

FADER

My father and mother, Herb and Zena Fader, brother Herb Jr. and I fell in love with Ocean Park a couple of years before we actually made the move. We had visited often with my grandmother Agnes Caley and Uncle Bob Mylroie who resided here in the early forties.

At that time, most of the year-round residents were of the working class, while the ones that came out to their cabins in the summer were white collar people.

In the forties, there was no electricity or plumbing. Many people moved into unfinished homes – some just shells inside, with only two-by-fours dividing the different areas. Sometimes only sheets hung for privacy.

The source for heating was the wood stove in the kitchen or a space heater. Sometimes in the winter we would lug coal from the coal shed near the railroad station in White Rock as all trains were steam driven and burned coal at that time.

In order to have a bath, we would go to the well to get water or bail some out of the barrels that collected rain water, then heat the water on the wood stove in the kitchen. We would bathe in a tub near the stove as this was the warmest place in the uninsulated house.

When Mom washed and rinsed our clothes she did it by hand, using a glass washboard. In order to iron our clothes she had to warm the iron on the top of the stove.

There was no refrigeration, so we used to hang our butter, milk and eggs, etc, down the well in a pail hung just above the water. In very cold winter weather, if the delivered milk was not brought inside promptly, the milk would freeze, force the cap up and cream would protrude from the bottle.

Some people had a few chickens for eggs and meat for themselves or for sale. A very few people kept cows for milk. Some people raised sheep for meat and wool. There were incidents of dogs killing sheep which lead to the first dog licences – they were called sheep tags – the fees going to compensate the farmers for loss of sheep.

During the Second World War, we were on rations. At that time my Dad worked at the Vancouver Sun (Beatty and Pender) so was commuting to downtown Vancouver in his Model A Ford. Friends would periodically help him with gasoline from their rations.

From our home in Ocean Park, big search lights could be seen over Vancouver and we could also hear the curfew Nine O'clock Gun go off every night – only adults were allowed on the streets after nine o'clock.

The one gas pump (and the one telephone) was located at the little store on the N.E. corner of North Bluff and Stevenson Road.

On the east side of Stevenson Road, just south of Darwin, there were a few very small cabins for rent at the Pleasant Cabin Court. The Pleasant Cabin Court also had a cafe, small grocery, and living quarters for the owners in a larger building. Later on a new home was built on the corner to house the owners.

The closest doctor was Dr. Sager at the bottom of Tulloch Road on Crescent Road in Crescent Beach – the closest hospital, an hour's drive to the Royal Columbian in New Westminster.

In the 1940s and early '50s most people shopped from catalogues i.e., Spencer's (later Eaton's), Simpson's (later Simpson's-Sears then Sears). The old catalogues usually ended their usefulness as toilet paper in the outhouse if nothing else was available. If you did go shopping in New Westminster or into Vancouver, it was from Monday to Saturday, all stores were closed on Sundays. Woodward's Department stores also closed on Wednesdays. Woodward's had a delivery service to some areas.

Jobs were limited in Ocean Park in those days. People became 'jack of all trades'. Some jobs were available at the local nurseries: Heathcliff Greenhouses, Manten Nurseries (now Ocean Park Nurseries), C. D. Morris, Shannon Nurseries, T. B. Lee Nut Orchards. Other jobs were available a little farther away, at the Mud Bay Flats where seasonal crops such as potatoes, beans, strawberries, and raspberries needed picking. Others would go as far as the Fraser Valley to work in the hop fields. Pickers would stay for the short season in

little huts supplied by the farmer. Otherwise, job income could be gained through digging wells, logging (and stump blasting), piling wood, smelt fishing, saw filing, or delivering newspapers at 35 cents per customer plus \$2.00 road distance allowance (per month). Work was also available at the oyster plant at Crescent Beach.

Some local boys, like John Holland, joined the Armed Forces and saw action in the Korean War (1950).

Entertainment, in the true sense was limited. At the Ocean Park Hall we had whist drives, bingo, tumbling, scouts, concerts, and plays. We could go horse-back riding by renting horses from the farm on the South West corner of Stevenson (128th) and Crescent Road.

We would build soap box carts and ride them down the beach trail hill to the railroad station at the bottom. This form of entertainment was discontinued after Michael Allanson was hit by a cart, receiving a badly broken leg.

If we wanted to locate a friend but we didn't know where he was, we just yodeled, and he would yodel back – even from some distance.

Cycling was popular and on many Saturdays and Sundays we would pedal our bikes to Blaine, across the U.S. border. The theatres in Blaine were open on Sunday evenings – ours were not. Every Saturday night the big event was to catch the bus from Ocean Park and take in a movie (shorts, news and the cartoons included) at the Park Theatre located on Washington Avenue (Marine Drive) between Habgood and Keil Streets, across from the Semiahmoo Indian Reserve in White Rock. The Palladium Dance Hall near the theatre was also popular.

Of course, there was crab fishing, trolling for sea trout in our little duck punts and swimming daily.

In the '60s, the May Day Parade was an important community event – starting at Safeway parking lot and moving down 128th to Crescent Park where a May Pole Dance and other festivities took place. In the early years the parade went in the other direction.

There is one person who must not be forgotten, and he is John Greene, the grocer. He went about in his shy, quiet manner helping people who were hit by hard times. Everyone thought he had only helped them (he told no one) but in real fact he helped quite a few.

– Ed Fader

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