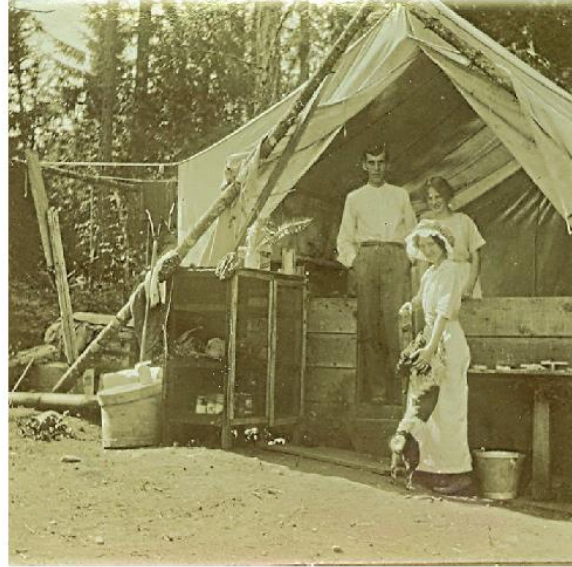# Saanich Archives

News & Events | Spring 2021

New Exhibit: Travel Through Time

Since we're not able to travel outside of our community this year, we thought it would be fun to take a trip with some past residents of Saanich. Our new exhibit features photos and postcards collected over the past 115 years by Saanich residents during their travels throughout Canada, the United States, and Europe. The exhibit is available now!

Recent Acquisition: Williamson family photo album

William Williamson opened Gordon Head's first grocery store in 1909 beside the driveway at his Tyndall Avenue home. Williamson was also responsible for successfully contracting Gordon Head's first rural mail route, and the Williamson home was the site of Gordon Head's first telephone office which opened in 1913. Williamson was the agent for the telephone company and his daughters worked in the office.

Thanks to a recent donation, Saanich Archives now has photos of William and Minnie Williamson and their children, friends and relatives, as well as their home and businesses. You can browse the entire Williamson family fonds on our website.To learn more about the many businesses operated by William Williamson and his children, check out our Gordon Head Local Area Exhibit.

Looking Back: Time to dust off your lawn bowling shoes, spring is just around the corner!

The Burnside Lawn Bowling Club, organized in 1922 and incorporated in 1923, was formed to *"promote, foster and safeguard the Game of Lawn Bowling, and to encourage and maintain Friendship amongst the Members."* In 1923, club member George Vallance donated land on Hampton Road for a green and clubhouse. The clubhouse, known as Hampton Hall, was completed in 1927 and is listed on the Saanich Heritage Register. This same year, a junior section was formed, adding to the already existing men's and women's leagues. Electric lights were added in 1930 to allow nighttime use of the green. In 1923, a Daily Colonist editorial praised the "*life-giving properties*" of lawn bowling clubs, so it's no surprise that the Burnside Lawn Bowling Club continues to operate to this day.
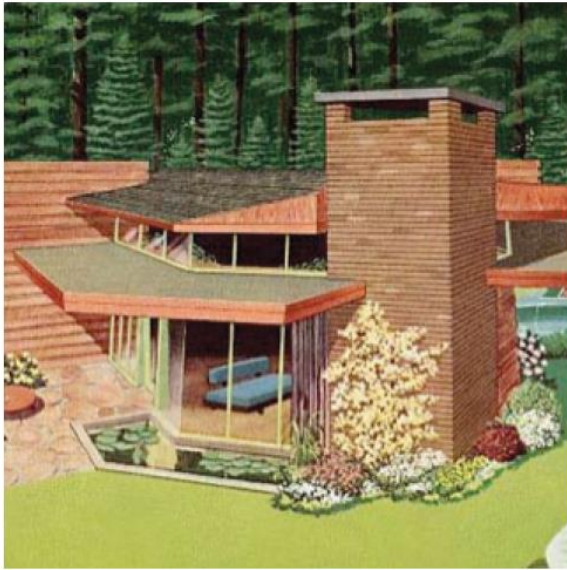
On the Web: Minutes of the Lake School Board meetings, 1878 - 1906

The Lake School, also known as the Lake District School, was established in 1865, built on land originally owned by pioneers Richard and Jane Cheeseman. Following Cheeseman's death, his widow Jane married James Bailey in 1864, and it was Bailey who donated the land for a neighbourhood school. The school opened its doors on 1 July 1865, with 5 boys and 10 girls, and a teacher named Elizabeth Beattie. The first schoolhouse was destroyed by fire in 1883, but in 1885 a new school (pictured right) was constructed on the same site. In the 1920s, a third schoolhouse (pictured left) was built next to what was now known as Royal Oak School. The 1885 schoolhouse can still been seen in its current location at 4525 West Saanich Road.

The minutes of the Lake School Board, beginning in 1878, are some of the oldest records in the Saanich archives, and include entries written by and about Saanich's Royal Oak area pioneers. You can browse the digitized minute book on our website.

Stories From Saanich: Heritage Houses

Ever wonder about who lived in some of the historic houses that now feature on the Saanich Heritage Register? Here are two of our favourites!

The Trend House, located at 3516 Richmond Road, was designed by architect John A. Di Castri. Completed in 1954, the house is one of 11 houses across Canada built under the "Trend House Program," a program which was meant to showcase the viability and versatility of BC lumber for building modern, affordable homes. The Saanich Trend House was commissioned by Gwendoline Cash, one of Canada's first female general reporters. Born in England, Cash came to Vancouver with her mother during WWI. She started with the Vancouver Province newspaper in 1917, worked as a publicist for the Board of Trade and the BC Teachers Federation, as publicity director for the Empress Hotel, and as a freelance writer. Cash also wrote three books, including her autobiography. She owned the house until 1971.

The Holland Residence, located at 1170 Tattersall Drive, was built in 1926 by local contractor and stonemason Arthur Stewart. The house was designed in the Arts and Crafts style by architects Sylvia Holland and her husband Francis "Frank" Holland. In 1933, Sylvia Holland became the first woman to register with the Architectural Institute of BC. Frank died suddenly in 1928, and a few years later, Sylvia moved to California with her two children. There she became one of the first women animators at the Disney Studios in Hollywood, working on movies such as *Fantasia* and *Bambi*. The Tattersall Drive house was leased to pharmacist William McGill and his wife Gertrude McGill, a child welfare advocate. In 1944, Gertrude opened Victoria's first co-operative preschool called the Children's Garden Library at the house. She also organized Victoria's first Save the Children fund drive in 1952, was a member of the Greater Victoria School Board for 11 years, and served 3 years as its first female chairperson.

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