

UREN

In 1939, when Derek Uren and his family came by train from Alberta to New Westminster and then made their way to Ocean Park, life was very different. People had to be more self-sufficient – there simply wasn't the money or the opportunities to buy what one needed. Instead, they grew fruits and vegetables, harvested native plants, raised animals, took whatever jobs they could find and became involved in community events.

Derek's parents rented a house and five acres of land at 12919 North Bluff Rd. (16th Ave.) from Mr. Bancroft. When they were able to buy, Mr. Bancroft deducted the rent they'd paid from the purchase price of \$1,100.00. Derek remembers rent 'receipts' written on cigarette rolling paper, brown paper bags and cigarette packages.

Derek went to the one-room Crescent School (Crescent Park Annex) at 24th Ave. and Ocean Park Road up to Grade 6. Getting to school was a particular adventure, mainly through forested, swampy areas with no designated roads. Toddy Bernard sometimes rode a cow from his home on Crescent Road, then turned the cow loose to make its own way back. A large rock at the edge of the school ground provided wonderful chances for all to play.

Many people owned or worked at a surprising number of local garden centres. Jack Manten, who owned the Ocean Park Nursery at one time, was such a recognized expert that, when Vancouver was starting its Arboretum, they enlisted his aid to help identify various plants received.

Children from Ocean Park, Crescent Beach and White Rock considered the embankment their playground. The big houses on the top were mainly used as summer homes so, for most of the year, they were vacant. When Derek was a boy, you could pick up vessels and other items lying on the ground at the First Nations encampment below Indian Fort Drive.

Summers meant catching crabs at the Ocean Park beach. Large pots, hidden at the beach until needed, were filled with salt water which was brought to the boil then used to cook the crabs. Can't get any fresher than that!

Anglican and Evangelical church services were held in the Community Hall. Derek remembers an evangelical group which showed 16mm movies of nature pictures followed by sermons. It wasn't unknown for small boys to sneak out at the end of the movie.

The Boys' Club provided a much-needed, appreciated service for the community. It was started by Mr. Pinchin, Pete Cotton and Charlie Deyoung in a chicken house on Mr. Pinchin's property, N.W. corner of Sylvan and Stevenson Roads, then moved to the hall. For awhile it was a Pro-Rec (Provincial-Recreation) program with an instructor provided. When the Province pulled out, the local men and boys continued. Derek himself was an instructor and later a Director. At one time, with 70 boys enrolled, classes had to be split into two nights. The focus was on gymnastics but copperwork and other handicrafts were also featured. Annual membership, \$1.00 per boy, was requested only on the first two nights. If a boy still hadn't paid, the matter was dropped.

Derek's mother Amy, his father Jack, his aunt Marie (Terrell) and uncle Claude were actively involved in theatre productions at the hall. Derek learned several parts inadvertently by helping with rehearsals at home. Does anyone else remember 'The Little Clodhopper' and 'Deacon Dubs', two of the popular plays of the time?

Every year the Ocean Park Community Association organized a Fall Festival, with a different theme, on vacant land to the north, where the vet clinic and video store are now. Derek's task was to don a top hat and walk along behind a wooden wall over which only his hat could be seen. On the other side was a horde of eager marksmen armed with baseballs, primed to knock his top hat off. Derek still isn't prepared to share his secret for survival.

Although a great deal has changed since those days, the community survives. People's involvements and commitments sometimes create degrees of isolation but the Hall remains as a visible symbol of the continuity of community spirit.

– by Anne Helps

Teen Beat

School Days ...

by Breanne De Jaeger

Times are changing. Since Ocean Park first began as a tiny community there have been, and continue to be, enormous changes and enormous growth. The roads have changed shape, some have even changed name. Houses have been built, moved, remodelled, and torn down. Stores of all sorts have come and gone, some staying for years, others for a few short months.

A thriving, growing community has helped shape Ocean Park into what it is today. This growth has affected one of the key elements in Ocean Park's society: education.

At first Ocean Park had no school. The only facility for education was the Coulee School, a small building at the peak of Tulloch Road in what is now known as Crescent Beach. When the larger Crescent School (Annex) on Ocean Park Road and Sunnyside (present day 24th, Ave.) opened its doors, the Coulee School closed. The Annex, which stood on land donated by Ben Stevenson, started with eight grades and a mere eight students. By the mid-forties the Annex had shrunk to six grades. This all-grade school was the solitary school in the area until 1948 when Crescent Park School was built to accommodate the ever-expanding community. A larger facility with four rooms, it went up to grade six.

Ray Shepherd, built in the following year, went up to grade seven. It began with the same four-room set-up as Crescent Park, but resident growth demanded more room, and the basement was soon opened up and transformed into a fifth classroom.

To gain a higher education students would bus to Semiahmoo Secondary (present day White Rock Elementary, Roper Ave. and Fir St.) which continued one's education from grades eight to thirteen, which would today be thought of as first year university.

Not everything has changed though. Through constant movement the heart of Ocean Park has remained steady. Children today are the same at heart as they were fifty years ago. They may drive cars to school instead of a cow as Toddy Bernard had been known to do, but the end effect is still the same. Whether being taught in the old style, one-room schoolhouse, or the modern day two-storey technical tower, children are children. There are still the smart children sitting straight in the front, the mischievous bunch that crowds towards the middle, and the slackers that slouch in the back.

Snowy days are still rewarded with a school-wide snowball fight and sunny days with fun in the sun. Teachers still have the endless patience that is required to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. The heart of the school is the same. Education has been a strong pillar in this community since it first began.



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