

HOWARD

Jessie Howard first came to Ocean Park in 1916 where her brother owned land. She was widowed in 1917. Peter Wright gave his sister property on what would become Howard Road and Ferndale Road. Jessie brought up her own five children, Tommy, Milton, Leslie, Jessie and Margaret, as well as three other girls, Connie, Hazel and Dorothy. Mrs. Howard also fostered children for the Children's Aid to help with her income.

The family spent winters in Vancouver, coming out to Ocean Park for the first time each year at Easter. The trip out by train with their



'FERNDALE' PLACE - circa 1920

supplies ended at the cliff, now the 1001 Steps, then they walked along the trail now Ocean Park Road. That first trip was always arduous, as the children had to re-cut their way through the overgrown trail (now 14B) to 'Ferndale', where Jessie had the house built. They would come out on weekends until school holidays, then move in for the season. This time many supplies were brought for the summer, and Broatch's hay wagon would be used to haul the supplies and baggage for the summer visitors and the Camp Kwomais campers from the railway up the hill. In the Fall, Aubrey Stevens would cart the Howard's Ocean Park grown vegetables and their other goods back to the Vancouver bound train.

'Ferndale' (adjoining Welch Road) overlooked the water across the western grounds of Camp Kwomais, and Connie remembers she and her sister clearing the brush in front of the house each year to ensure the best view. The area included a swamp and smudge pots were kept going to stave off the worst effects of the mosquitoes. The frogs sang their songs each night.

There was much work to be done each summer, trees to be cleared, and the huge garden (100 feet by 100 feet) to be tended so that the family had a winter supply of potatoes and other vegetables. The sweet peas grew as tall as their mother. Wood was sawn with the cross cut saw and chopped to dry for the fires the next year as wood stoves were the only source for heating and cooking. Son Tommy was tragically killed when he fell from a tree. A forest fire, raging through Ocean Park burnt the edge of Jessie's house.

The family went to the open air Chapel at the Camp each Sunday. Connie remembers Dr. Willin, a holidaying minister, walking across their land to get to the Camp. The children found Indian relics in Camp Kwomais.

Mrs. Howard bought additional property for \$25 and organized the building of two other houses on Howard Road: 'Resthaven' and 'Melrose'. Jessie Howard, although widowed, could still provide for her family.

The family maintained links to the community. Daughter Jessie (Stewart) was the teacher in Crescent School (Annex) for many years. Hazel married into the Laronde family. Connie, who stayed with her mother in Vancouver to help raise the fostered children, married and moved to Ocean Park in 1949 with husband Angus McKeigan, and the first two of their four sons. Jessie Howard died in 1950 at 84, and left 'Ferndale' to the McKeigans who winterized it for a permanent home. Although, still without water, it had electricity. Dan recalls the huge stump in the yard, cut off 12 feet above the roots, but still 18 feet in circumference. It provided room for many children to stand together, before jumping to the ground.

Source: *Connie McKeigan, Dan McKeigan* — by *Shirley Stonier*

EARLY PEST CONTROL

At an April, 1929 meeting of the Ocean Park Community Association, "it was decided to have the children in the community gather caterpillar [sic] rings, and that we pay 10 cents a 100, and a bonus to the ones having the highest number of rings." Mr. Davis agreed to collect the money to pay for this service. He also volunteered to do the counting and to destroy the 'rings' brought in.

Regrettably, there's no record if this was a one-day event or extended over a period of time, or of who specifically participated, but the children must have been very industrious about their task. The May, 1929 Minutes record that 5,901 caterpillar rings were turned in and that Mr. Davis, in addition to the money for the rings, also paid out a bonus of 50 cents.

(I'm sure there's a math problem just waiting to be solved in all this but someone else is going to have to do it.)
— *Anne Helps*

jazzercise.

Happy 75th OPCA,
and thanks for all your support!

— *Anne C. Erlebach, M.A.(Cand)
Certified Instructor*

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