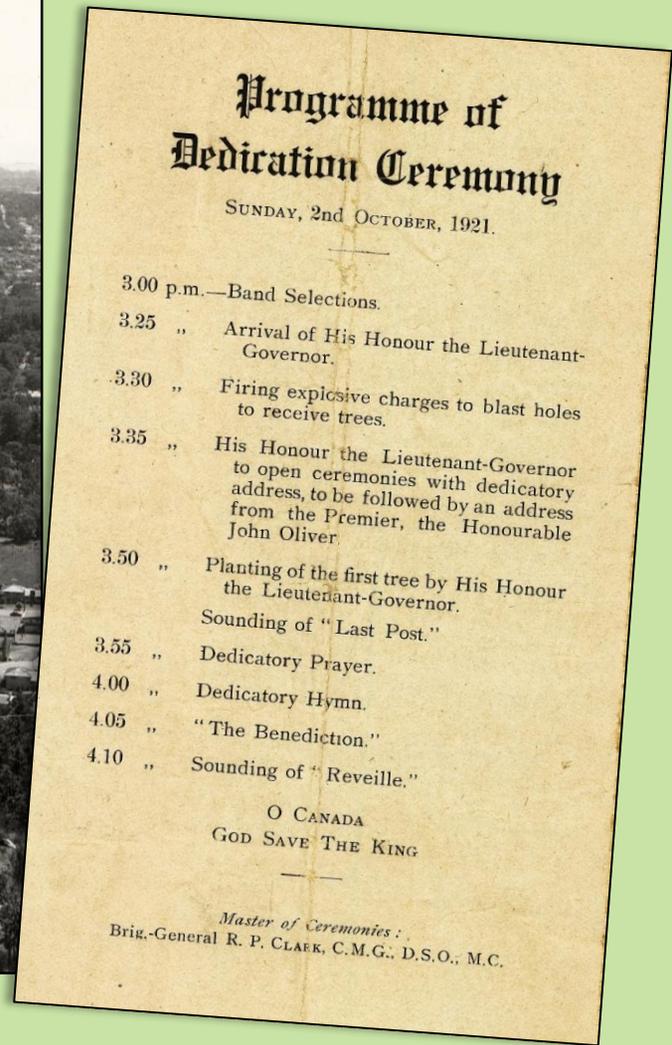
Above: View from Mount Douglas showing row of trees along Shelbourne Street, 1969 (1980-021-001a)
Right: Programme from the Memorial Avenue dedication ceremony, 2 October 1921

1921

Following the end of World War I in 1918, Canada began erecting statues and cenotaphs to honour the memory of its war dead. Out of this arose plans to turn **Shelbourne Street** into a "Road of Remembrance," or "**Memorial Avenue**" to serve as a tribute to fallen soldiers. The proposal was for 350 London Plane trees to be planted on either side of the boulevard as memorials to those who had fallen in the war. By 1921, the project goals had expanded to include a tree for every British Columbian who died in the war. Some 600 trees were planted, many of which were surrounded by wrought iron fences and decorated with commemorative plaques. That number would prove insufficient, as ten times that many men and women from British Columbia died in the Great War. Memorial Avenue was formally dedicated on the afternoon of 2 October 1921. The ceremony was held near the entrance to Mount Douglas Park where 7,000 people arrived to hear speeches by Premier John Oliver and Lieutenant Governor Walter Nichol.

As time passed, interest in the project diminished and Shelbourne Street did not fully materialize into the Memorial Avenue that was originally intended. In September 1960, Saanich Council formally passed a resolution to rededicate Shelbourne Street as Memorial Avenue and to include soldiers killed in World War II and the Korean War. This too was not fully realized, and by 1965 all the original commemorative plaques were gone. Development throughout the 1960s and 1970s continued to threaten the future of the London Plane trees. In 1969, some of the trees planted in 1921 were removed to allow road widening for the University Heights Shopping Centre at McKenzie Avenue. As further development stretched along Shelbourne Street and the road was expanded from two lanes to four, a huge swath of the boulevard of trees disappeared.

In 2018, the *Memorial Avenue Committee* organized a re-dedication ceremony and commemoration of the 1918 Armistice. In advance of the event, Saanich installed 30 Memorial Avenue sign toppers along Shelbourne Street.

1921

While serving overseas during WWI, **Jack Williamson** decided that when he returned to Gordon Head he would set up a bus service. When he got home he found that Carl Henry had beat him to it. In 1921, Carl Henry was willing to sell, and Jack and his brother William became the owners of what had been **Gordon Head's first bus**. Home-made by Henry, the vehicle was basically a Ford Model T one-ton truck with a wooden body added. The sides of this reached a little above the seat level. From there to the roof was a canvas curtain that could be pushed open. On 1 January 1922, the rules of the road switched traffic from the left side of the road to the right. Jack and his father worked late the night before, transferring the entry door from one side of the bus to the other in readiness for the next morning. William died of tuberculosis in 1923 but Jack continued to grow the business until the late 1920s when the Williamson family bus service, along with others around Victoria, was bought by the Matson Coach Lines Company.
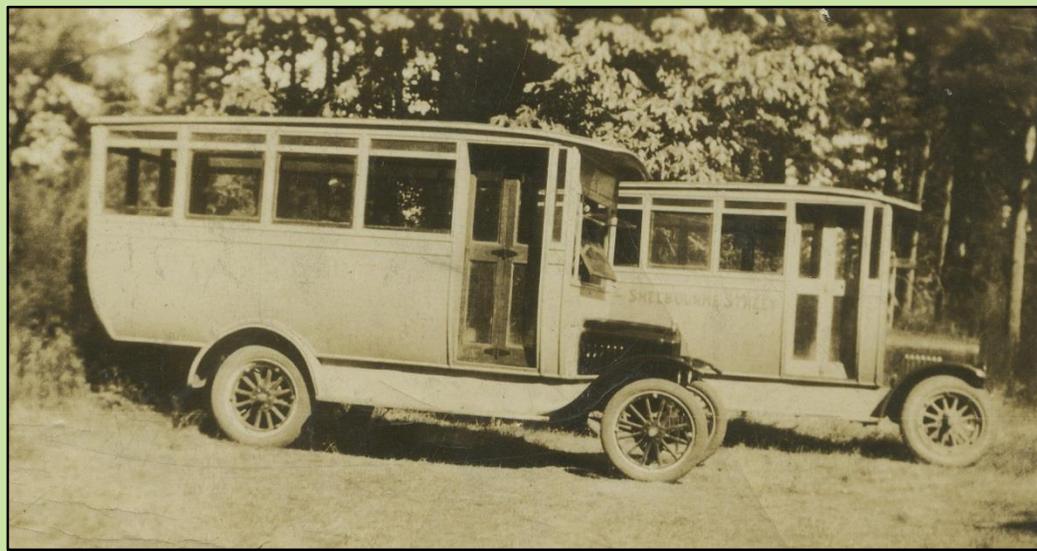
1922-1958

Around 1921, to supplement the income he earned from his apple orchard, **Billy Edwards** began driving the bus for his friend Jack Williamson. Williamson was finding that his Model T truck-based bus was too small for his growing clientele, so he suggested that Edwards buy the old one and expand the auxiliary parcel-carrying service that was becoming an inconvenience to the bus service. In March 1922, after removing the bus seats from the truck, Edwards began **Gordon Head's first delivery service.**

On the way into town he carried loads of cauliflower, potatoes, fruit and flowers. On the return trip to Gordon Head he carried bales of straw or hay, sacks of fertilizer, and lumber. He also made many individual deliveries such as furniture, or flowers for a funeral, and for a time, the daily can of milk for a city businessman from the cow he kept at his Gordon Head summer home. He also hauled livestock to the Agricultural Fair at Willows. In the early years his busiest days were in fruit season, but as the flower industry grew in the 1930s and 1940s, his busiest days were in the spring. By the 1950s, farms were getting scarcer in Gordon Head and holly from the Pemberton orchard was the only harvest he carried. In August 1958, Billy Edwards closed his business.

Above: Williamson bus, ca. 1923 (2020-002-032)
Middle: Williamson bus, 1920s (2020-002-033)
Below: Schedule for Cordova Bay Stage, undated

1921

Until 1921, the few families who lived in the north end of the Shelbourne Valley got much of their water from the springs on James Todd's Spring Farm. In 1921, Gordon Head was finally connected to the **city water supply.** In the same year, thanks to a campaign led by Gordon Head residents such as Mileva Todd and W.C. Grant, Gordon Head finally received **electricity**.

The arrival of city water and electricity did not immediately change the lives of the few residents of Shelbourne Street, but it did eventually bring more to settle in the valley. The spread of new homes out along the new Shelbourne Street was slow but, by the mid-1920s, the Shelbourne Valley had become a favored area for greenhouses. First among these were Young Bros. Greenhouses, established in 1924 by Lum Young Chow near the intersection of Shelbourne and Ruby Road (McKenzie).

Interior of Young Bros. greenhouses on Shelbourne Street, 1955 (2011-044-010)

1924

Saanich resident **Lum Young Chow** arrived in Victoria in 1903 at the age of 18. He began working as a houseboy for W. Jameson of the W.A. Jameson Coffee Company. For several years he worked 14 to 16 hours a day. Eventually he saved enough money to pay for his three brothers to come to Victoria. In 1924, wishing to go into business for himself he bought land on the west side of Shelbourne Street (later the University Heights Shopping Centre), and established his very successful greenhouses. They were demolished in 1980.

Some of the **other early greenhouse** operators were Chum Ham, Lee Lock, and W.F. Creed. Later came the Montagues, the Newtons, the Lakes, Art Knapp, and Mr. Louis. W.F. Creed was one of the greenhouse operators who began by raising vegetables in his greenhouses on the south side of Kenmore, west of Shelbourne. He later became renowned for his roses. In the 1930s, the Sing family on Blair Street laid the foundation of the business that later became part of the large Victoria Hydroponic Farms Ltd.

Above: Exterior of Young Bros. greenhouses on Shelbourne Street, July 1927 (2013-022-001)

Below: Lum family on the porch of their Shelbourne Street home, and Young Bros. greenhouses and employees, July 1927 (2013-022-003) [Looking south along Shelbourne Street. Building on far right was the original Lum family home, the centre building was a workers' house, and the building to the left was a packing shed and warehouse]

Lee Lock greenhouses on Tyndall Avenue, 1969 (1984-003-020)


Lee Yan (Burdon) greenhouses, 1969 (1984-003-017c)

Young Day greenhouses on Shelbourne Street, 1970 (1984-003-024b)

1925

Arthur Lambrick came to Victoria around 1911. In 1914, he married Clara Sedgman and from 1915 to 1925, they ran a grocery and hardware store at the corner of Shelbourne Street and Kings Road. In 1925, Lambrick bought the first ten acres of a dairy farm near Feltham Road from Luke Pither who, from 1908 to 1924, had operated a hobby farm. When Luke Pither died a few years later, Mrs. Pither continued to live in their house, but she sold the remaining land to Lambrick, 5 acres at a time over the next several years. When she died in 1944, the Lambricks moved into the Pither house.

Arthur Lambrick served as chair of the Vancouver Island Milk Producers' Association for a time, and served on Saanich Council, as Police Commissioner, and for two terms as Reeve of Saanich. In 1966, a year before his death, he sold his herd and his property.

Above: Haying on the Lambrick farm, 1960s (1980-022-002)
Right: Arthur, Clara, and Elizabeth Lambrick, 1916 (1980-022-004)
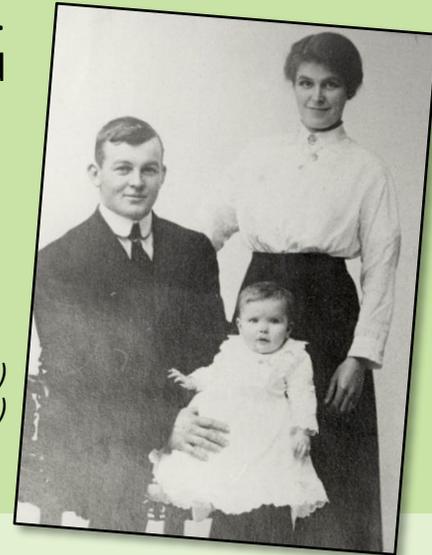
1927

In 1918 W.C. Grant's house, Craigelachie, burned down and the new owner of the property, Eleanor Fleming, built a new house. In 1927 Colonel S.C. McMullen and his wife Lois moved onto the property at Cormorant Point. They named their home **Strangewood** after the petrified wood brought in from Drumheller, Alberta, where the McMullans had coal-mining interests. The McMullens made additions to the house and were responsible for transforming the farmland into an estate of spreading lawns, rose gardens, perennial borders and arbors. Building the elaborate gardens took years and was overseen by a succession of head gardeners and staff. The first head gardener was Wilgan Playfair, who for 15 years planted trees, built the stone basket on the front lawn, and in 1932, installed the lily gardens that guarded the famous petrified wood. An aviary was also built during this period. When later this was dismantled, its pair of white peacocks was given **to Beacon Hill Park.**

Throughout the 1930s and during WWII, Lois McMullen, now widowed, aided the Red Cross by hosting garden parties. After 1945, the garden parties continued, this time in aid of St. Luke's Church.

Above: Poster for Garden Party, 1940s (2017-018)
Below: Will, Emma Nutter, and Ethel Lytton at Strangewood, July 1946 (2019-016-410)

1929

George Leadbetter opened Shelbourne Street's **first garage**, the GDL Service Station, at the southeast corner at Ruby Road (now McKenzie) in 1929. The small building that housed the garage and George's living quarters stood very close to the road, the narrow entrance being sufficient for the volume of customers who rarely arrived more than one at a time. George ran the GDL Service Station until his death in 1932.

1930s

Around 1890, **James Richards** and his family moved to the Springridge area in Victoria, then later bought 75 acres in Gordon Head (which became part of University Heights Shopping Centre). James Richards' daughter, Lena, married **Samuel Ruby**, a butcher by trade, and the couple started a **dairy farm** at Kenmore Road and Shelbourne Street in the 1930s. They had a small herd of between 15 and 30 cows and delivered milk to the Gordon Head and Cedar Hill districts. Later, they sold milk to Mr. Michelle in Victoria and to Shepherd's Dairy who picked up bottled milk from

the farm, though the Rubys always maintained the 12 km Gordon Head milk route. Samuel and Lena's son Bill went on to build greenhouses where he grew tomatoes and flowers.

Contrary to popular belief, Ruby Road was not named for the Ruby family. The road can be seen on maps many years before the Ruby family established their farm.

Above: Mr. and Mrs. Ruby, between 1930 and 1950 (1981-005-015)

Right: James Richards, Ruby Road farm, 1920s (1981-005-011)

Below: Bill Ruby and calf, Shelbourne and Mortimer Streets, 1923 (1981-005-004)

1930s

Mount Douglas tea room, 1926 (1981-005-026)

By 1938, the Depression workers who built Churchill Drive to the top of Mount Douglas were gone, and the huts where they had lived were put to use by young travelers who came from all over Canada to stay in the new Youth Hostel. One of the amenities of **Mount Douglas Park** in the mid-1930s was a small cedar coffee shop not far from the park entrance, run by Mr. and Mrs. Libby. Food was also available at the park's second restaurant farther up the slope, run by a Mrs. Edwards. George Rosson had cut cedar trees for the lumber to build the restaurant in 1939. At times the restaurant would get very busy (once serving 200 people at one meal), and Caroline Rosson would come from her nearby home in the Shelbourne Valley to help Mrs. Edwards serve the steak dinners that, complete with dessert, cost 35 cents.

1933-1960

Cluster of loganberries, 1930s (2011-004-003)

The need for a local cannery was first voiced by Gordon Head farmers in 1926. In 1932, R.S. Twining, then manager of the Gordon Head Fruit Growers Association, met with two men connected with the co-operative movement in England. They informed him that if he could supply canned fruit, they could assure him of a market in Britain. The Lake Hill Cannery was quickly rented and that year, with the guidance of an experienced canner, 4,000 cases of canned strawberries, loganberries, raspberries and cherries were sent. The growers' real need was for a cannery of their own. By the time the 1933 crops were ripe, the **Gordon Head Cannery** on Tyndall Avenue was ready.

In the first year, a staff of a dozen women and ten youths was sufficient, but the cannery eventually came to employ 60 people. During the busiest times the cannery ran two shifts, and as many as 20,000 cases were put up in one season. For 12 years the enterprise flourished. By the end of WWII, war-time shortages of cans and sugar, as well as pests such as the strawberry weevil and June bug larvae that reduced crop yields, led to the decline of the cannery. By 1956, only a few growers were bringing small amounts of fruit to the old depot, and in 1960 the Gordon Head Cannery finally closed.

1935

In 1935, **Nellie (nee Mooney) and Wesley McClung** bought the property at 1861 Ferndale Road. They named it **Lantern Lane** after the ship's lantern that Nellie hung on the coach house door to throw a "welcoming beam of light on a dark night down the lane". The house, built in 1914, was first owned by John Fullerton, who had served as second engineer on the Hudson's Bay Company paddle wheel steamer *SS Beaver* from 1877 to 1878. After the death of his wife Annie (nee Reid), Fullerton retired to Gordon Head and became a strawberry farmer. Colonel Albert William and Henrietta Marion Woods later acquired the property, and were some of the first to grow tulips commercially in Gordon Head.

Nellie McClung was a teacher, suffragist, social reformer, and champion for the causes of women's rights, prohibition, and the Liberal party. It was as a result of her efforts that in 1916, Manitoba became the first province to give women the right to vote and to run for public office. McClung and four fellow campaigners, the "Famous Five", successfully petitioned the Supreme Court of Canada for clarification of the interpretation of the word 'person' in the British North America Act, thereby making women eligible for appointment to the Senate. From 1921 to 1926, she served as a member of the Alberta Legislature and in 1939, she represented Canada at the League of Nations in Geneva. She was the first woman to sit on the CBC Board of Governors, and the first woman elder in the United Church of Canada. McClung was also a successful author, and her books typically celebrated the country ideal over city life. Her house became nationally famous in *Leaves from Lantern Lane* and *More Leaves from Lantern Lane*, penned in her upstairs study. The books contain reflections on her life, her neighbourhood, and her joy in her house and garden.

Above: Nellie McClung at Lantern Lane, ca. 1949 (2008-010-001)
Below: Lantern Lane house, 1861 Ferndale Road, 1960s (1981-023-004b)

LEAVES from LANTERN LANE

Nellie L. McClung

1940

Former Gordon Head Army barracks at the University of Victoria, ca. 1970 (1978-001-078)
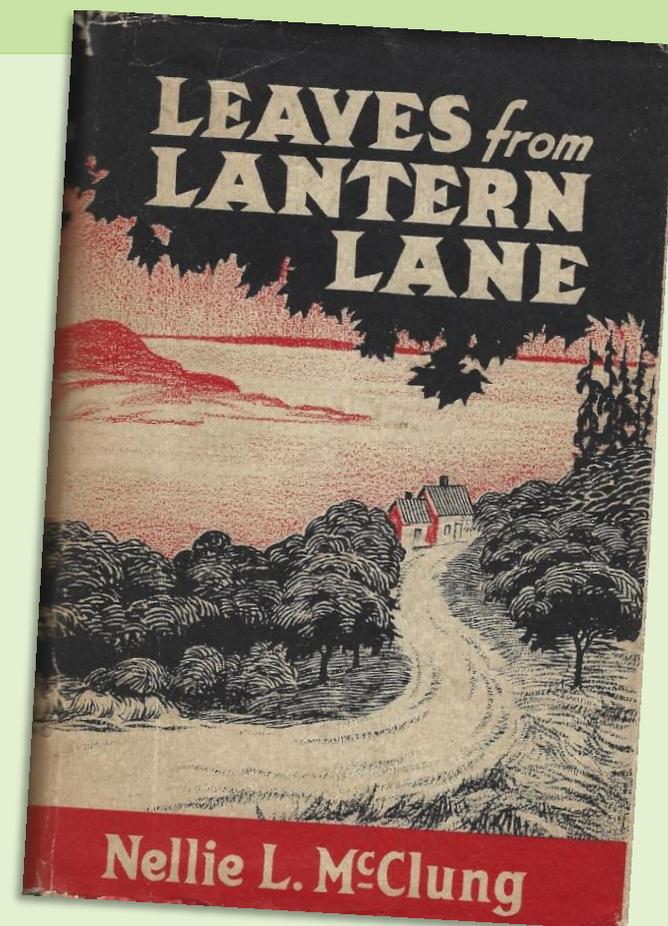
When Canada entered WWII, the federal government quickly began establishing training camps for recruits across the country. In September 1940, more than 50 buildings were erected for the **Gordon Head Army Camp**. Approximately 400 members of the Royal Canadian Engineers constructed the units which included officers' huts, sleeping quarters and mess halls. Permanent staff numbered 200 under the camp commandant Lieutenant Colonel T.B. Monk. The camp could accommodate 1000 men at a time for 30 days of intensive training.

After the war, the camp housed a variety of military functions including casualty retraining and rehabilitation of prisoners of war returning from Japan. During the housing crisis that followed the war, the Department of Veterans' Affairs also accommodated soldiers and their families in the camp's huts. During the Korean War, from 1950 to 1953, the camp reverted to its original use for soldiers. In 1959, the site was purchased by Victoria College (which became the University of Victoria in 1963) and the huts were used for a variety of administrative and academic purposes.

Aerial view of Gordon Head, showing University of Victoria campus under construction at right and Gordon Head Army Camp left of centre, 1960s (detail of 1995-004-011)

1950

As the population of Gordon Head started to grow in the early 1950s, it was determined that a fire station was needed to serve the area. **Saanich No. 3 Fire Hall** officially opened on 18 August 1950 with a budget of just over $100,000 per year. During the 1950s, they responded to around 300 calls per year.

In the 1960s, the Saanich Fire Department introduced an ambulance service, and by the 1970s was a leader in the ambulance and rescue field. Saanich was the first fire department in Canada in which members administered drugs and used specific life support equipment to aid heart attack victims. In 1975, a second ambulance was placed in service in the No. 3 Fire Hall.

Above: Saanich Fire Department outside Fire Station No. 3, 1968 (2006-014-019)

Below: Saanich No. 3 Fire Station, October 1961 (2006-014-013)

1955

Mums the Word At Garden Club

Mrs. C. J. Freeborn will discuss chrysanthemums at the meeting of the Gordon Head Garden Club at 8 p.m. Monday in the Gordon Head Community Hall.

The club also announced yesterday that Sept. 19 has been set as the date for its annual fall show, to avoid clashing with a chrysanthemum show Sept. 26.

Above: Daily Colonist, 10 September 1959
Right: Daily Colonist, 10 September 1961

Big Day for Big Blooms at Gordon Head.

First-prize winner in large decorative dahlias class at Gordon Head Garden Club's annual fall show is held by Mrs. E. W. Carey, judge. Enetry was submitted by Art Hadfield, 1160 Reynolds.— —(Colonist photo.)

Horticulturalist Ed Renouf came to Gordon Head in 1928 with his wife and daughter. He soon began coaching school children of the district on how to prepare exhibits for the Victoria Horticultural Society's spring show. By the 1950s, Syd Smethurst was leading a Boy's Club out of the Gordon Head Mutual Improvement Society and this led to Ed establishing a Junior Garden Club. The first year only boys were allowed to join, but girls were admitted the following year. Parents of the young gardeners were moved to suggest a club for adults. Only 12 attended the first meeting of the **Gordon Head Garden Club**, but by the 1970s the club had 100 members. Ed Renouf filled the position of president for nine years.

1956

23,000 Students

'Full House' Signs Up At Schools

"Full house" signs were posted at several Greater Victoria schools yesterday as an estimated 23,000 youngsters began the fall term.

Officials said, however, opening day arrangements went off without a hitch, fulfilling the expectation that district schools would be filled to capacity this fall and winter, but still able to accommodate the predicted record enrolment without shift classes.

School superintendent John Gough said he received word from Gordon Head elementary school and Lampson Street school that all class rooms were filled to capacity.

The overcrowding situation in the Gordon Head-Lansdowne area was eased by opening of the new Gordon Head Junior High School with an enrolment so far of 336 students.

A special class of 15 elementary children was moved from the jammed Lampson Street school to nearby Mac-Aulay elementary school. At Lampson, enrolment jumped from 615 to 667.

GORDON HEAD

Another 20 children, living near the boundaries of the school attendance area, were moved from the overcrowded Gordon Head elementary to Shelbourne and Frank Hobbs schools.

Mr. Gough said in the overall picture there was a slight decrease in enrolment in some Victoria schools compensated by increases in Saanich and Esquimalt.

He pointed out the enrolment totals didn't include 33 pupils enrolled for classes at Queen Alexandra Solarium, 21 others in special classes for the retarded, and between 100 and 150 taught in St. Joseph's and Royal Jubilee Hospitals.

By the early 1950s, the effects of the Baby Boom were being felt by the Saanich school system, and a larger school was needed to replace the old Gordon Head School on Tyndall Avenue. In 1956, students at the old Gordon Head School moved to **Gordon Head Elementary** on Kenmore Road. The school opened with 6 classrooms, one for each grade, and a large auditorium. Dan Parfitt was the first principal. The school was officially opened by Saanich Reeve Arthur Ash on 11 April 1956. In 2007, the school building became **Gordon Head Middle School**, with children in grades 6, 7, and 8 attending.

Left: Daily Colonist 7 September 1960
Right: Daily Colonist 10 September 1960

1959

In 1901, land formerly owned by John Irvine was sold to Joseph Howroyd, who went on to operate a daffodil farm. Joseph Howroyd, whose house was located at 1641 Mortimer Street, was also a veteran flyer and co-owner of the Butler-Howroyd airstrip in Central Saanich.

In 1956, the Howroyd family began selling their land and the property for a new school was purchased. Construction began in 1958, and Shelbourne Elementary School opened in September 1959 with 140 students. An additional 4 classrooms and a new entrance were added in 1964, with a further addition in 1968.

The name was changed from Shelbourne Elementary to **Campus View School** around 1970.

Above: Campus View School with new entrance, ca. 1964 (2010-058-014)
Below: Campus View School with first addition, ca. 1964 (2010-058-011)

1950s-1970s

By the mid-1950s, the post-war economic and baby booms were helping to transform Gordon Head from a farming district into a **middle-class suburban community**. The transition was made possible by the introduction of sewers in the late 1960s. This period saw farmland subdivided and developed into single-family housing.

Above: Alderwood Street looking west off Cedarwood Street, 1967 (2019-012-051)

Right: #28 Majestic bus serving Gordon Head residents, ca. 1970 (2019-012-341)


1960

In 1960, **Gordon Head Junior Secondary** opened in a new building on Gordon Head Road. In 1970, Gordon Head Junior Secondary was split into two schools, with students moving to either Arbutus Junior Secondary or Cedar Hill Junior Secondary which is located in the former Mount Douglas High School on Cedar Hill Road. Mount Douglas High School students moved into the now vacated Gordon Head Junior Secondary and the name of the building was changed to Mount Douglas Secondary.

SEE YOUR
SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMME
IN ACTION
SUN., JUNE 8
2:30 p.m.
CAMERON BAND SHELL
BEACON HILL PARK
GORDON HEAD JUNIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL BAND
CONDUCTOR: EMILE MICHAUX
Master of Ceremonies: Harry Downard

Victoria school board opened tenders Thursday for a six-room addition to Gordon Head junior secondary, and the results sent the project back to the drawing board.

Low tender from G. H. Wheaton Ltd. was for $133,166, which was $17,908 more than the $115,258 marked for this purpose in a referendum.

Above: Daily Colonist, 8 June 1968
Right: Daily Colonist, 26 Marcy 1965
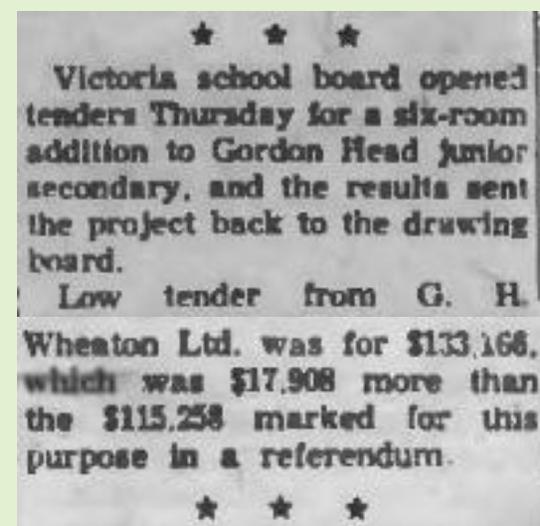
1963

In 1959, owing to pressures from increasing enrollment at **Victoria College**, the University Development Board purchased 120 acres of land on Finnerty Road formerly belonging to the Gordon Head Army Camp. In the spring of 1961, the Board of Governors hired a firm of architectural planners from San Francisco, Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, to develop a master plan for the new university campus. The designers created a plan of a central "garden campus" surrounded by a ring road. In 1963, Victoria College was succeeded by the **University of Victoria,** which by 1988 had expanded from 120 acres to 385.

Above: Student Union Building, ca. 1964 (2009-020-009)

Below: University of Victoria, Elliott building and McPherson Library, 1965 (1995-004-012)

1964

In the early 1960s, the Anglican Synod purchased land formerly owned by the Dunnett family for what would become **St. Dunstan's Anglican Church.** St. Dunstan's was formed in 1964 as an amalgamation of the congregations of the missions of St. Richard and St. Chad, led by Archdeacon A.E. Hardy. The first service was held at the San Juan Avenue church on 6 February 1966, and the church was dedicated a month later. Meanwhile, Gordon Head United Church was finding that they had outgrown the hall they had erected in 1961, and they were considering building their own church proper. They consulted with the Victoria Presbytery who advised them that their most responsible move would be to confer with the Anglicans about possible interdenominational co-operative use of St. Dunstan's. Beginning in 1972, St. Dunstan's and **Gordon Head United Church** formed the first joint parish of its kind which lasted for several years.

*St. Dunstan's Anglican Church, ca. 2012*

1965

In 1965, Saanich purchased the land for **Lambrick Park** from dairy farmer and former Saanich Reeve Arthur Lambrick. The park area purchased was 44 acres, some of which was used for Gordon Head Recreation Centre and some for Lambrick Park Secondary School. In 1971, the Victoria Gladiolus and Dahlia Society installed a test garden in the park.

Above: Lambrick Farm looking from Feltham Road, 1956 (1978-001-079)
Right: Detail of architectural plan for Lambrick Park Clubhouse addition, 1971 (M1-05-08)
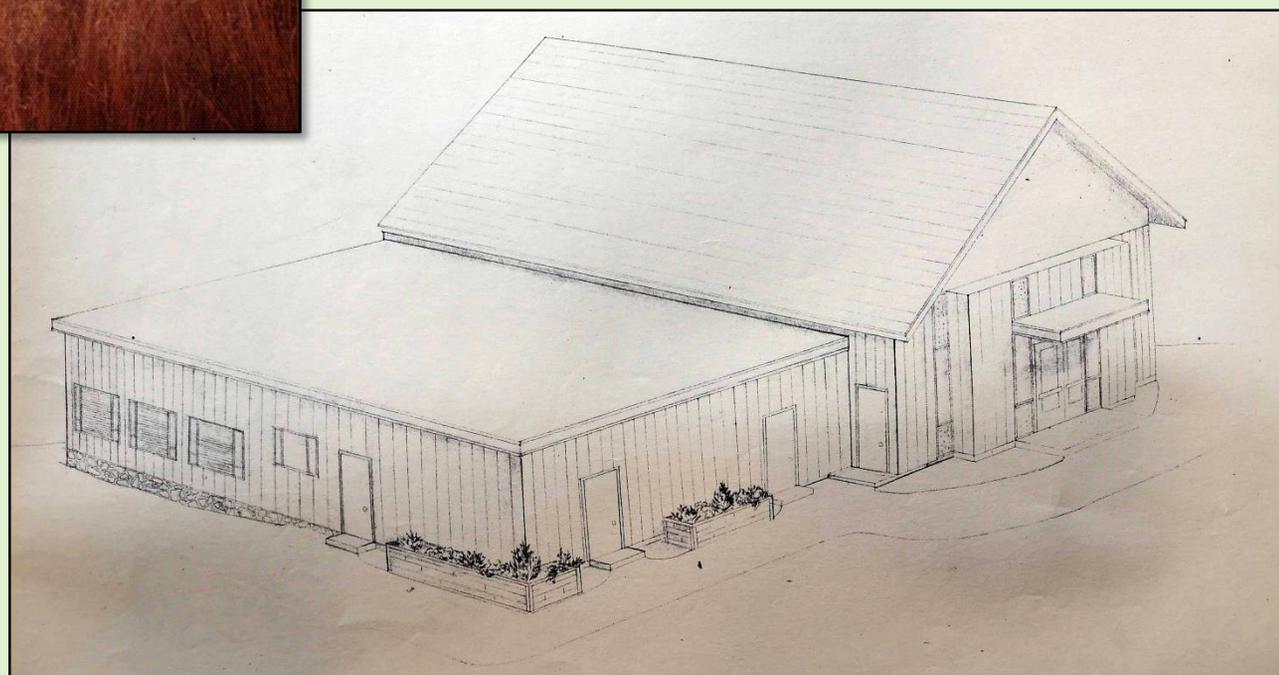
1970

Construction on the **University Heights Shopping Centre** on Shelbourne Street began in February 1970. A year later in March 1971, the shopping centre held its grand opening. The land north of McKenzie Avenue between Cedar Hill Road and Shelbourne Street was first cleared by James Richards in 1890. He had come to Victoria with his wife and two sons from Colorado shortly after the death of one of their children. They bought 75 acres for their Gordon Head farm. From 1924 until the 1980s, this area was the location of the Lum Greenhouses.

Above: Daily Colonist, 3 March 1971

Below: Aerial view of University Heights Shopping Centre, 3 October 1974 (2016-038-024j)

1971

Gordon Head Recreation Centre and swimming pool was officially opened 13 January 1971 by then-mayor, Hugh Curtis. The modern complex owes its start to a petition presented to Saanich Council by the Gordon Head Mutual Improvement Society in 1963. In 1994 the pool was updated, and in 1995 the Little League clubhouse was rebuilt.

Above: Gordon Head Rec Centre pool, 1973 (1981-021-012c)
Below: Gordon Head Rec Centre exterior, 1970s (1982-001-023c)

1970

In 1970, students at **Mount Douglas High School** moved into the recently vacated Gordon Head Junior Secondary School at 3970 Gordon Head Road and the name was changed to **Mount Douglas Secondary**. The former school on Cedar Hill Road became Cedar Hill Middle School.

The original Mount Douglas High School, which is now in use as Cedar Hill Middle School, was one of the first 3 high schools in Saanich. Mount Douglas, Mount View, and Mount Newton High Schools were all built in 1931.

Top Left: Mount Douglas School, 1976 (2019-012-188)

1976

Lambrick Park Secondary School opened in September 1976 to students in grades 8 to 11, with grade 12 scheduled to be added the following year. There were 29 staff that year including Mr. Voth as Principal. The school had a difficult first few months because, while only 460 students were expected to enroll, 575 students arrived on opening day. By October of 1976, two additional teachers had been hired and two portable classrooms installed to ease the overcrowding.

YOU ARE INVITED
by the
Greater Victoria School Board
to the official opening of
LAMBRICK PARK SECONDARY SCHOOL
4139 Torquay Drive
(next to Gordon Head Recreation Centre)
Thursday, October 7 at 8 P.M.
PARKING will be limited
Come Early
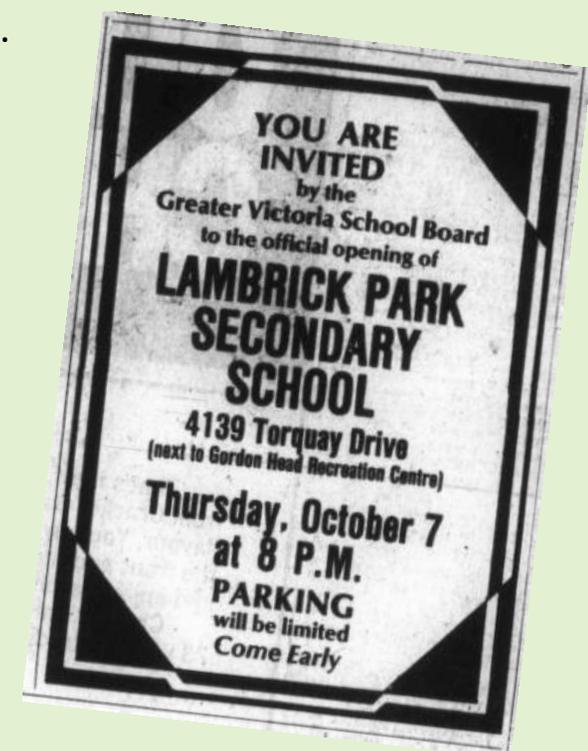
Centre Left: Bicycles outside Lambrick Park School, 1976 (2019-012-189)
Bottom Left: Lambrick Park School, 1976 (2019-012-157)
Right: Times Colonist, 6 October 1976

1976

Brass and voices to blend in square

A 45-minute musical program by the Oak Bay High School brass choir and the Torquay elementary school choir will be presented at 7:30 p.m. today in Centennial Square.

Times Colonist, 13 December 1978

Torquay Elementary School officially opened on 21 October 1976. There were 34 more students enrolled than expected, and an additional teacher was hurriedly hired to solve the problem. As well, construction of the gym was not complete by opening day. There were 17 staff members that year led by Mr. Donald Falder as Principal. Mrs. Wood was the last of the original staff members to leave Torquay School when she retired in 2008 after 32 years.

The school was named after Torquay Drive, which in turn was named by then-Reeve Arthur G. Lambrick in 1940 after the town in Cornwall where he was born. Until 1940, Torquay Drive was called Pollock Road, named after the Pollock family who lived in the Dodd house from around 1874 to 1900.

1996

Glencoe Cove-Kwatsech Park officially opened in 1996, the name Glencoe Cove having been adopted by Saanich in 1986. Previously, the area was sometimes called Codfish Cove by locals. Kwatsech is the Songhees word for Gordon Head, as told to ethnologist Wilson Duff by Songhees elders Sophie Misheal and Ned Williams. Until around 1994, the entire area remained privately owned.
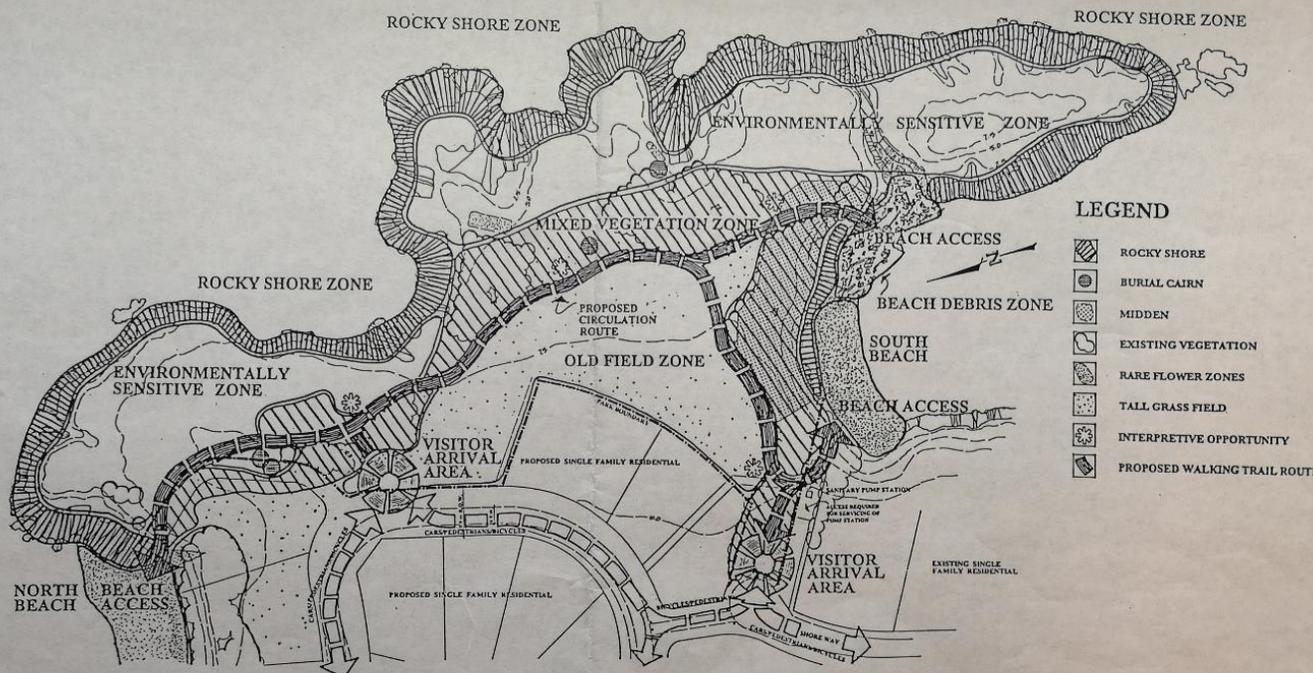
From 1912 until 1952, the present-day subdivision that surrounds the park consisted of an uncleared 13 acre property called Glencoe, owned by Keith Wilson. Wilson, a Victoria businessman, subsequently sold the land to Mr. Curle, who then sold it to Geoffrey Vantreight who subdivided it.

The park was once the site of a Songhees First Nation village or summer camp that dates back about 1500 years. In 1993, it was described by Grant Keddie, archaeology curator at the Royal BC Museum, as one of the best preserved of the few archaeological sites that occur along the 20 kilometers of exposed eastern waterfront between Ten Mile Point and Cowichan Head.
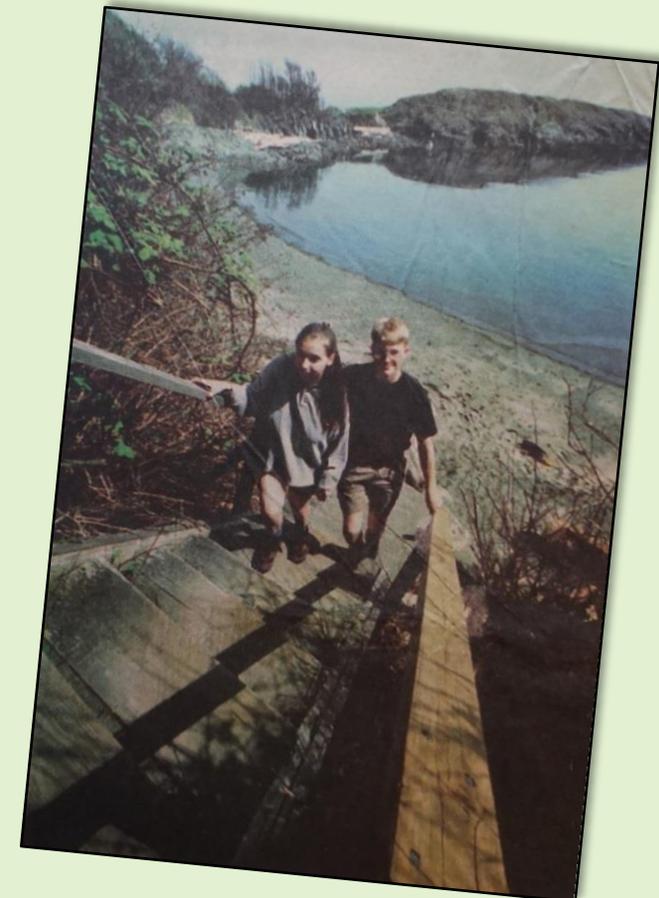
Above: Glencoe Cove Park Schematic Plan, District of Saanich Parks and Recreation Department, undated
Right: "Victoria-area residents Laura Dobie, left and Mark Reeves climb stairs up from Glencoe Cove."
Times Colonist, 23 April 1994

Left: Saanich brochure, 1922

FRUIT GROWING

IN THE HINTERLAND OF THE CITY OF
VICTORIA
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Strawberry growing—Saanich district.

A BERRY AND POULTRY FARM

GOOD MARKETS

AN ASSURED INCOME

Issued by

THE VICTORIA & ISLAND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAANICH

Working on your own research project?

Visit **www.saanich.ca/archives**
to access our online finding aids
and photo search site.

Saanich Archives is located inside the
Saanich Centennial Library next to Pearkes
Recreation Centre at 3100 Tillicum Road.

Our hours are:
Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

For more information contact us at:
archives@saanich.ca
250 475 5494 ext. 3478

Saanich

Produced by Saanich Archives, February 2021

Left: Saanich brochure, 1922
Right: Charles, Maude, and May Aitkens feeding
chickens on Aitkens farm ca. 1912 (2017-008-001)