

*Where*  
**Bulbs & Bungalows Met**



**A NEIGHBOURHOOD HISTORY**

*Dennis Minaker*



For Val,  
with thanks

# Where Bulbs & Bungalows Met

## -A Neighbourhood History-

Summer 2015

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*Cover photograph: Marion Dempster and Barbara Underwood kneeling in Dempster tulip fields, Spring of 1957. Looking south from these Freeman Avenue houses (numbers 1669 to 1673) meant a view of the distant Olympic Mountains - before construction began along Kingsley Place.*

*Opposite: Aerial view of Shelbourne Valley, 1928. Shelbourne Street runs up the middle, between Cedar Hill Road (left) and Richmond Road (right), to meet Cedar Hill Cross Road at the top. University School (now St. Michaels University School) with its curving driveway is at lower right, immediately below Knight Avenue. Only fenced field and orchards lie between that rough road and Pear Street to the north. Bowker Creek, open to the summer sun, snakes through fields at lower left.*





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# Acknowledgments & Introduction

Bugles, bulbs and bungalows - all bound together in time - make for a curious local history. But each came to light during my research of this past winter. Longtime neighbours Bob Foster and Bob Rogerson set me in motion when they recalled buying their houses (around 1949) from the original contractors, Paine and Townsend. From that start, I went further back in time to the founding farms of John Work and George Knight. Stories and photographs of people from years ago came my way, largely thanks to the generosity of their descendants here and elsewhere in the province. Those people included Pam Gaudio, Nancy Elliot, Chris Newton, Ron Barrieau, Richard Brown, Dawna Coady, Lynne Thompson, Cal and Betty Wambolt, Phyllis Leong, Barbara Dusseault, Judy Paine, Mollyanne Baker, Sheila Mar, Eric Nott and Gaye Rogerson. Special gratitude must go to Marion Dempster Craigmyle for the loan of her mother's diary and photo albums; equally to Joyce Whiteoak Gibson for her engaging childhood memories of Cedar Avenue. Above all, I give thanks for meeting the late Freeman Nott who graciously received me just after his ninety-ninth birthday this past Spring. His first-hand memories were truly invaluable.

Other helpful sources included the archives of British Columbia, Saanich, Victoria and St. Michaels University School. Back copies of *The Daily Colonist*, *Victoria Daily Times* and *B.C. Directories* were found at the legislative and public libraries. Old aerial photographs came from the map library of the University of Victoria. Published works of note included *Saanich Heritage Structures* (Luxton and Barr), *More Victoria Landmarks* (Castle and King), *Building The West* (Luxton) and *From Cordwood to Campus* (Jupp).

From the above, I was able to compile a few stories that highlight the past in this small neighbourhood bound by Shelbourne, Cedar, Richmond and McRae. Post-war bungalows have long since replaced the frontier farm, nursery and greenhouses where tulips and daffodils grew. Gone too are the flowering perennials and mixed vegetables once cultivated for city markets. But two structures that witnessed those changes have survived. One is an old farmhouse of uncertain origin. The other - standing apart both physically and culturally - is a private school established over a century ago to educate privileged boys in the tradition of Mother England. That unlikely combination, and more, is laid out on the pages that follow. Most of it is true.

Dennis Minaker, August 2015

# MOUNT TOLMIE NURSERY

*'Now's the Time! What For? To Plant Cabbage Plants'*

- The Daily Colonist, 1892

**JOHN WORK** (1791-1861) liked to grow big pumpkins. For that hobby he had more than enough land. In fact, by 1857 this former chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company had extended his Hillside Farm across one thousand acres from the salty shores of the Gorge Waterway eastward to a granite rise known as Mount Tolmie. Decades later, when land values matched a growing population, the Work family began to subdivide, carving off several sections into the so-called Mount Tolmie Estate. George Knight was one of the buyers, claiming twenty-eight acres of Section Thirty-six.



George Abiah Knight (1850-1928) of Hampshire, England, was still a young man when he took up horticulture, serving for a time at London's Crystal Palace Garden. Then, at age twenty, he crossed the Atlantic to Toronto and by 1876 was married to Emily Hephzibah Hundey (1849-1905) formerly of Birmingham, England. Four years later, they arrived in Victoria to establish Mount Tolmie Nursery in the flat expanse of Shelbourne Valley, land already cleared for pastures, hay meadows and orchards.

Access to the family property was via Mount Tolmie Road (now Richmond). From there, as Christine Dempster later recalled, *'a rough, narrow pathway filled with holes and ruts dropped quite steeply down through a damp stretch of wooded land where skunk cabbages grew.'* The track then continued westward, stopping just short of flood-prone Bowker Creek. Along this Knight's Lane (now Knight Avenue), a large house was built to accommodate a growing family of five children - daughters Jane Lily born in 1877, Rose Maude (1880), Emily May (1882), plus sons Cosmos Hundey (1885) and Graft Abiah (1890). Built on a brick foundation, the house was of farmhouse vernacular style with two wings of one and one-half



stories, each set at right angles to the other. A covered porch on the south-east corner marked the front entrance. Three bay windows lit the ground-floor, complete with a high-ceilinged parlour, pantry, kitchen and two bedrooms. Heat came initially from the kitchen stove and fireplaces. In later years, a circulating heater in the central hallway warmed upper bedrooms lit by gabled windows. Immediately behind the main structure stood a small 'milk house' of brick with a large barn some distance beyond. The surrounding land was given over to open fields, a small orchard and the actual nursery.

With housing in place, Knight set about establishing the Mount Tolmie Nursery. By 1889, he was listed in the local directory, competing against a dozen other like-businesses. Savoy cabbage, Brussel sprouts, broccoli, kale and other bedding plants for the vegetable garden were advertised in the two local journals. An order by post card to 'G. A. Knight, Mount Tolmie Nursery' guaranteed delivery of even one dollar's worth of bedding stock to any part of the city or province. Two dollars would buy one thousand young plants.

In 1919, Knight (along with adult sons, Cosmos and Graft) published a sixteen-page catalogue offering a full selection of shrubs, berry plants, herbs and vines. Seventy varieties of rose were included next to fruit and ornamental trees. *Knight's Early Scarlet* highlighted the choices of rhubarb. The pamphlet's inventory was complemented by printed advice towards successful home gardening:

*'Planting in moderately rich, well pulverized soil, free from standing water, improved by effective trenching, ploughing and draining. If not ready for planting on receiving trees or plants, unpack, trench or heel-in in a slanting position to keep the roots from the sun and air, or dip the roots in a puddle made by mixing clay with water until the consistency of cream, and lay away in a cool damp cellar until the return of suitable planting weather.'*

Further pages of the catalogue carried a glimpse into a nurseryman's lot. With professional pride, Knight declared that:

*'All trees and other plants that I have for sale are propagated and grown by me. I pack in the best possible manner, so that trees, etc., can be shipped to any part of the world, having had a life experience in the different branches of gardening. Plants are not supplied at less than six of one variety as time is money with me, and it takes time to run to different parts of the Nursery to dig and label separate trees. Furthermore, no nursery stock will be held without a deposit of half purchased price. The nursery business is too long-winded to run any risk. One party dies and others change their minds, and thus the poor nurseryman is left with stock on his hands that he often could have sold for cash, so please be considerate.'*

Knight's closing, rather cranky note hinted to a personal weariness. After his forty years in the trade, change was inevitable with loss already underway. On June 10, 1905 Emily Knight, aged fifty-three, died at the Royal Jubilee Hospital. Following a funeral service 'at the family

*residence, Mount Tolmie Nursery, where a number of appropriate hymns were rendered,*' burial took place at Ross Bay Cemetery. Pall-bearers included those in the nursery trade such as long-time florist Arthur Woodward and friends who shared her non-conformist Plymouth Brethren faith, including Cedar Hill Road neighbour George McMorran senior.

Marriage also pulled the family apart. On December 31, 1900 Rose Maude followed sister Jane Lily into marriage, taking the hand of widowed teamster John Kerr at her parents' Mount Tolmie home *'where a wedding supper was served and a pleasant evening spent'*. In late 1905, Emily May married shoe-salesman Kenneth Bushell. After some years in James Bay, where daughter Emily was born in 1908, the couple returned to the Mount Tolmie residence in 1911 for a brief stay.

Though both sons were initially partnered in the family business, change came there too. Around 1907, Cosmos moved to Mill Bay (then part of Cobble Hill) to establish his own farm and a satellite nursery. For years, the adjacent portion of the Island Highway - immediately south of Kilmalu Road - was known as Knight's Hill. Married in 1914 to Frances Williams, Cosmos farmed there till his own death in 1978. Graft married Alice Safford of South Vancouver in 1912 and later moved to his own land east of Mission in the Fraser Valley. He was still actively farming when felled by a heart attack in 1973.

George Abiah Knight's last years of failing health were spent between Victoria and Cobble Hill. He died at St. Joseph's Hospital on Fairfield Road on February 25, 1928. A funeral service was held at the Victoria Gospel Hall on Blanshard Street, with the singing of *'Safe in the Arms of Jesus.'* Numerous beautiful floral offerings covered the casket and hearse leading to Ross Bay where friends gathered at the graveside to sing *'Farewell for the Present.'* A simple cement curb stamped with *'KNIGHT'* marks the final resting place of Emily and George.

The elder Knight left an estate worth \$10,548 that included a hunting cabin and horse barn in the Sooke Hills. After George's death in 1928, his two children Graft and Rose took title to the remaining portion of the family estate in Section thirty-six - land on the northern border that would await two more decades before development as the present suburb bound by Freeman and Derby roads. Even by the early 1920s, Knight was easing towards retirement by selling properties along Knight's Lane. Three houses from that period survive there today: Number 1684 (first occupied by Isabella and Ernest Corble an accountant with the E&N Railroad), 1694 (then home to Sarah and carpenter Wesley Salter) and 1704 (housing the family of Susan and Richard Davis, a shipwright turned shoe salesman). Further subdivision of those deep properties came in 1960 to create Kingsley Place. In 1921, even the Knight family home was sold to the young nurseryman Franklin H. Hilborn of Ontario. By then the main vehicle entrance to the old house had been realigned, giving the property a new address on conveniently-flat Shelbourne Street. Farm horses, finally spared the steep incline up Knight Avenue to Richmond, were forever grateful.



Seen around 1925, this house still exists at 1694 Knight Avenue. Barn stands on land that would become Kingsley Place in 1962. Mount Tolmie is visible on the right. Note the long-gone water tower.

THIS SIDE UP WITH CARE

**LIVE PLANTS**

Please Handle Carefully.      Keep from Heat and Frost.

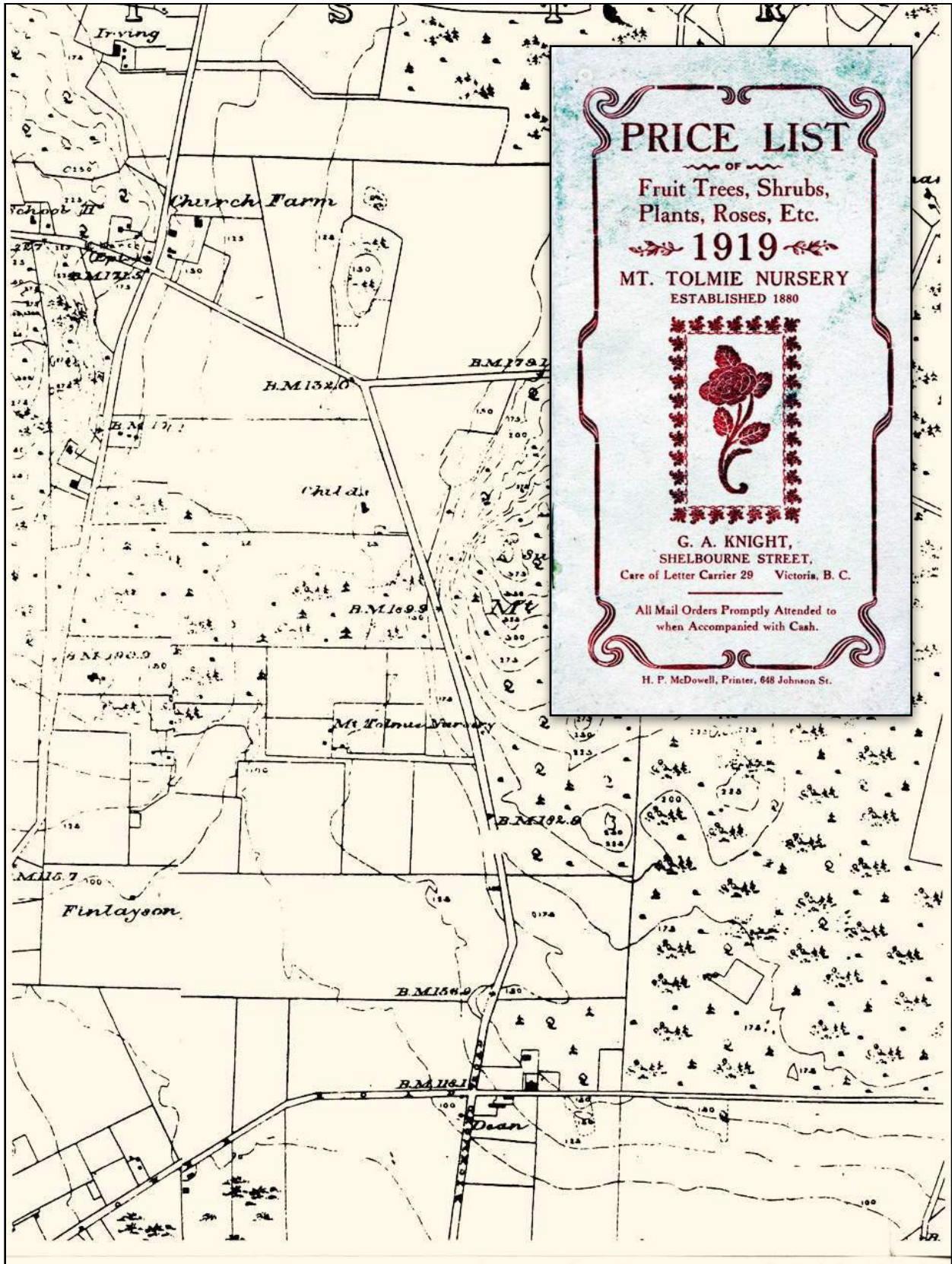
FROM

**Geo. A. Knight & Son**

NURSERYMEN AND FLORISTS

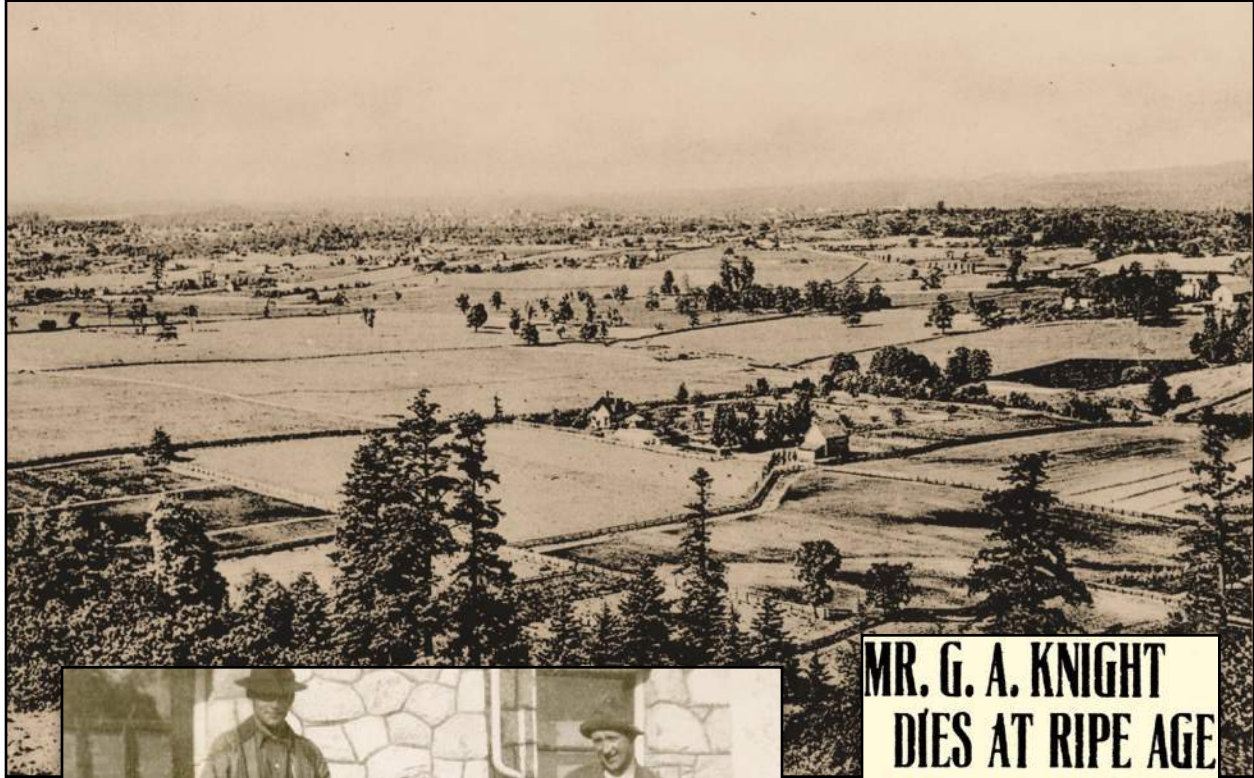
MOUNT TOLMIE,      ESTABLISHED 1880      VICTORIA, B. C.





War Department map of 1888, showing Mount Tolmie Nursery and the few early roads. Map courtesy of the Saanich Archives.





*Neighbours Graft Abiah Knight and George Stark McMorran in front of the latter's family home, still extant at 3601 Cedar Hill Road. George went on to establish a popular resort at Cordova Bay in 1919. Photo, circa 1910, courtesy of the Saanich Archives.*

*Top: Mount Tolmie Nursery Estate as seen from the mountain, circa 1900. Knight's Lane runs across the middle of the picture to the family farmhouse at centre. A large barn stands nearby, site of today's fence line between Freeman Avenue and Kingsley Place. On the extreme right is the Twin Oaks farmhouse of Ronald McRae, owner of land in Section 35, immediately across Knight's Lane. Distant meadows that stretch towards the city would soon become housing of the Oaklands and Jubilee neighbourhoods. Photo courtesy B.C. Archives.*

*Right: The Daily Colonist, February 26, 1928.*

## MR. G. A. KNIGHT DIES AT RIPE AGE

Conducted Successful Nursery at  
Mount Tolmie for Many Years  
—Arrived Here in 1880

Mr. George Abiah Knight, well known Mount Tolmie nurseryman, died yesterday at the age of seventy-seven years. He was a native of Petersfield, England.

Mr. Knight took up horticulture as a study early in life, and making rapid advancement, he became head gardener at the Crystal Palace, London, England, coming to Canada in 1868. He arrived in Victoria in 1880, and established a nursery here, which was well known throughout the province. He was a recognized authority and wrote extensively for trade journals on gardening and kindred subjects. Mrs. Knight, who predeceased him, made a most efficient aid in his work. Of late, Mr. Knight resided at Cobble Hill.

The family consists of three daughters and two sons: Mrs. W. C. Dull, of Santa Cruz, Cal.; Mrs. J. C. Kerr, of Vancouver; Mrs. K. C. Busheil, of Taft, Cal.; Mr. C. H. Knight, of Cobble Hill, and Mr. J. A. Knight, of Port Hammond. There are ten grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

The remains are at Hayward's B.C. Funeral Chapel, from where the funeral will take place tomorrow at 2:15 o'clock, proceeding to the Victoria Gospel Hall, 1415 Blanshard Street, where service will be held at 2:30 o'clock. Interment will follow at Ross Bay Cemetery.





*West side of the original Knight farmhouse in 1942 when home to Thomas and Christine Dempster. Young daughter Marion wheels her bike towards Shelbourne Street. As Christine wrote:*

‘The outside was quite lovely. A cherry tree sheltered one of the windows providing shade for the sitting room in the summer and succulent cherries too. It towered over the old house and was usually alive with birds. Right at the back door was a milk house which had been built by the farmer. We called it the Brick House. It was completely overshadowed by the huge Cedar of Lebanon. Next to this was a woodshed and beside it, on the north east corner, a Weeping Elm. I had never seen such a tree. It was completely covered with leaves which hung in beautiful array down to the ground. When the leaves were fallen it was a sight to see. It looked as if it was growing upside down with fantastically twisted limbs. The children of the neighbourhood loved it and called it the green tent. A little distance from the house was a large storage shed and garage. At the corner of this was a Medlar tree and nestled safely in its shade was our outhouse. There was no sewage system then. I didn’t mind during the day but a night it was certainly scary, especially if the medlars decided to fall.’

# DEMPSTER BROTHERS'

## GREENHOUSES

*'Half a million tulips, massed row upon row on the slopes of Mount Tolmie, a kaleidoscope of colour in the early summer sun.'*

- The Victoria Daily Times, 1949

**UNLIKE** most Scotsmen, young William Brown Dempster (1876-1952) liked to take the odd drink - followed by another glass just to even things out. After five years, the jig was up when older brother John arrived from Glasgow in 1910 to set things right. John Dempster (1869-1957) did not make that long trip to Victoria alone. Also onboard were wife, Jeannie (1869-1954), eight children and - to start life anew - 200,000 daffodil bulbs. With that initial stock was born the Dempster Brothers Wholesale Company, pioneer bulb-growers on Vancouver Island.

Around 1915, John and Jeannie built a large family home at 1940 Connaught Avenue (now Ernest). Initially, bulbs were grown down to the northeast corner of Richmond Road on two acres well fertilized in former years - as wrote The Daily Colonist - by '*animal waste where the abattoir of city butcher Lawrence Goodacre plied its grisly trade.*' In 1920, the family built the Richmond Greenhouses opposite the Royal Jubilee Hospital. Nine years later, they expanded even further by purchasing about three acres from the former Mount Tolmie Nursery at the northeast corner of Shelbourne and Knight. This site soon became their major operation.

In addition to an existing small greenhouse, the Dempsters built three new structures there, each measuring 20 by 120 feet. Nearby stood another building to house the coal-fired boiler that kept each greenhouse warmed to a constant 70 degrees Fahrenheit (21 degrees Celsius). In this artificial environment the best bulbs previously grown in adjacent fields were 'forced' through the cool winter months to hopefully flower at springtime's peak demand: red tulips for Valentine's Day, pastel flowers for Easter. In 1953 alone, the farm produced 80,000 daffodils and 65,000 tulips, plus irises and narcissi shipped mainly to the still-frozen prairie provinces. Soil in the greenhouses (also used for tomatoes) came from the family's own land, some of which was kept fallow to rest up for bulb-growing.

But rest for the family was all too rare, especially on cold winter nights when the boiler needed a constant feeding of coal by hand. Equipment required regular maintenance, and insects and plant disease did their worst. After the younger brother, William, retired in 1936,

John carried on with the help of sons, Bill, Scott and Thomas. The old Knight farmhouse on site served as home for the latter along with wife, Christine, and daughter, Marion. In 1949 John and Jeannie retired to a nearby home of their own at 3371 Shelbourne. There he died peacefully in 1957, three years after wife Jeannie. Both are buried at the Colwood Cemetery. Thomas and Christine remained at the old Knight home till 1959 when it was demolished along with the greenhouses. Their new house rose nearby, part of the subdivision and redevelopment that created Kingsley Place between 1962 and 1964. Onsite surveyors found 'old posts of wood and iron' - likely from the days of George Abiah Knight.

*Dempster Family, circa 1922.*

*Top, left to right: James, Bill, John senior, John, and Thomas. Bottom, left to right: Marion, mother Jeannie, Jean, Mary and Scott. Young John was still underage in 1915 when he joined older brother Thomas fighting overseas. Both were wounded at The Somme, recovered, and then sent back to the firing line. Re-enlisting years later, Thomas represented the Canadian Scottish Regiment at the 1937 coronation of King George VI. He became gardener and caretaker of the Veterans Cemetery (Naden) after the Shelbourne greenhouses were demolished.*



*The Dempster home and low bulb shed on Ernest Avenue (formerly Connaught) next to their tulip fields which extended down to Richmond Road. The family retained ownership of the house after subdivision of the land in the 1940s. It became home to daughter Jean and her own small family, the Browns, in the 1950s.*

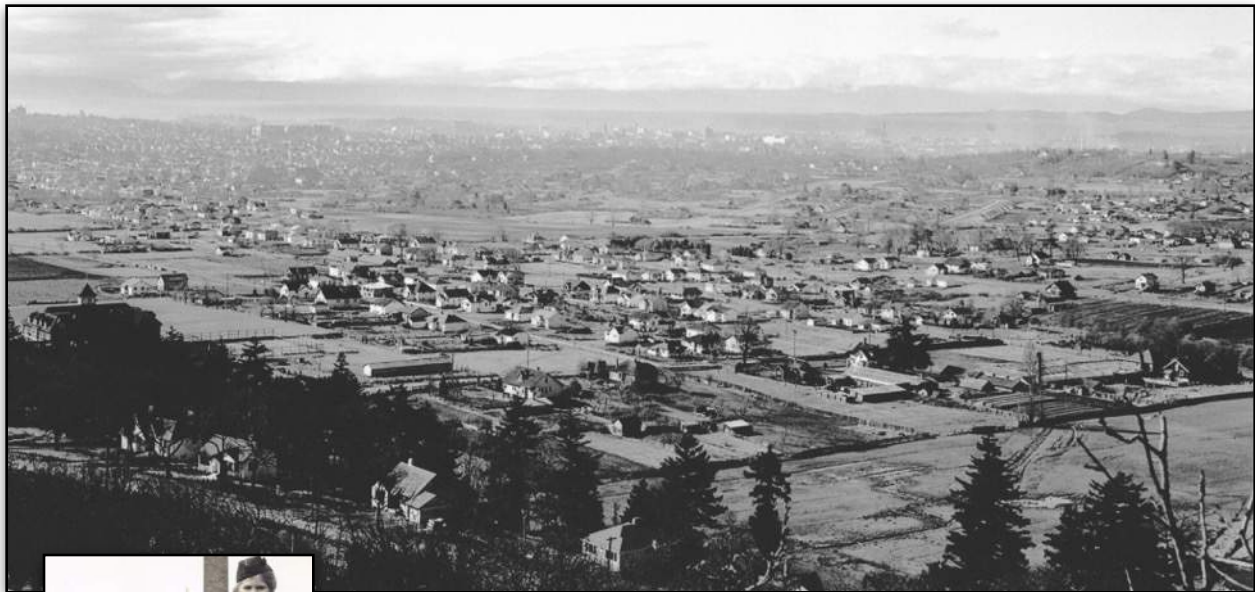
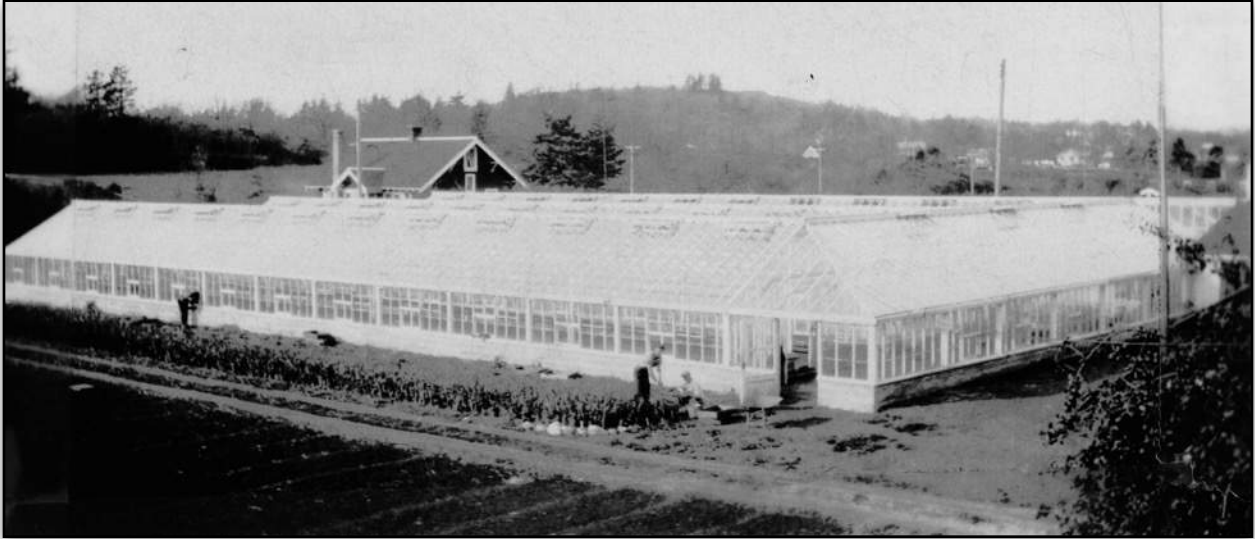






*Old Knight farmhouse (when home to Thomas, Christine and Marion Dempster) facing Knight at Shelbourne, 1955.*

*Young Marion Dempster amongst daffodil fields with greenhouse, brick boiler-house chimney and the front facade (towards Knight Avenue) of the old family home. Circa 1946.*



*Three large greenhouses with a neighbouring house at 3385 Shelbourne Street.  
Inset: Greenhouse, boiler-house, buggy and Marion.*

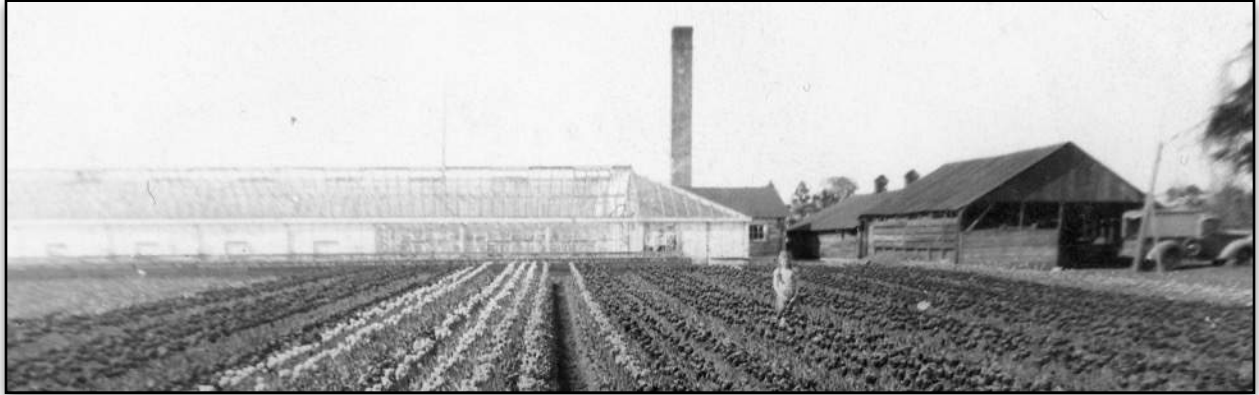
*Bottom: A view from the mount, 1948. The Dempster family home on Knight Avenue Rises above a solitary greenhouse right of centre. Three larger hothouses and smokestack sit further to the right. On the extreme right are two existing houses along Shelbourne St., one being for John and Jeannie Dempster (#3371). Freeman Avenue homes will appear on the wet fields at bottom right within two years. Photo, courtesy B.C. Archives.*

*Opposite Page, top to bottom: \*Dempster greenhouses, boiler-house chimney, shed and truck.*

*\*Pioneering bulb grower John Dempster senior gathering King Alfred daffodils*

*\*Bill Dempster heading out in the delivery truck emblazoned with 'Say it with flowers'. Ironically, the 1952 obituary of Uncle William Brown Dempster, retired florist, stated 'No flowers by request'.*





# THE WHITEOAKS OF CEDAR

*'Mr. Whiteoak, or Horace as we affectionately knew him, had for many years been one of the guiding stars of the society...No man who lives in perfect accord with nature, as he did, can live far from God '*

- Victoria Horticultural Society, 1938



*Horace and Grace Whiteoak with baby Horace, late 1915. Horace - aged 35 years - left for war a few months later. Shellfire injuries while a lance corporal in the Canadian Field Artillery meant convalescence in an English hospital and a chance to reunite with his mother and family there.*

**LANDSCAPE GARDENER** Horace Whiteoak knew all about perennials. But not till the fortieth year of his too-short life did he enter the profession full time. Born in 1880 at Yorkshire, England, Whiteoak sailed to Canada around 1904 and by 1911 found employment with Victoria's city works crew. Housing (room and board included) was found at the newly-built YMCA building on Blanshard at View. Appropriate digs for a single gent, but not so on June 30, 1914 when Horace married Grace Holmes (1885-1974), daughter of a pioneer dairy farmer in Gordon Head. A house in the Oaklands neighbourhood was called home for Grace and little Horace junior when the father signed up in 1916 to serve overseas with the Canadian Field Artillery. In January 1919 Horace returned to Victoria and one year later found work with Wilkerson and Brown Florists. Gardening work - and housing for the growing family - then followed at James Dunsmuir's grand Hatley Park estate in Colwood. In 1924 the Whiteoaks returned to the city, taking up rented quarters at 1730 Cedar Avenue. This old house, where two more daughters were born, was to become Horace's much-loved garden and final home.

When the family moved in, only one other house - the Price family home at 3521 Shelbourne - stood on the 'block'. Cedar Avenue, like many area roads at that time, was simply an ungraded road allowance edged by fencing. Access to the family home was actually along a rough driveway curving down from Richmond at



Donnelly. The house itself (still extant and looking colourfully out-of-place amongst bland postwar housing) offered shared bedrooms upstairs with more bedrooms, a pantry and kitchen below. Original sliding doors still serve to partition the main floor parlour where a special breakfast of bacon, eggs and coffee was served each Easter Sunday after attending the sunrise service on nearby Mount Tolmie. Outside, a side porch once faced that looming hill, while the front porch has been partly enclosed.



*The Whiteoak house and garden at 1730 Cedar Avenue, circa 1935. Number 1740, uncomfortably close on the extreme left, was home to the Hawkins family for several decades. Both still stand. University School (now SMUS) is seen in the distance beyond a grove of trees that also remain. Facing flat empty fields on the west, the small forest was known to Whiteoak children as the 'plantation'. Natural springs of water flowing from its dark interior meant yellow skunk cabbage, edible watercress and the delights of winter skating.*



*Whiteoak children - tall Horace, Joyce, Daphne, Rita and Ruth - at the house front, 1929. Walks when older took them to Cadboro Bay Beach to swim and up Mount Tolmie to pick armfuls of wild lilies.*



*Though the Whiteoaks settled at 1730 Cedar Avenue in 1924, their rented house was at least two decades older. It stands along the bottom of this photograph taken from Mount Tolmie around 1900. At some later date the house was turned from this westward orientation to the south, thereby facing Cedar Avenue (as today) instead of the open valley. Distant Cedar Hill Road runs across the top where a dark-walled 'ginger-bread gothic' house can be seen (right of centre) next to the junction of Pear Street. That house was also moved (in 1904) with horse power by the McMorran family to its present location of 3501 Cedar Hill Road. Much of the land back then was used for spacious vegetable gardens and orchards - largely replaced by fenced pastures in the 1920s. Photo courtesy of the Whiteoak collection.*

Considered one of the best known horticulturalists in the Lower Island, Horace was often called to judge at flower shows. As a professional gardener he worked throughout the city. Grounds were maintained at Christ Church Cathedral and Spencer Castle, plus private properties in Rockland and South Oak Bay - including the comfortable home of Premier Duff Patullo on Beach Drive. Gardens in the Uplands also received his welcome touch though one matron there offered payment only after Grace complained by telephone that *'You had a garden party but I have children to feed.'*

Stock for landscaping came partly from Horace's own garden. Perennials such as Golden Rod, Michaelmas Daisies and Blue Poppies were his specialty, though he chiefly favoured delphiniums - propagating a new variety that he named *'Miss Hague'* after the spinster living nearby at 1722 Donnelly Avenue. Beyond his own landscaping needs, perennial stock was also sold to area nurseries. A young entrepreneur called Art Knapp, living further up Shelbourne Street, was one such buyer.

Family outings also brought opportunities to increase his stock. In good weather all would pile into a Model T Ford truck - the kids riding in back *'facing where we'd been and*

*throwing up*' - bound for Muir Creek west of Sooke. While the five children (Horace junior, Ruth, Rita, Daphne and Joyce) played on the beach, Grace would fret over Horace's absence in search of new rockery plants in nearby hills. At home the children helped the family business by

skillfully pollinating plants and filling gunny sacks with 'cow pies' from nearby dairy farms to make manure tea. Special events at Government House saw them passing out floral bouquets while Grace operated a flower stand at the City Market.



*Barefooted Joyce Whiteoak communes with chickens in 1931. The cows belonging to neighbours Margaret and Joseph Price were usually found grazing in the field visible beyond the fence. Their house - seen here in the distance - still stands at 3521 Shelbourne Street.*

Sharing his gardening knowledge with the public, Horace wrote a weekly column in *The Victoria Daily Times* under the nom de plume 'Quercus Alba', latin for Whiteoak. On February 19, 1938 he advised on the proper care of garden tools:

*'A tool-shed should be provided with hangers, nails or pegs, on which to hang the implements. If each is always put in the same place one can expect to find them any time they are wanted. Garden tools do not improve by being left in the ground or hanging on a fence...Paint is a good preserver and the life of wooden-handled tools may be considerably extended by its application. We have painted the handles of tools green, but it would be better to do them in red, as they can be seen much easier when left in the garden. When not in immediate use on a job, stand all tools upright to save one from accidents, usually one blow on the nose, from a rake stepped on is fair warning.'*

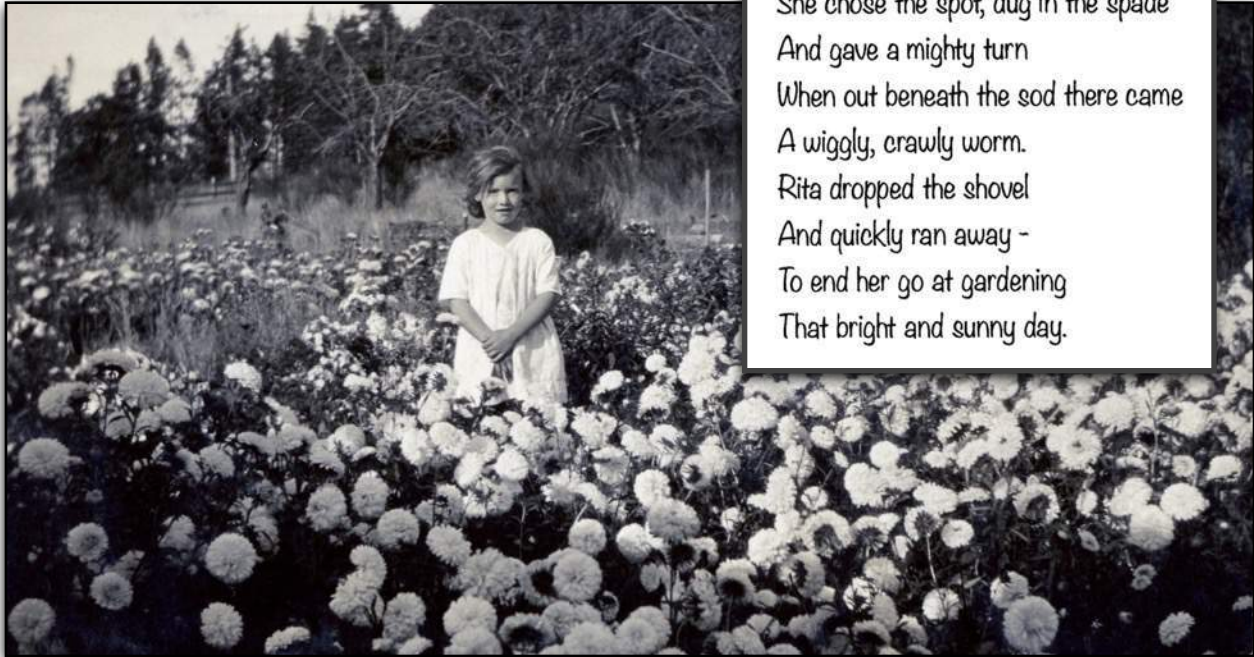
Horace was a founding member of the Victoria Horticultural Society (then meeting at city hall) and served as president from 1933-35. In return for his *'faithful and valued service given to the society over a period of years'* he received the first Life Membership in 1937. Though remembered by family as *'always strong, getting up with the birds and to bed with the birds'*, Horace took ill with Hodgkins Disease that very year. By the following summer he was gone. The Whiteoak Trophy, established in 1940 to honour *'this generous horticulturist'* remains the society's most prestigious award.

Horace and Grace Whiteoak lie together in the cemetery of St. Luke's Anglican Church on Cedar Hill Cross Road, site of their wedding years ago.





The day was bright and sunny,  
 A lovely day in spring.  
 Rita had an urge  
 To do some gardening.  
 She got the pick and shovel,  
 The spade and the hoe,  
 And hied her to the garden  
 To see what she could grow.  
 She chose the spot, dug in the spade  
 And gave a mighty turn  
 When out beneath the sod there came  
 A wiggly, crawly worm.  
 Rita dropped the shovel  
 And quickly ran away -  
 To end her go at gardening  
 That bright and sunny day.



*Whiteoak daughters Rita (top, with poem by mother Grace) and Joyce (bottom) in their father's perennial garden, behind the family home at 1730 Cedar Avenue, circa 1930. The house at top, still standing at 1722 Donnelly Avenue, belonged to neighbour Annie Josephine Hague - honoured by Horace with the 'Miss Hague Delphinium'.*

# AND THEN CAME SUBURBIA

'VICTORIA - PAINE (M.P.) & TOWNSEND (P.M.)

Office 715 View - E 6822 and B3119'

- City Directory, 1950

**FOR MANY YEARS** only two houses stood along this neighbourhood's portion of Shelbourne Street. Both were built around 1924 and both survive today. Number 3385 was



*Yet Chong Leong and wife Yute Ho, dressed for church in 1951. Aged twenty three when he arrived here from China in 1908, Leong spent the next fifty-three years raising vegetables for market, chiefly on other people's land. Eventually he was able to purchase his own ten acres on Ash Road at Majestic in Gordon Head before retiring.*

home to Helen and Wallace Jolly, local manager of the Montreal Life Insurance Company. Further up at 3521 lived Margaret and Joseph Price (1895-1982), the latter being a full-time painter and part-time dairyman. In 1941 a third house arose at the yet-to-be corner of Derby and Shelbourne. Numbered 3451, it was built by Mary and Vincent Townsend.

A native Victorian, Vincent Gladstone Townsend (1899-1971) also kept a few dairy cows while working full-time as a city bus driver. Somehow, funds were acquired to eventually buy the entire block behind their Shelbourne house. Part of that open land was rented to market gardeners Yet Chong Leong (1885-1968) and wife Yute Ho, known to neighbours as Norma. Poor and hard-working, the couple grew vegetables for Chinese wholesale firms. Daughter Phyllis, a young student at Cedar Hill School, shared their rustic home — an old barn improved on the inside with a bit of wallpaper. Seasonal watercress, growing in a spring below Richmond Road, would be

picked by Leong and sold to neighbour Grace Whiteoak.





*Aerial view of the neighbourhood in 1948. The empty fields at centre would be replaced by new houses within four years on Freeman, Veteran, St. Matthew's and Derby roads - the latter seen as a dark line of greenery across the middle. The so-called 'plantation' forest of the Whiteoak children lines the westside of Richmond Road on the right, above the University School (SMUS) campus.*

Around 1950 the Townsends began to subdivide the block, setting aside lots for themselves and three children. Properties along the north side of newly-graded Derby Road, costing \$300-\$500 each, were developed first. The house at 1672 was one of the last to rise, built for bowling aficionado and cement contractor Patrick Graham. So explains the concrete ball and pin.—In 1938, ten years after their father's death, Graft Knight and sister Rose sold the last of the nursery site. Ralph Rendle, pioneer breeder of Holstein cows at Cadboro Bay, was the buyer. Seven years later he made another purchase that centred his Stanhope Dairy Farm along Pear near Richmond. With that larger property, complete with an existing barn, Rendle had little use for the Knight acreage - leaving that empty, level ground ripe for change. In May of 1949 that land was bought by a trio of developers: George Piercy, Mathew Paine and Philip Townsend (no relation to the aforementioned Vincent).

George Piercy (1903-1978), son of a local wholesale goods merchant and nephew to the prominent turn-of-the-century contractor George Mesher, was born with good business connections. But success was delayed when a commercial stay in Singapore was brutally aborted by the Japanese invasion of 1941. Released from their prisoner of war camp in 1945, he returned to Victoria to start anew as director of the Island Enterprises land development and real estate company - a partnership shared lifelong with Townsend.

Philip Milnes Townsend (1906-2003) was born in Saskatchewan but grew up in Oak Bay. In 1930 a natural ease with numbers led him to the Canadian Bank of Commerce, serving as a junior clerk. But after eight years - partly spent filling ink wells and guarding the safe after hours - he tendered his written resignation to seek better prospects as general contractor with brother-in-law Mathew Paine.

Mathew 'Pat' Paine (1908-1993) was a second generation Victorian raised in the Royal Oak area. In 1927 he entered the building trade then married Eileen Townsend three years later. By 1939 he and Philip were partners. The company office, often thick with Mathew's cigar smoke, was at 715 View Street with a warehouse located in Fernwood.



*Mathew Paine, of Roman Catholic parents, married Eileen Townsend in 1930 at the Bishop's Palace on View Street - the same block that would house the offices of 'Paine & Townsend' and George Piercy's 'Island Enterprises'. The couple later joined the Christian Science Church. Their marriage of fifty-five years was largely spent living in the High Quadra area. Mathew died at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in 1993, eight years after retirement. 'A noted building contractor for many years in Victoria and once an avid contributor to the editor' observed the Times Colonist obituary.*



*Philip Townsend was a quiet, private man fond of candied ginger, good design and numbers. The latter brought professional success - and a new hobby. Acquiring an old roulette wheel from the Klondike gold rush, he spent many hours in the basement of his Beach Drive home seeking a numerical formula to 'beat the odds' in Vegas. With that same determination - doggedly cutting a pathway through solid rock from the house to shore - he was labeled 'The Mad Driller' by suitably-impressed golfers on the Victoria Golf Club green next door.*

A variety of skilled tradesmen worked for the company. Mathew employed brothers George, James and Daniel along with son Brian. Philip Townsend occasionally hired brother Sidney to build fireplaces. 'Quietly efficient' carpenters would be sent to do small renovation jobs in Oak Bay - a ready route to expand business connections. One such employee was finishing carpenter and sailor John Guzzwell. His free time was spent behind a nearby View Street Fish and Chip shop building the twenty-foot-long yacht 'Trekka'. Launched in 1955, it became the smallest vessel then to circumnavigate the globe. Other tradesmen employed by Paine and Townsend included electrician Bob Berow, plumbers John McDowell and Bill Bonner of Oak Bay, along with concrete man Jack Rose (complicit in the common but misguided practice of throwing old bed frames into cement foundations). Bill Stubbs acted as site foreman while Freeman Nott served as longtime superintendent of construction.



*Freeman Nott kept his own casual record of construction over the years by sticking thumbtacks - one for every project site - into a city map. When removed from the wall years later and held up to the light, the much-punctured sheet closely resembled a galaxy of stars. Not included was a cabin built at Weir's Beach, reserved for the enjoyment of his own family - wife Marjorie and two boys.*

Freeman Walter Nott (1916-2015) was born in a sod hut near Expanse, Saskatchewan. In 1924 the family of six fled the heartbreak of homesteading for the seaside charms of Discovery Island, near Oak Bay. There the kids kept busy raising chickens and rabbits when not spying on natives at potlatch or rum-runners hiding their illegal hooch. Later mischief at Strawberry Vale School in Saanich earned Freeman another island stay, this time in the Gulf of Georgia. Banished to collect firewood and shoot troublesome seagulls for the solitary lighthouse keeper, the young rascal soon saw the light. Opportunity for better prospects came in 1935 when - during a game of neighbourhood softball - he met carpenter Mathew Paine. A valued apprenticeship followed, starting an association that lasted over forty years.

Through that time Freeman supervised a work crew on a great range of projects, both large and small. The latter included renovations to the Snug Bar of the Oak Bay Beach Hotel, George Straith's Mens Wear (where smoke-damaged clothes were free for the crew's taking), the kitchen of the Royal Jubilee Hospital and the Craigflower Motel. At the old manor house opposite, Freeman replaced the original cast iron door hinges and - in a frivolous moment - carved 'Freeman 1892' into one of the original, previously-hidden

door frames. Guilt and embarrassment kept him from admitting to the historically-incorrect prank. By contrast, each Christmas brought the happy chore of delivering - courtesy of Paine and Townsend Incorporated - whiskey, cigars and cigarettes to the building supply offices of Rock Bay. Turkeys went to each man on the company's own payroll.





No. 88

  
 PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
 DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR.

## Certificate of Apprenticeship

This is to Certify that Freeman Nott  
 has satisfactorily served an apprenticeship of FOUR years in the employ of  
PAINE & TOWNSEND  
 at the trade or occupation of CARPENTRY  
 in accordance with the Statutes of the Province of British Columbia.

Whereof let this diploma with the official signatures and Seal bear witness. Given  
 at Victoria this 29th day of June 1939.

Countersigned

J. P. Paine J. Townsend EMPLOYER.

Geo. S. Pearson MINISTER OF LABOUR.  
J. A. Ward CHAIRMAN, PROVINCIAL APPRENTICESHIP COMMITTEE.  
Alvin B. ... PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR OF APPRENTICESHIP.



Freeman Nott and wife Marjorie at their first home on McKenzie Avenue near Swan Lake, 1940. Like Freeman, Marjorie Kerlake was born on a prairie farm before her parents' move to Saanich. She was working as a domestic servant in the South Oak Bay mansion of a former trade commissioner when the young couple began their courtship. They were wed in the manse of the Strawberry Vale Church on October 6, 1939 - four months after Freeman completed his apprenticeship with Paine and Townsend. Their marriage lasted for seventy one years.

While Mathew Paine was the professional builder, Philip Townsend provided design ideas (sometimes sketched on a napkin in downtown's old Poodle Dog Restaurant) along with advice on mortgages for prospective buyers. If the latter contributed 'sweat equity', construction costs were reduced. As they advertised in *The Daily Colonist*:

N.I.A. PAYMENTS      N.I.A. SPECIFICATIONS

## Save Through Our OWNER ★ PARTICIPATION PLAN

Have you, with a limited down payment, searched for a suitable home in a preferred district . . . Were you satisfied? NOW you can actually BUILD this modern bungalow on your own lot OR—we can assist you in finding one, as we now have a few lots in a very choice location.

**START PLANNING YOUR OWN HOME!**




**ECONOMY HOME**

It's smart, attractive, spacious, and fully automatic with automatic oil heating. This plan can be changed to suit YOUR REQUIREMENTS.

**NO EXTRAS**  
Only a limited number constructed yearly. Our finished price is guaranteed with NO EXTRAS. Proud owners are your assurance.

★ YOUR SPARE TIME MEANS MONEY

Here's an opportunity to reduce the down payment by any amount depending on how much you participate in the building. Your spare time is "Money in Pocket" when you help, and there's any number of jobs even the most inexperienced can do.

COST OF HOUSE, built on your own lot.	
Guaranteed No Extras .....	\$11,000.00
MORTGAGE OBTAINABLE (between \$9,000/\$10,000) .....	9,700.00
YOUR DOWN PAYMENT .....	1,300.00
LESS AMOUNT OF OWNER PARTICIPATION .....	???.00
FINAL DOWN PAYMENT .....	\$ ???.00

These figures may be reduced \$500.00 if house constructed on a concrete slab with asphalt tile floors.

Financial reliability based on 25 years of house building experience is your guarantee of a trouble-free building program.

Building Costs Are Still Rising  
**ACT TODAY!**  
**DON'T DELAY!**

Drop in at our office to discuss details and type of home you want.

**PAINÉ & TOWNSEND**  
GENERAL CONTRACTORS      2-2623      719 VIEW ST.

*'Here's an opportunity to reduce the down payment by any amount depending on how much you participate in the building. Your spare time is Money in Pocket when you help, and there's any number of jobs even the most inexperienced can do.'*

Homes built this way were considered to be affordable and modest in size - a fact that displeased wealthy residents of Uplands. Many complained that the unadorned Paine and Townsend bungalows cheapened the neighbourhood. An example at 3179 Midland Road remains to this day.

The company's largest development project, on the land purchased from Ralph Rendle in 1949, proved a much better fit. Almost two years were spent building the fifty three bungalows marketed at \$4200 each. All interiors (and some exteriors) were patterned after Nott's own family home built in 1948 to a Townsend design. It still stands at 85 Obed Avenue.

Construction was not without challenges. Poor drainage of wet, heavy clay soil prevented full use of construction machinery. Teams of horses pulling drags and scrapers were used instead to create drainage ditches and levelled ground for foundations.

New streets required new names. Derby Road was simply the extension of an older stretch in the Maplewood area. Veteran Street was newly designated to honour soldiers of the recent World War. In later years the junction of those two roads - Veteran and Derby - came to be conveniently called Veterby.

Superintendent of construction Nott was honoured with Freeman Avenue - a tribute that arose 'simply because I was there'. Foreman Bill Stubbs declined a similar offer, saving the surname for a later project of his own in West Saanich. St. Matthew's Street first appeared on a subdivision plan of 1949. Philip Townsend probably suggested the name to honour both his

business partner and - being familiar with all things financial - the biblical Matthew known as the patron saint of banking. Clearly tongue-in-cheek humour prevailed but the double-barrelled name did give the flat little street a much-welcomed gravitas.



*Construction workers for Paine and Townsend parked their vehicles along Freeman and Veteran (lower right) in this picture of 1951. Tennis courts and the indoor shooting range of University School (now SMUS) are visible on the left. Further back (on the left) stands the old Milman house at 3232 Aldridge next to empty fields. Across the middle is Knight Avenue with three houses of the 1920s. Their back yards would later be subdivided for Kingsley Place. The original Knight farmhouse is on the right, just behind an early Dempster greenhouse. Three more stand just off picture. An eight-foot-high fence separated them from Knight Avenue. Photo from BC Archives.*

After the construction company was dissolved in 1958, Mathew Paine continued on alone though Philip remained as his basement bookkeeper. Building bridges on the Island became his new focus, completing spans at Buttle Lake, Qualicum Beach, Lake Cowichan, Duncan and the overpass of the new Island Highway west of Tillicum Road.

Philip Townsend dabbled in private ventures of his own (such as the Oak Bay Theatre) but mainly found financial success in partnership with George Piercy's Island Enterprises. Dean Park Estates and houses of Gordon Head were two of their profitable developments - allowing them to build or buy plush family homes of their own in the Uplands and Oak Bay. In 1957 Philip moved his family of four into such a home at 951 Beach Drive, the longtime residence of the late premier Duff Patullo. Perhaps he paused to admire the estate's mature greenery - greenery planted years earlier by a gardener he never knew, Horace Whiteoak.





*Aerial view of the neighbourhood, 1956. New houses line Freeman, Derby, St. Matthew's and Veteran streets but fields remain north of Cedar Avenue. Dempster greenhouses are visible at the corner of Shelbourne at Knight  
Inset: The roads and driveways were rough gravel when Trudy Rogerson 'toodled' down Freeman Avenue in 1951.*

# ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL

*'High against the protecting shoulder of Mount Tolmie, looking down upon the city over stretches of green field and flowering hedge, is University School, one of the most enviably situated of all Victoria's educational institutions.'*

- The Daily Colonist, 1925

IT'S A CURIOUS THING. Though this neighbourhood was founded on farming in all its forms, the oldest building to be fully dated was once a private boarding school for boys established to mimic the traditions of an Old Country education. On October 7, 1908 Richard McBride, Premier of British Columbia, laid the cornerstone of School House - a central block for classrooms, staff quarters and student dorms. Other buildings would soon arise nearby but only School House remains today.

St. Michaels University School - originally just University School - began as an amalgamation of three earlier institutions. Founding masters were Reverend William Bolton, James Barnacle and Captain Robert Harvey. Together they would establish an institution that - as stated in *The Daily Colonist* - offered 'the organization and discipline of a boarding school, situated, not in a crowded city, but as far from it as can



Early faculty of University School including the three founding principals sitting at centre: (left to right) Captain Robert Harvey, William Bolton and James Barnacle. All were educated in England where Bolton had been president of the Cambridge University Athletic Club. Both a scholar and outdoorsman, he led three surveying expeditions on Vancouver Island that helped to shape Strathcona Park.

*be attained without inconvenience.* To that end, fifteen acres of *'excellent level pasture land'* along the south side of Knight's Lane were purchased in 1907 from area farmer Ronald McRae. Construction soon followed on the main block, built by Luney Brothers to the designs of prominent architects Thomas Hooper and C. Elwood Watkins.



*An early Sports Day at University School. Built far from the 'harmful influences of city streets', the boarding school next to Mount Tolmie formed 'a little community in itself, affording all the interests and amusements that a healthy-minded boy could wish for'. School House (seen on the left and still extant though much altered inside) boasted six classrooms and a small library on the main floor, four large student dormitories on the second and matrons' quarters above. All was crowned by a landmark cupola that hid a cistern containing one thousand gallons of spring water pumped upwards in the small shed at left. To the right (behind the flag pole) stands the small dining hall and kitchen where meals were prepared by cook Chin Hong and six teenaged assistants, all from China. Rooftop skylights illuminated the adjacent gymnasium and indoor swimming pool. Eight large classrooms and an assembly room were found next door in the Classroom Block, followed by the brick Harvey House on the extreme right. Three and one-half stories high, it was added in 1911 to accommodate more boarders and a junior school for sixty boys.*

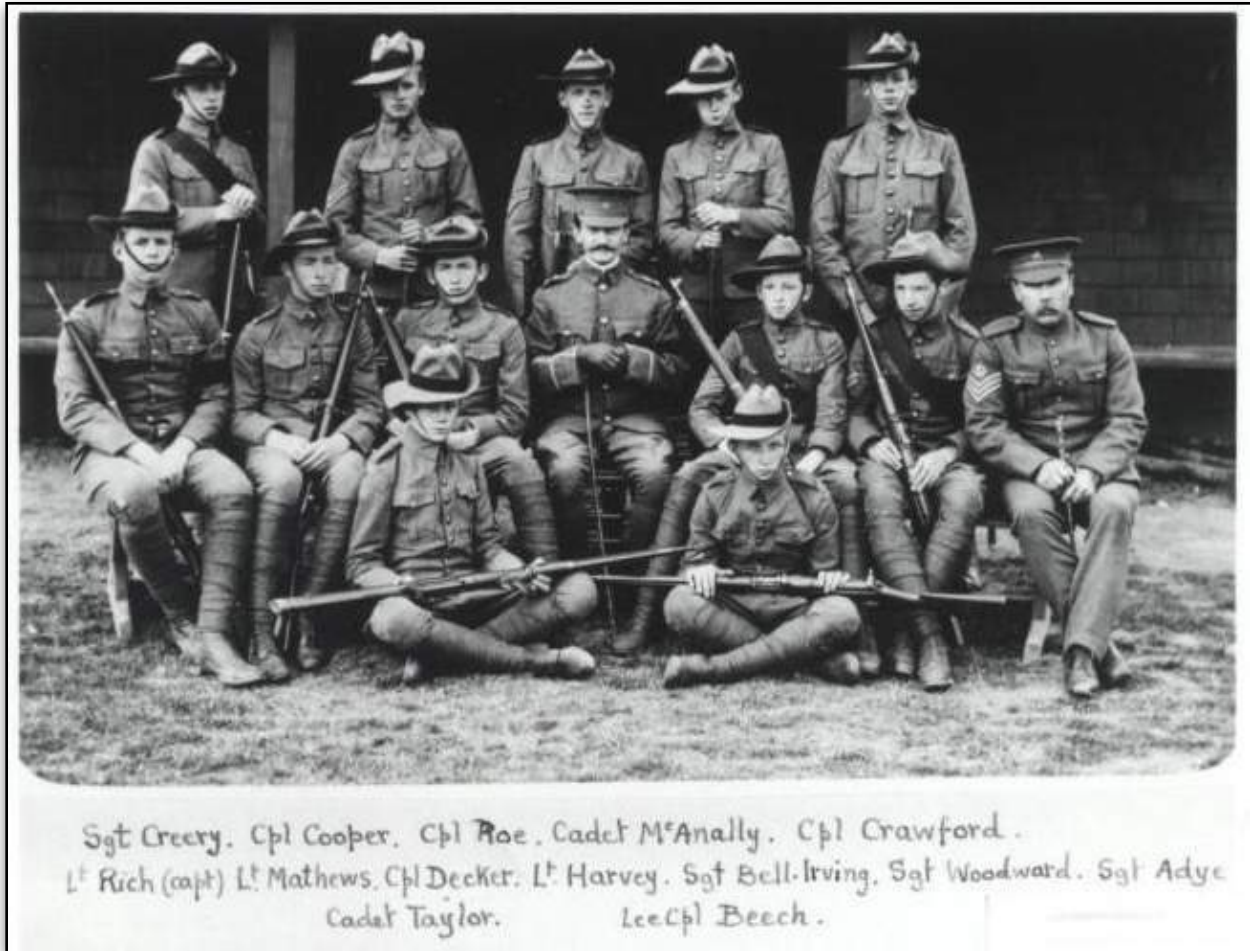
About sixty boys were enrolled when classes began on February 1, 1909. Those from town - still awaiting completion of a promised streetcar line - rode out on a six-horse tally ho. By 1913 total enrolment, including boarders, rose to 230 students.

With a proclaimed objective *'to instil the values of steadiness and self-control in manly boys, capable boys who would set the sake of the school before personal interest'*, academic studies were matched, if not surpassed, by both athletics and military training. Playing fields

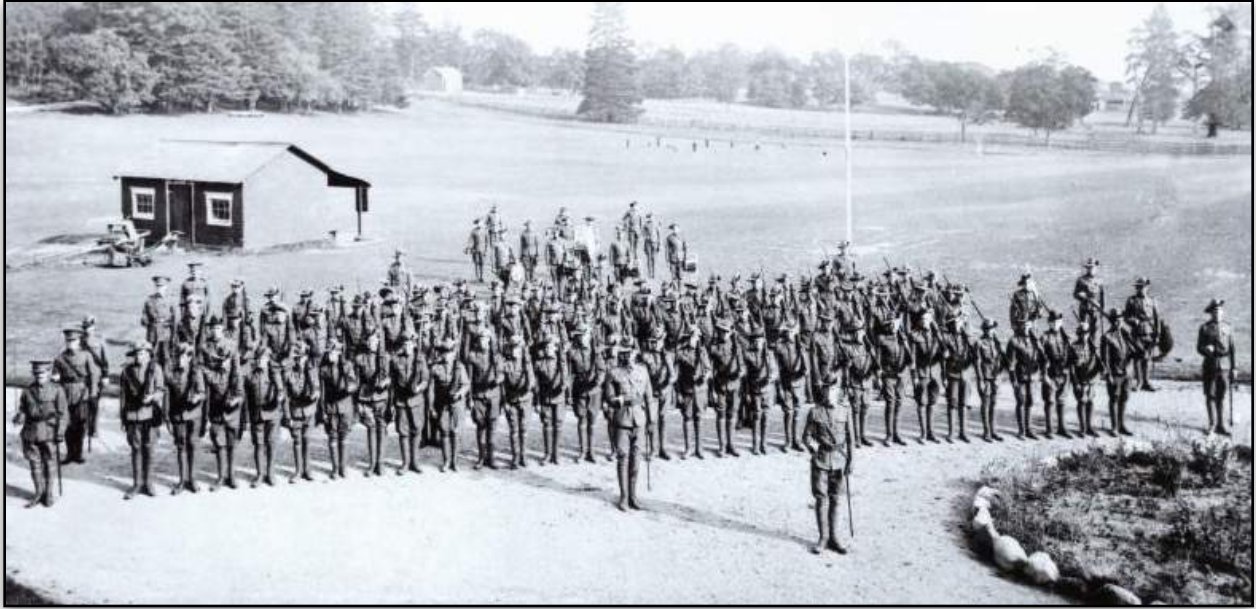


hosted rugby games through the winter, cricket in summer complemented by cross-country running, cycling and tennis. An indoor swimming tank measuring twenty by sixty feet allowed for year-round aquatics. Boxing and gymnastics were taught by 'a qualified sergeant-major'.

Active participation in the school's Cadet Corps was compulsory. Marching drills, led by a bugle and drum band, were part of daily student life. So too was bayonet and shooting practice held inside a low, wooden rifle range located along Knight's Lane. The racket of gunfire from that long shed must have annoyed the few, new neighbours across the way - but the school had arrived there first.



*School Cadet Corps led by co-founding principal, Captain Robert Valentine Harvey at centre. Born in 1876 at Liverpool, England, Harvey had operated his own private Queen's School for Boys - first in Vancouver then on Rockland Avenue - before joining fellow masters William Bolton and James Barnacle at the Mount Tolmie campus of University School. When the Great War broke out in August, 1914, he was quick to join the British Columbia Regiment of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces. Before heading overseas he wrote an open letter to his young students, encouraging each boy 'to do his best in school or out, at games or at drill, to keep the honour of the school as high and untarnished as we others are trying to keep the honour of our country.' Captain Harvey died the following Spring, his slight frame brought brutally down by chlorine gas on the battlefield. Four other masters and sixty boys (including some pictured here) also perished before that war was over.*



*Cadet Battalion at drill practice on school grounds, 1912. Fresh spring water was collected by the pump house (at left) which later served as the first cricket pavilion. The present-day headmaster's house rose in 1923 on the distant grassy slope below Mount Tolmie Road (now Richmond).*



*Field hockey team, 1915. The distant houses stood along Mount Tolmie (Richmond) Road and Mayfair Drive.*



*Students marching north along rough Richmond Road (at Cedar Avenue) to attend a Sunday Service at St. Luke's Anglican Church on Cedar Hill Cross Road. The school's association with that church persisted long after this photo of 1925. Two teachers, a former student and Headmaster George Scarrett lie buried in the old churchyard. A commemorative stained glass window depicts a school boy kneeling at prayer. The pairing of church and school ended in 1962 when a chapel was built on campus, largely through student labour.*



## ADDITIONAL NOTES OF THE GREATER AREA

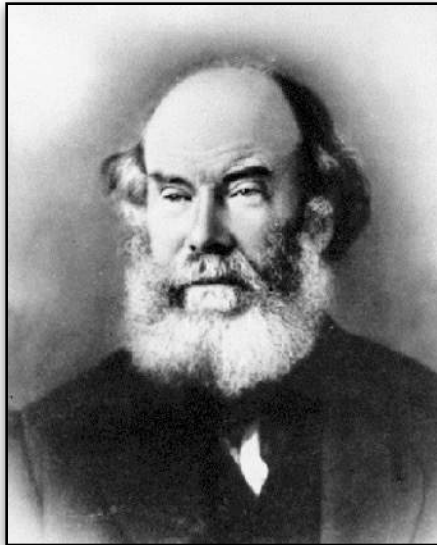
DAIRIES - Prior to the suburban development of the 1950s, several dairies existed in the greater neighbourhood. Most contained less than twenty cows. To the north were farms of Joseph Price (Shelbourne at Cedar) and Ralph Rendle. The latter site, previously owned by dairyman George Deans, is marked today by Stanhope Place. Fred Ellis' Cedar Hill Dairy was replaced by Shelbourne Plaza in 1960 anchored by a Shop Easy store. To the south east, James Townsend (step-brother to Vincent) ran Cornbury Dairy at the end of Argyle Avenue for over thirty years. His cows made trails through the adjacent Hudson Bay Woods, conveniently used by local children at play. A parking lot of Camosun College now occupies the site where deer far outnumber any milk cows. George Milman kept a herd of cows at 3232 Aldridge from 1917-1928. Vincent and Mary Townsend also lived there for awhile until finally moving into a brand new house at 3421 Veteran next to the top end of Derby (aka Veterby). Their single cow had a habit of getting stuck in the nearby bog.



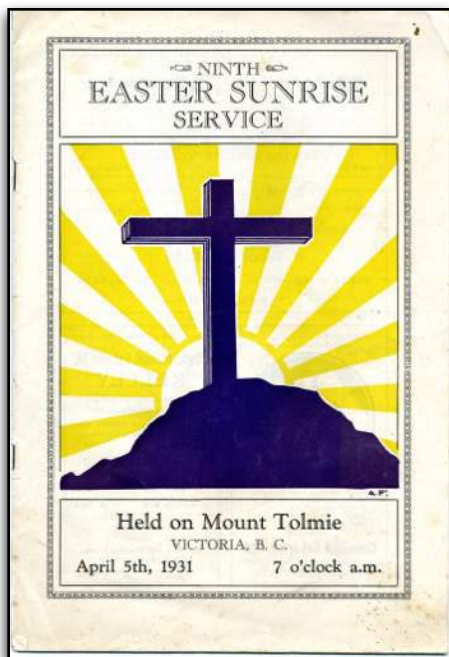
*Canadian Governor General Henry Charles Petty-Fitzmaurice, Earl of Shelburne (sic). After Ottawa he went on to serve as Viceroy of India - a welcome way to warm his winter-weary bones. Not sure if he lay with mad dogs in the noon-day sun though.*

EARLY ROADS - Cedar Hill Cross Road dates back to 1850 as a trail that connected Fort Victoria with North Dairy and Uplands farms. Maps of 1872 show the addition of both Cedar Hill and Mount Tolmie roads. The latter became Richmond by 1925. Where possible, the early routes followed ridges to avoid wet, low-lying land. Shelbourne Street did the opposite. Laid out along the flat valley bottom, it was completed from scratch by November 1916 to carry fresh produce (notably berries) from the fertile fields of Gordon Head to city markets. In 1921 efforts were made to transform Shelbourne into a memorial route honouring the dead from wars past. London Plane trees were planted only at each end however before the enthusiasm faded. The road was named long after an 1885-visit by Governor General Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice, Earl of Shelburne (sic) and Fifth Marquess of Lansdowne. An impressive handle that explains two intersecting streets.

McRAE AVENUE - Originally called Tennyson, this road was appropriately renamed in 1925 after the original land owners Ronald and Catherine McRae. Their tall Victorian house of 1892 still stands at 1525 Oak Crest Drive overlooking the greater neighbourhood and beyond. In 1941 Clarence and Violet Abbott started a corner store (now restaurant) at 1652 McRae. James McGee from Ontario occupied number 1699 in 1921, raising commercial seed on his adjacent land. His family remained at that address for over sixty years.



*William Fraser Tolmie.*



MOUNT TOLMIE - The neighbourhood's favourite viewpoint was named after Dr. William Fraser Tolmie. A botanist and surgeon with the HBC, Tolmie was also a son-in-law to John and Josette Work. While stationed at Fort Nisqually (Tacoma, Washington) he made the first recorded climb in the Mount Rainier Range. His historical effort there is remembered by Tolmie Peak which rises to 5,931 feet or 1810 metres. An impressive height - but we still like our view.

The local hill has also been a source of summer fun. In 1893 a wooden slide was built allowing riders to speed from the peak downwards to a lower knoll. The end of the First World War was celebrated with a huge hilltop bonfire for all to see. Accidental grass fires in warm weather were also common. Local residents, including boys, beat back the flames with gunny sacks wetted down by Saanich firemen on the scene. Rising smoke made an impressive sight from houses below.

A deposit of sand on the southwest slope (partially obscured by today's Mount Tolmie Ridge Apartments) allowed for more fun. Motocross races were held there each Victoria Day in the 1950s. Kids of an earlier generation slid down the sand pit on sheets of corrugated metal and climbed into an abandoned 'rock crusher'. Streetcar tracks, finally laid by 1912, ran into the site to carry away sand and gravel for the grading of city roads. Riding tramcars up and down the curving track towards Lansdowne reminded some passengers of a tame roller coaster. Kids who greased the tracks on Halloween challenged the skills of motormen trying to make the uphill climb to the Mayfair Drive terminus. In 1937 Arthur and Elizabeth House started a confectionary store there, just

six years before the underused streetcar service - line Number 10 - was abandoned.

MORE NOTABLE BUILDINGS - Though St. Michaels University School (SMUS) was the only architect-designed structure within the immediate neighbourhood, others arose nearby. Charles Elwood Watkins, co-designer of SMUS' School House in 1908, would later add several public schools to his curriculum vitae, notably the lavish Victoria High School in Fernwood. In 1922 he designed a private residence called 'Westward Ho' at 1930 Woodley Road for Olive and Edwin Tomlin, managing director of the Associated Portland Cement Company at Bamberton.

The residence at 1951 Woodley was built around 1920 under a municipal program to house returned soldiers or families of men killed in war. Designed by architect Karl Spurgin, the house cost a total of \$4,035. In 1928 that same architect built a handsome house nearby at 1908 Waterloo Road corner of Richmond. This half-timbered 'Sussex Bungalow' was home to Spurgin and wife Ann, headmistress of St. Margaret's School for girls.

Grandest of all is another one-and-one-half storey bungalow built in the British Arts and Craft style at 1911 Woodley Road. It was commissioned in 1913 by Maggie and Charles Jones, a civil engineer who later served as Saanich reeve. Samuel Maclure was the gifted architect. On nearby Ernest Avenue stand still more craftsman style houses. Though modest in size, they form a cluster of pre-1920 houses that includes the Dempster residence at 1940.

Lastly is the former Provincial Normal School (now Camosun College) standing at the northeast corner of Lansdowne at Richmond. Built five years after SMUS, the Normal School shared a site against Mount Tolmie. Acres of open field, dotted with oak trees and crossed by dusty roads, separated the two neighbouring institutions from the hurly-burly of town far to the south-west. William Gillam of Vancouver was the architect of this second school, producing a design in Late Renaissance Italianate Revival style. The original block of 1913 still features an elegant clock tower visible throughout the neighbourhood. Some area children - including the Whiteoaks of Cedar Avenue - attended regular classes at the Normal School where student teachers learned the standards of their chosen profession. In 1946 it became Victoria College.



## FIRST HOMEOWNERS, 1950-57

### SHELBOURNE STREET:

- 3401 Gordon (salesman) and Verna Munro
- 3405 Norman (RCN) and Jean Tapping
- 3409 Roy (government clerk) and Jean Crouch
- 3411 Bernard (Yarrows worker) and Mary Strongman
- 3415 Alex (customs agent) and Yvonne Effa
- 3419 Horace (warehouseman) and Marjorie Stenning.

### DERBY ROAD:

- 1661 Gideon (marine engineer) and Lillian Scott
- 1663 Charles (crane operator) and Audrey Lanceley
- 1665 Gordon (sales representative) and Doris Roper
- 1666 Joseph (auto mechanic) and Margaret Dupuis
- 1667 William (HBC salesman) and Margaret Allen
- 1668 Rob (gas station worker) and Flora (typist) Kirker
- 1670 Albert (motor repairman) and Jeanette Attfield
- 1672 Patrick (cement contractor) and Hope Graham
- 1674 Arthur (retired) and Ethel Fee
- 1676 Joseph (stevedore) and Margaret Evans
- 1677 James (mechanic) and Betty McDonald
- 1678 Walter (dir Blue Bird Cabs) and Mavis Woodward
- 1679 Archie (draftsman) and Isabella Lochhead
- 1681 Harry (janitor) and Eliza Mathews
- 1682 Stuart (truck driver) and June McInnes
- 1683 John (Saanich fireman) and Evelyn Turkington.

### FREEMAN AVENUE:

- 1661 Bernard (dry cleaner) and Mary Hill
- 1662 Alex (taxi driver) and Audrey McLean
- 1663 Robert (auto mechanic) and Gwen Foster
- 1664 Harold (janitor) and Florence Biggs
- 1665 Ron (taxi driver) and Jean Young
- 1666 Harold (customs officer) and Marion Bennett
- 1667 Doug (BC Tel installer) and Alice Mawer
- 1668 David (floor layer) and June Patterson
- 1669 Don (mechanic) and Christina MacDonald
- 1671 James (window cleaner) and Colleen Hickman

1673 Robert (petty officer RCN) and Helen Rogerson  
 1675 Norm (RCN) and Anne Bryon  
 1677 Charles (land surveyor) and Betty Smythies  
 1678 Cyril (electrician) and May Egan  
 1679 John (fireman) and Yvonne Quinn  
 1680 Frank (petty officer RCN) and Elizabeth Lenk  
 1681 Henry (Yarrows apprentice) and Aileen Osselton  
 1682 Allan (janitor) Lord  
 1683 Nels (lathe operator) and Norah Carlson  
 1684 Stuart (sales engineer) and Shirley Burnell  
 1685 Walter (broadcaster) and Mavis Cownden.



*Trudie Rogerson on Freeman Avenue,  
circa 1955.*

#### ST. MATTHEW'S STREET:

3408 Jack (salesman) and Florence Evans  
 3409 Roy (bookbinder) and Elsie Barnes  
 3410 Robert (cpl RCN) and Edna Moxam  
 3415 Ken (civil servant) and Ada Garland  
 3416 Ernest (postal clerk) and Patricia Aldus  
 3419 James (tire repairman) and Rebecca Patullo  
 3420 Ken (oiler) and Mary Grant.



*Gwen Foster, painting the fence at 1663  
Freeman Avenue. Circa 1962.*

#### VETERAN STREET:

3370 Robert (spray painter) and Elinor Smith  
 3380 Herbert (journalist) and Vera Binny  
 3385 Byron (RCN) and Henny Kindred  
 3401 Frank (shipwright RCN) and Ellen Curson  
 3405 Percy (salesman) and Audrey Fletcher  
 3406 Leonard (lumberman) and Rita Norbury  
 3409 James (bricklayer) and Doris Romain  
 3410 Gilbert (flooring installer) and Beatrice Davis  
 3411 Michael (sawmill worker) and Joyce Ott  
 3415 Ray (employee of Merchant's Transfer) Barrett  
 3416 Robert (plumbing apprentice) and Winnifred Todd  
 3419 Ray (sawmill worker) and Lorraine Wainwright  
 3420 Don (1st officer BCCCS) and Eliza McKechnie  
 3421 Vincent (bus driver) and Mary Townsend  
 3422 Calvin (carpenter) and Betty Wambolt  
 3460 Michael (dept manager HBC) and Helen Ward  
 3461 Keith (cpo RCN) and Joan Toll  
 3481 Archie (Gorge Auto Service) and Helene Hopfe



*Young rascal not painting the fence at  
1663 Freeman Avenue!*



Freeman Walter Nott  
1916~2015



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