

## George Lark—Mosgrove

George Lark Sr. was born in Nepean Township and married Margaret Grier of City View in 1876. They came to old Britannia and Mr. Lark, being a carpenter, built his home which still stands today. He also built the Conroy cottage directly across the street, which has since been destroyed by fire. In 1887, he paid \$1.96 in taxes on his home!

During an interview, their daughter, Mary, said her mother had operated a store at the corner of Cassels and old Main Street sometime in the 1880's as the village began to be a summer resort. She recalled her childhood when, with other children, she used to go to the wharfs on the lake front when the timber rafts put in. There they would be treated to beans baked in sand.

The Larks had three children, George Jr., Robert (died in infancy), and Mary.

In 1891, they moved to Mosgrove (once known as Sandy Hill). A house was purchased at the corner of John Street (now Pinecrest) and the March Road. The Lark family were Anglicans, and St. Stephen's held only summer services, so in the winter months services were held in their home the first Sunday of each month.

Mr. Lark and son, George, did market gardening, and as well had a grocery store. Mr. Lark Sr. died in 1912, and his wife in 1915.

In 1912, Magistrate Smith (whose big home was at the corner of Pinecrest and Richmond roads) asked George Jr. to add to his store the Post Office which the Winthrops were giving up. This was done, and it was at this time that the name of Mosgrove was changed to Britannia Heights. George and Mary carried on until 1923 when the business was sold to Cameron McLaurin.

George had acquired considerable land at the Heights, and had purchased the old Mosgrove estate to be used as a sand pit. He died in 1932, and Mary continued to live in the home next door for many years. Though retired, she was much interested in history and had a vast knowledge of oldtimers. She passed away in 1963. With her death, the Lark family history closed as she and her brother had never married.

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*The Winthrop Olde Forge on Richmond Road, as it looked in the 1890's.*



## The Olde Forge in the 1890s

Canada Census, 1851, lists George Winthrop, Nepean Township, blacksmith from England, English Church, wife's name, Jane - two children, Robert and Margaret. Their home was a log house.

According to the late Robert William Winthrop (grandson), his grandfather with wife and two or three brothers came out from England about the year 1828. They stayed in Montreal for about two years. He recalls the story told by his father who heard it from his father, how they came up by row boat to what was to become Bytown, and likely landed at Richmond Landing below the Chaudière. In the year 1830, he settled in the township of Nepean on Concession 2 Lot 20. It was owned by the Winthrops for 133 years.

At the junction of the Richmond and March roads, he set up his business as a blacksmith, a busy trade in those days with the influx of settlers. He was called upon to do all types of work mending the crude machines, ploughs, and keeping the horses properly footed. He was no doubt a pioneer blacksmith between Bytown and outer settlements.

George WINTHROP died March 2nd, 1868, aged 77, and is buried in Christ Church cemetery, Bell's Corners.

Robert WINTHROP born in the log house about 1842 - died April 16th, 1929, aged 87. He continued his father's business, and was one of the well-known forge's on the Richmond Road, catering to all the large farms even into other townships. His son, Robert William Winthrop, said that a new blacksmith shop was built in 1870, with quite a few barns at the back. These buildings were nearly lost during the terrible fire of 1870 that swept the area, when fireballs from the raging flames were thrown into the air and carried long distances.

An interesting old business journal kept by Robert Winthrop began in 1876 and ended in 1891. In addition to the Forge, he was an agent for farm implements, and also did repairs. They also had a small store and in the 1890's a post office.

About the year 1909 Robert Winthrop gave up his business and rented out the Forge for a time. He died in 1929 in the home he was born in and is buried in the family plot at Bell's Corners. Surviving children were: Fred J. Kelwood, Manitoba; Edwin L. Millarville, Alberta; Robert W. at home: Mrs. Percy L. McClare, Mount

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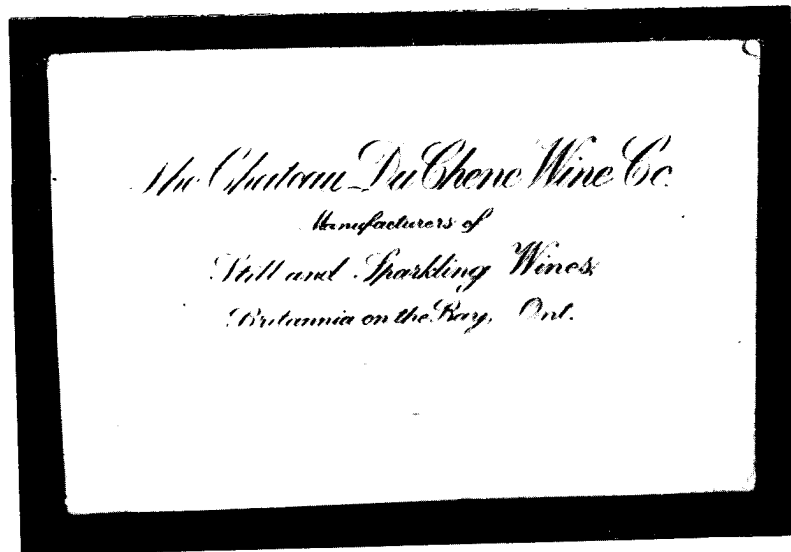
Uniake, Nova Scotia; Mrs. E.M. Honeywell, Woodroffe; Mrs. A.J. Todd, St. Jerome, Quebec, and Miss Winnifred.

Robert William Winthrop continued to live in the old home. He married Emma Knott, who died in 1959. About the year 1932, he had the old home renovated, and much of the old house ended its era though he did use the old forge timbers.

This was the scene of many gatherings by societies and churches of the area, as well as wedding parties, skating and sleigh rides, and marvellous bean feeds. Mrs. Winthrop was an excellent cook. Its great living room with a fine fireplace made it a most pleasant room to have fun in. St. Stephen's Church people look back on the many meetings held there.

The growth of the city westward changed the way of life and finally in 1962, the city purchased the remaining land and the 'Olde Forge' became a Tourist Centre.

Mr. Winthrop then moved into the home of another pioneer, David Richardson, up on the March Road. There he lived until his death at age 82 on February 11th, 1966. His surviving children were Jean (Mrs. Fraser) and Foster, a son.



*Company business card.*

## Mosgrove's Vineyard

Since the early 1920's, on the north side of Richmond Road just past Pinecrest, people have looked into a gradual gaping hole, which had become a sandpit. One marvelled at the great depth of same. But today how many recall what was there before? This part of the city was once an extensive vineyard.

Looking back into the pages of history, we locate one Robert Mosgrove from Sligo, Ireland, appearing in the embryo records of Bytown. Doubtless he was one of those who worked under Col. By building the Rideau Canal. During his lifetime, he established a saddlery and tannery shop and Mosgrove Street commemorated his memory until February, 1974. Robert Mosgrove's son, William, was born in Bytown, January 1st 1837. He was educated in the local grammar school going on to university to study law. He had a large practice in Ottawa.

Some time after 1868, William Mosgrove married Harriet Moore, daughter of David Moore, well-known lumberman of Hull. David Moore and his brother, Job, were known as the famous "Moore Brothers" of the Ottawa Valley. A part of Mrs. Mosgrove's dowry was the beautiful bed believed to have been slept in by the Prince of Wales when he came to Ottawa in 1860 to lay the cornerstone of our first Parliament Buildings.

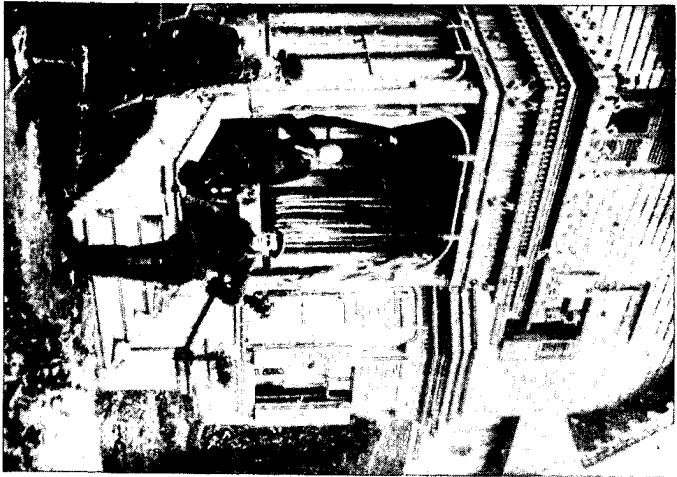
Three children were born to this marriage. Robert St. Patrick followed a career in the British army, married an English girl, had one child, and died in Britain in 1917. William and Edgar continued at home. William married and went to live in Florida in the 1920's, dying there in 1965. Edgar went to the United States.

Looking at an old account book kept by Robert Winthrop, an early entry, made in 1878, recorded that one William Mosgrove had made purchases at his shop. The parcel of land Mosgrove had purchased was located between the farm of George and Peter Bell and the estate of Frederick William Harmer, now the Richmond Heights Apartments. He added other parcels of land.

Mosgrove laid out a fine vineyard as can be seen from an old photograph taken from the tower of his home, looking east down Richmond Rd. (photo pg 19) There was an interesting old vine press and cellar for maturing and making of wine which became a lucrative business. He purchased a large bell and placed it in the tower to call in the workers. He grew all kinds of grapes and made various



*Judge William Mosgrove. Judge  
of the County of Carleton (1889-1903)*



*Judge Mosgrove's home on Richmond Road.  
Mrs. Mosgrove and sons William and Edgar  
are in the foreground.*

types of wines and champagne, supplying the elite of Ottawa's "Cliff St."

Old-timers, who were school boys at the turn of the century, recall vividly the vineyard and the types of grapes - small green, red, and blue, some sweet and others sour. Tall tales were told how they used to venture in to steal the grapes. Many a boy left the seat of his pants on the barbed wire fence!

The old stone schoolhouse was nearby, so you can imagine the temptation to go after the forbidden fruit. After the picking was completed, they were allowed in but only the dregs were left. Long after the vineyards were out of use, grapes continued to grow. Even in recent years, I have seen signs of the vines in autumn colouring the sides of the pit.

The Mosgrove home was considered an outstanding residence of wood construction, with spacious lawns and peacocks strutting about. Adding distinction to the house was a high tower attached to the side. Judge Mosgrove had a bell specially made, and oldtimers recalled bringing it up from the C.P.R. Britannia Station.

William Mosgrove was an influential citizen in Ottawa and the County. He was appointed County Judge in 1889 and held that position until his death. He was a tall, handsome man, and the oldtime school children remembered the fine team of horses that he drove. In those early days, means of transportation from Britannia was by train, horse and carriage, or on foot.

It is interesting to note that the area known as the highlands of Britannia took the name of Mosgrove. Winthrop had a Post Office for a couple of years named Mosgrove. Even the old stone school took that name. In 1913, a new Post Office was opened and known as the Britannia Heights P.O.

In May, 1903, Mrs. Mosgrove died. The Judge followed in August. They are both buried in Maple Grove Cemetery, Hazeldean, in an unmarked grave. Sadly, no memorial was erected.

Left the estate, William and Edgar continued to operate the winery known as the Chateau du Chene Wine Company manufacturers of still and sparkling wines. Times changed, and, after a few years, it folded. Edgar had gone to the United States, and William's wife, not well, took the family to live in Florida.

In 1919, the estate was put up for sale. Capt. Ed Gamble and his wife rented it for a year or two and ran it as "The Wayside Inn" serving teas, etc. Cars had become popular, and it was such a nice run from Ottawa to relax in the rural setting and have tea. Such trips

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made the establishment very popular.

A visitor one day was Mr. George Train, a warden of St. Stephen's Anglican Church. Mrs. Gamble took much pride in showing off the interests of the home, and took Mr. Train up to the tower room to see the bell and the Dowry Bed. I wonder what happened to it? Mr. Train looked at the bell with a longing eye. How good it would fit into the belfry of old St. Stephen's which was not yet opened for service during the full year. So he sent off a letter to William in Florida. In remembrance of his parents, William presented the bell to the church. From 1922 until 1956, it could be heard calling the parishioners to service. Today, it can be seen in the entrance of St. Stephens Church located on Watson Street.

A flashback to 1922 — when they were filming the movie, *Man from Glengarry*, this bell called the actors for the church scenes.

The estate was sold in the 1920s to George Lark, who used it as a sandpit. The next owner was R.R. Foster who continued to operate it as a pit. What remained of the old house was torn down in the 1950s.

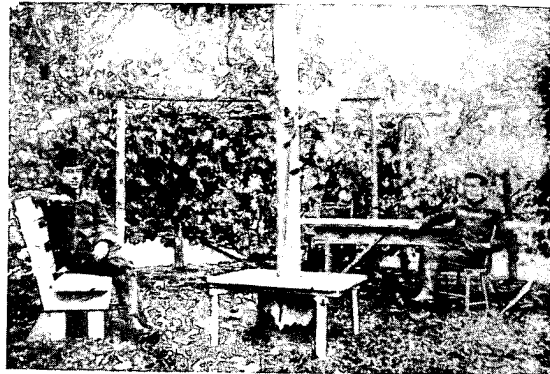
Such is the saga of Britannia's famous vineyard!

As a result of the Mosgrove story being printed, Mrs. E. Ross who owns properties skirting the Quarry Site, presented me with a bottle of grape jelly made from the offspring of the Mosgrove grapes planted 100 years ago.



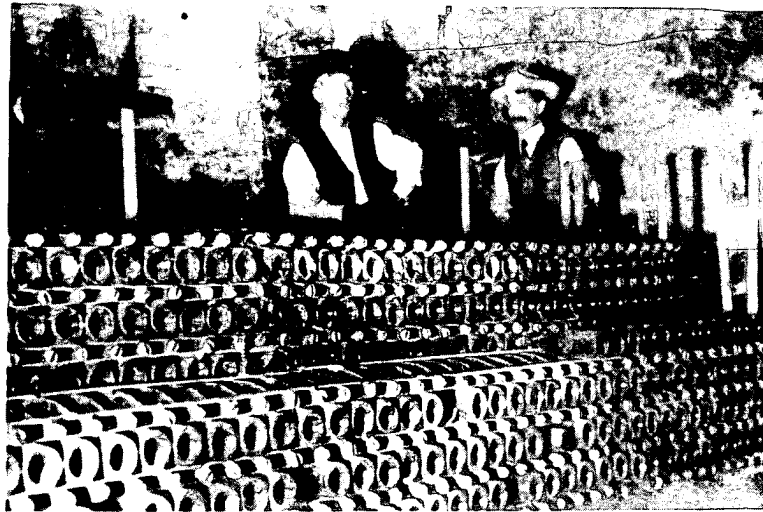


*The winepress with William and Edgar.*



*The grape arbour with William and Edgar.*

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*The cellar*

## Sir John A. Macdonald

Happy New Year folks! I trust you all had a very happy time celebrating. Keep up the spirit, as I would like you all to recall January 11th, 1815, when our great Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, first saw the light of day.

Happy birthday, Sir John. You have left this nation a heritage not to be forgotten. Sir John A. Macdonald served Canada as Prime Minister from 1867 to 1891, except for the years 1873-78.

He represented Carleton County. To remind residents that he was the elected member in 1882 for the county of Carleton, his faithful in the county planned a great celebration. I have before me a copy of the *SemiWeekly Citizen* dated July 3, 1882 (price 3 cents) giving a marvellous write-up of the affair.

Thursday, June 29th, was a day to remember for the residents along the old Richmond Road ending at Bell's Corners, place of the big celebration. It was a beautiful summer day. The farms never looked better with haying about to start, corn well sprouted, and contented bovines in the pastures.

The Corners was all set and ablaze with decorations, with arches made of cedar from the big stand in Stoney Swamp. Colorful bunting adorned the buildings with countless Union Jacks unfurling in the breeze. The Agricultural grounds with its new buildings presented a picture with special tents erected for the VIP's luncheon party. Reeve of Nepean, Thomas Clark, and his committee, were very proud of the preparations made for the big event, a great picnic party.

The Reception committee comprised some 45 men of the Party's faithful, and the Parliamentarians invited made a healthy list. From far and near, farmers forgot their daily chores, donned their Sunday best, hitched up the best driver, and were away to the Grounds. It was a real round-up from the city and county, and quoting from the newspaper of that day, "the attendance of ladies was also large."

From Ottawa to Bell's Corners was a 12-mile drive. At Stadacona Hall, Sir John and Lady Macdonald, Hon. D. L. MacPherson, and Miss Bury entered their carriage with a mounted escort under the command of ex-Alderman Coleman. Many more carriages joined the procession on the way to Parliament Hill. Along the route they were greeted with cheers and flag waving. As they passed Britan-

nia's old log school, the pupils stood by the roadside and let their voices be heard.

The large crowd assembled at the Corners were on tiptoes in anticipation. There was no walky-talky in those days, but like the African bush telegraph, the word came to the waiting throngs that the procession was approaching with its mounted escort. Great was the excitement when Sir John's carriage came into view and loud the cheers, hurrahs, and flag waving. Never did the old village resound to such a show, as the band struck up, "See the Conquering Hero comes", and wave upon wave of cheers followed as the carriage entered the grounds, at the stroke of noon.

A fine luncheon followed with Sir John and his party sitting down with the special visitors and the elite of the county.

The highlight of the day was Sir John's speech. He appeared to be in excellent health and spirits and was pleased with the cordiality and reception in this old Conservative riding of Carleton. First he thanked them for electing him their member, even though he had not visited the county during the campaign.

It was a lengthy speech given with his dynamic power of words and wit. Here are a couple of his comments: "The moment that a government is formed it commences to sew the seed of its own dissolution." And this one we have heard down the years. "We must relieve this country from the state of depression, establish manufacturers, and instead of our workmen part-time, or going to the U.S.A. to get work, they get it in Canada...raise their families as Canadians." Great was the cheering as his long speech ended. Then followed more speeches by invited guests.

The great day ended at 4pm. To the music of two brass bands attracting crowds of cheering people, the carriages formed an impressive procession as they wended their way back to Ottawa. It was truly an event that was the talk of the countryside for years to come.

## Highlights of Old Britannia 1891-92

A Mayoralty race, the Chateau Von Charles, Nautical Club's Activities, and two devastating blows...

The *Evening Journal* of June 24, 1891, reported the following nominations for civic honors at Britannia when residents held a meeting at the Chateau Von Charles.

Mayor William Howe (by acclamation). Ward 1 - Messrs. George Howe, T.W. Currier, R. Masson, C. Masson, R. Burland. Ward 2 - F.H. Heath, L.A. Desrosiers, R.J. Tanner, J.M. Oxley, Wm. Wyld, E. Stone Wiggins, H. Kinlock, A.S. Woodburn. Ward 3 - Dr. M. McElhinney, T.F.S. Kirkpatrick, R.A. Sproule, A.N. McNeill, G.R. Nettle, Chas. Bryson, C.W. Wilmott, W.J. Lynch, H.S. Campbell, A. Grignard.

The residents were serious in keeping their village neat and tidy.

### The Chateau Von Charles

Yes, it was gracious living in Ottawa's fashionable summer resort. It boasted a summer hotel. Being so far from the city, residents looked forward to dining out, and in fact some were paying guests.

Its proprietor was Mrs. Frederica Alexandra de Vallier Von Charles, born in Paris, France, on December 18, 1851. During the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, she became a member of the volunteer corps of nurses organized by the Nuns of Paris. She was educated at Fulham Academy, near London, England, and at an early age married Lieut. Ferdinand Von Charles. A widow with one child, Catherine, she came to Ottawa in 1888. Britannia was becoming a fashionable summer resort for the elite of Ottawa, and Catherine operated the Chateau Von Charles. It was burned in 1901, and she then took over the large French cottage nearby on Bradford Street between Rowat and Cassels streets.

She possessed a charming personality, was widely known for hospitable and charitable dispositions, and had an alert and cultivated mind, having done considerable travelling before coming to Canada.

The hotel was known far and wide, and its rooms were booked well in advance each year. It was a very busy place over the weekends for her dinners were of the finest cuisine. The cottagers donned their Sunday best and, at the allotted hour, sat down to

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excellent meals, complete with the finest in linen, china, and silver. This can be attested today in the memory of an oldtimer, whose parents always feasted there on Sundays. It was the day of gracious living.

Mrs. Von Charles died in 1926, survived by her daughter who went into the civil service when she gave up the hotel business.

#### *Nautical Club News*

The *Evening Journal* - August 31, 1891. The club's first annual set of races was a success with good weather. The course ran southward to Graham's Bay, then north towards Aylmer. The Aylmer Boat Club brought their craft over with Commodore Driscoll in his yacht. But the grand event of the day, the War Canoe race, was not run because the Ottawa War Canoe Club could not make satisfactory arrangements with the C.P.R. to bring out their equipment.

And on April 14, 1892, the Nautical Club held its annual meeting in the OAAC rooms with an enthusiastic gathering. An interview was to be held with the Minister of Public Works to see if a landing pier could be built at Howe's Point, as the old one built years ago had gone into decay. They were to see the Minister of Marine, because the lamp is not often lit in the lighthouse. River boats do not carry their proper lights on the bay and so make it dangerous for small craft.

Officers elected were President - George Howe, Sec.-Treas. - Arthur Tanner, Commodore - Dr. M.G. McElhinney, and other officers were R.J. Tanner, Chas Wiggins, J.W. Bennett, Robt. Burland, E.L. Brittain, E.D. Parlow, J.C. Jamieson, F. Robson.

Tornado hits Britannia and has devastating results, according to the *Journal* of June 15th, 1892. The paper said Britannia was disheveled and craft washed up on the beach. Despite the fury of the elements, the reporter delighted in the June growth in the grove with perfume of wild briar and honeysuckle. New cottages were going up and vacant spots filled with tenters.

Additions to the sailing fleet in port were the *Northumbria* - Capt. Robson, *Iris* - Capt. Brittain, *Iolanthie* - Capt. Tanner, *Esmerelda* - Capt. Bennett, and *Leviathan* - Capt. McElhinney.

July 16th saw a lively blow and Britannia had an anxious time with some yachts damaged. The boom from the lighthouse to the Cliff was broken and washed up. A large raft of square timber, owned by Klock & Co. that lay at the usual spot at the head of the Rapids, was

dashed with such a force against the rocky shore that it completely broke up, drifting in pieces down the rapids. The cookhouse on one of the cribs caught fire, and provisions were lost. Men worked all through the night in the shallow water getting the timbers worked down.

The *Free Press* of Nov. 16th gave out the news that Mr. E.L. Brittain was going to build a summer residence.

During the summer of 1892, the Anglican Chapel of St. Stephen's was built.

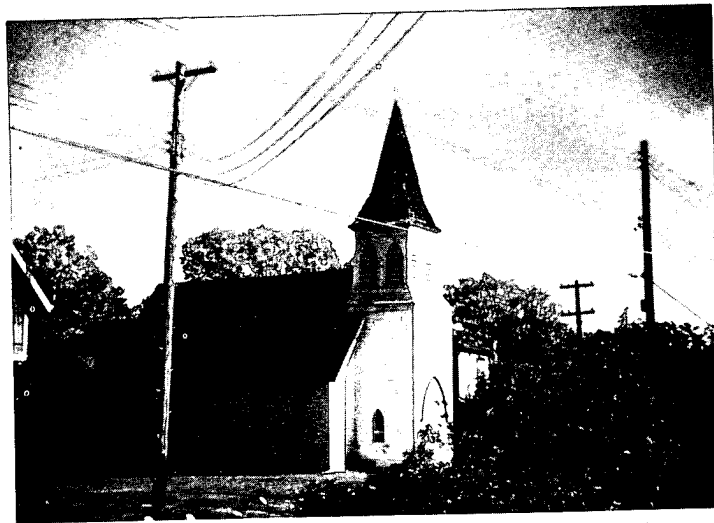


*The W. Wainwright cottage, built in 1894 by Robinson, as it looked in the 1890s.*

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*The M. Graham cottage on Bradford Street near Salina, built by a Harmer in the 1890's. (1982)*



*St. Stephen's Anglican Church on Britannia Road. (1950 s)*



## History of Old St. Stephen's

Saint Stephen's Anglican Church was once known as the little church among the pines.

The fast growing summer colony in the resort area of Britannia missed their usual Sabbath routine, the day of rest and spiritual tonic. There was need of a chapel.

The first records of the church of England here date back to 1886, when clergy from the city came out and conducted services from a verandah of a cottage, with a piano from within supplying the music. In fact a service was sometimes held under the beautiful pine trees. Two clergy mentioned who came out in those early days were the Venerable Archdeacons Snowden and Bogert and also the Canons Pollard and MacKay.

The first Vestry meeting of the "planned" church was in 1890. Rev. Jemmet was chairman, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, vestry clerk, and Mr. A.N. McNeill, R.N., and Mr. Robert Burland were the wardens.

During the summer of 1892 work was commenced to build the Church, with Charles Robinson, son of Nelson G. Robinson who in 1835 took over the Mills from Capt. LeBreton, and other helpers. They did such a good job that on August 7th, 1892, the building was formally opened for services. Mr. A.N. McNeill, R.N., prime mover for its construction superintended the erection. The church was called "Saint Stephen".

A Board of Trustees was chosen names consisting of Judge William Mosgrove, A.N. McNeill, R.N., Maynard Rogers, George Nettle, Frederick Graham and Nicholas Sparks.

The Church was finished inside with polished ash, in a diamond pattern. A steeple was erected the same year according to plans donated by Mr. Horwood. The windows in the church were at one time in the old stone Baptist Church on Queen St. and the sashes had been carved by Bytown residents.

Sunday services were held during the summer months and an old record tells of a Sunday School picnic with 40 children and parents attending.

Until 1909, St. Stephen's formed part of the Nepean Mission, with a clergyman caring for St. Stephen's, All Saints, Westboro, and St. Matthias, Hintonburg. That year it became part of All Saints parish with the Rev. R.H. Steacy as its rector.

On September 3rd, 1916, the Church was consecrated.

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On Feb. 10th, 1956, the rare service of secularization was held in the church. Rt. Rev. E.S. Reed, Bishop of Ottawa, pronounced the formal words which ended the use of the building for sacred services. He paid tribute to those who had worshipped and worked there over the years. In the 1960's the building was sold to a private owner.

### Two Interesting Notes

It is interesting to look back on events that took place in this little church. One afternoon in 1922 a church Warden chanced to be having afternoon tea in the former home of Judge William Mosgrove, of vineyard fame. He had a bell in the tower of his home which had been used to call in the workers. Upon suggestion to the Judge's son, then living in Florida, it was donated to St. Stephen's in memory of his parents. And so for many years, it rang each Sunday morn to call the faithful.

Also in 1922, the church scenes for the filming of the movie, "The Man from Glengarry", took place in St. Stephen's. And the locals took part dressed in old costumes, creating plenty of excitement in the old village.



*Iris Lodge (Oct. 1897) Mr. E. L. Brittain in front and Dr. and Mrs. E. Stone Wiggins on the top verandah.*

## Britannia Never Looked so Well as this Year — 1893

'Tis the spring of 1893 and the *Ottawa Daily Citizen*, April 22nd, reported that a heavy east wind had moved the ice up river, and it was feared that a west wind might bring it back down and damage the Jamieson Mill and cottages on the bay.

Mr. Brittain let it be known that his cottage cost about \$1,000 to erect. The *Journal* of May 11th related how some of his lady friends took possession and added a feminine touch to make his bachelor habitation more homelike.

And more cottages were springing up - Mr. Tache on the lakeshore, A.N. McNeill, R.N., on Bradford. Dr. E. Stone Wiggins also built a palatial residence on the same street. He was a famous weather prophet, with an equally famous wife, Susie Annaw. She wrote "The Gunhilda Letters" in 1881, in support of a Bill before Parliament, making it legal for a man to marry his deceased wife's sister.

Bayview House put on an addition in order to take in more guests, and the Chateau Von Charles had its usual regular complement of guests. The resort was getting increasingly popular.

And a plank sidewalk was built, from the railroad tracks down Main St. No more dusty shoes, or ladies' hemlines messed up, as one walked the unpaved road.

Electrical storms started early that year for in June, Mr. Brittain's yacht was struck by lightning and damaged.

Dominion Day was a very hot humid day, as reported by both city newspapers. They gave lengthy reports of a wonderful day at Britannia on the Bay. The population of the town was swelled with both visitors and cottagers. Visitors enjoyed the trip out by train. Others came by carriage, as well as many getting exercise by bicycling out. The lake presented quite a picture with all types of boats, yachts and sailboats cruising about. Some were trying to fish, but few fish were caught due to the heat.

Britannia's first waterworks — Alas the heat brought a dead calm for about ten days. Mr. Jamieson had erected a windmill on the cliff near the head of the Rapids, with a 5000 gallon tank. No wind, and soon the water tank was emptied. So the old water cart had to be brought into service for the cottagers. You could drink the river water and enjoy swimming in it too. Soon the winds came and once

more the creaking of the windmill was heard and a full tank resulted.

Mr. Jamieson extended water to the cottages by laying pipes above ground, a welcome service for the residents. After the spring floods his boathouse had been repaired and cottagers had a shelter for their boats.

It was bad enough not to get water tapped to your cottage, but sadly some of the residents had a greater loss. Their milk supply was cut off. There was no milk delivery in those days, so many people kept a cow. Unfortunately, one day a group of cattle wandered onto the railroad tracks and were killed by a fast-approaching train. One family I recall in my early days had a beautiful little Jersey, named Betsey. She summered at Britannia and wintered at Chute A Blondeau, making the journey up and down the Ottawa by boat. She was pastured with our cow, and oftentimes Mother had to milk her when her owners were away. It was lovely creamy milk.

The Baseball Club and Tennis Courts were in full swing, and the *Citizen* of July 7th, reported "The 9:40 train is a boon to Britanians". And the *Ottawa Citizen* is received every morning of publication by the 7:10 a.m. mail, a welcome visitor at breakfast.

A big social event of the season was a Lawn Social held at the home of Mrs. Graham. It was really a brilliant affair. The lawn was beautiful, lighted up, and the young ladies made everyone perfectly at home. They deserved much praise for the spread which all enjoyed, especially visitors from the city. The parsonage fund received \$50.00.

Plans for a Board of Health confronted the village council, and it was considered imperative to appoint one at once. Some residents were very careless and their yards a menace to health. The rocky land does not absorb refuse which should be burned or buried.

And the *Citizen* listed the residents on each street (takes too much space to name them), but the streets named were Main, Bradford, Sparks, Society Square, Front St., Bay and the Cliff. Many of the cottages are nicely situated and filled with happy good natured cottagers who mix with each other to increase a common goodwill.

The 3rd Annual Regatta of the Nautical Club was reported in the *Citizen*, August 15th. Weather was very poor due to rain, but plans went ahead and events were witnessed by a large number. Open sailing race was won by *Doris* owned by N.C. Sparks. Open Skiff race... W.C. Baker of the Aylmer Club; Swimming race - (boys

under 16) R. Rogers; Skiff sailing race - F. Merrill; Yacht race - G. Moon in *Stormy Petral*. The balance of seven events had to be run the following Saturday.

It was a great season as it ended, and that hardy seaman Mr. Edwin Brittain was still hoisting the sails for a run up the lake, as reported by the *Journal* of October 14th.

And so that was as it was in Britannia in 1893.

## Happy Days at Britannia 1894 - 1896

It was the beginning of nice summer days way out in Britannia. So said the *Ottawa Journal*, June 23, 1894. The moving vans were busy transporting household needs to the cottagers. Already eager sailors had their crafts in shape and were making runs up river.

The river and lake presented a busy scene as the paddle wheelers and tugs brought down the winter harvesting of logs for the Ottawa mills.

Great cribs had been assembled by the expert rivermen and carefully watched as they were towed down to near the crest of the rapids.

Then a booming bellow from the boat signalled the river men that the next step was to be taken. The water being high that year, the cribs glided smoothly over the rapids while the rivermen sang river songs happily as if rocks and raging water held no terror for them. They were a great breed of men, these rivermen, who followed in the wake of the lumber industry.

This was an exciting time for the young boys, as oftimes the rafts of logs were put into the bay, before releasing. Armed with a few pennies, they would rush down to the shoreline and go onto the raft where the Cook held sway. From a great iron pot nestling on hot coals, they would receive a huge plate of beans, a twisted doughnut the size of a carrot, and a panniken of tea. What a feast spiced with wild tales of river life. Sometimes older boys were invited to stay on for the run over the rapids. A dear oldtimer, long gone to his reward, almost started to drool as he recalled those wonderful days of his youth when summering at Britannia.



*Iris Lodge and Jamieson's Mill on lakefront between Jamieson and Rowatt streets. Taken from E. Harmer's cottage about 1894.*

The year 1894 was a nice peaceful summer. Cottages were still being erected, and the Wainwrights named theirs "The Gables". And the good Catholic population rejoiced as their dream was realized, the chapel of St. Bonaventure was built.

The Nautical Club had much in mind as reported in the *Journal*, Sept. 17th. A meeting chaired by Commodore Parlow, "Resolved that owing to the growing importance of Britannia and the special attractions it offers to yachtmen, that it is desirable that suitable provisions be made for the shelter and safe keeping of all kinds of sailing craft." Committees were formed, and plans drawn up for a structure. It would be a magnificent one, with every modern convenience, and would adorn the easterly extremity of the lake in the near future. The Nautical Club had outlived the day when they occupied a room in the Old Mill and had a war canoe called *The Whiskers*.

December 28, 1895 - the *Journal*- "Judge Ross granted an order today for the incorporation of the Britannia Boat House Club", with Thos. H. Kirby, Jackson Booth, E.L. Brittain, Arthur Tache, and William Wyle as the first Directors.

The pride of Britannia, the new and commodious Boat House which has just been completed, was given its "social baptism" last evening, reported the *Evening Journal* of June 13th, 1896.

"Henceforth its doors will stand open to Ottawa people and at least once a week devotees of terpsichore will trip the light fantastic to the merry jingle of the stringed instruments".

Snugly situated on a pretty point of vantage overlooking the bay, the new Boat House is large enough to provide accommodation for almost any number of craft. The second floor has been arranged for social enjoyment with a wide verandah to view up the lake.

A special train last evening conveyed several hundred citizens of the city out to the Concert and Hop, the first of many more to come. A great many come out by wheel, including a large number of the Ottawa Bicycle Club, while others drove, and the large hall was crowded.

The concert programme was brief, a prelude to the dance to follow. Mr. William Wyld, president of the Boat House Club, gave a brief history of the new Club. He said it had always been the desire of the residents to have such a building, but for years no one had the courage enough to start the ball rolling. Last fall, however, a number of young men set to work and with pluck and perseverance, and only \$80.00 as a basis for operations, managed to bring about this successful result. The Building Committee deserved the thanks of everyone, especially Messrs. Brittain and Tache. Mr. Wyld expressed thanks of the Club to Mr. J.R. Booth for the free gift of the site. It was truly a night to remember.

And there was a train wreck that year (month not shown in the newspaper clipping). It was caused by a cow lying on the tracks of the Canadian Pacific's line through Britannia. A freight train coming through from the West, picked up the cow on the cowcatcher, and as the engine reached the station platform, it became jammed with such force that it threw some of the cars off the track. Some of the cars contained a shipment of steers. Many of them were killed, and some got free and caused quite a stir in the village when trying to round them up.

But the great Event of 1896 was the Club House.

98.



*The Britannia Boathouse Club, before 1900.*



## The Chapel of St. Bonaventure is Built

The building of a Roman Catholic Chapel for its summer residents was long the concern of Mr. W.J. Lynch of the Patents Branch, who has a fine cottage located on old Main St. The faithful were unable to get to the usual Sunday mass and it was time something should be started.

Mr. William Howe of the summer colony, well known painter and decorator and a good friend of Mr. Lynch's, suggested the use of the Anglican chapel just erected, but this was not possible. Mr. Howe promised Mr. Lynch if permission was given to erect a chapel, all the residents were ready to help.

In 1894 the Archbishop permitted Mr. Lynch and Mr. Arthur Tache to canvass the residents in order to carry out the cherished dream. J.R. Booth, the great lumber king who owned the large parcel of land east of Britannia Road, graciously donated two lots on which to build plus enough lumber. The dream was about to be realized.

Mr. Lynch and Mr. Tache prepared the plans and surveyed the land. His Grace the Archbishop of Ottawa donated \$50 to the building fund, as well as all the large side windows. Mr. Lynch provided 16 stone pillars to place the church on, and the altar was the workmanship of Messrs. Lynch and Tache and W.J. Conroy, to last all through its years. Mr. Howe provided the interior and exterior paint, with others generously helping.

It was a joyous gathering on July 14th, 1894, when Msgr. Routhier, Vicar General of the Diocese, blessed the Chapel and dedicated it to St. Bonaventure. Rev. Father Nelles of Ottawa University celebrated its first Holy Mass. Henceforth Mass was said on Sundays and Holy days by the Oblate and Capuchian Fathers faithfully serving the congregation. An organ, rented from the Orme Company, provided music.

## A Bell to Call the Faithful

The tower was there, but no bell. Mr. Lynch was busy. A bell was ordered from a firm in Troy, N. Y. They sent him a better bell than ordered and as well paid the freight. From now on the bell would signal time to come to service.

100.

The Bell was blessed on Sunday, August 30th, 1903, when His Grace Archbishop Duhamel assisted by the Rev. Fathers Honore and Gregoire of the Capuchians and Rev. Father Myrand as Master of Ceremonies. Beautiful music was rendered by Valentine's orchestra, with Mr. A. Tremblay presiding at the organ.

The sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. Lynch, Mr. Tache, and Mrs. Esther Lemieux. Following the ringing of the bell by the sponsors, the congregation was given the chance to follow which realized gifts amounting to \$25. It was indeed a wonderful day of rejoicing shared by Catholics and non-Catholics.

The Stations of the Cross was the gift of Britannia's residents. As the years progressed, new lights, paintings and a small rectory were added to the church for visiting priests as well as other improvements. In 1905 Father Maurice of the Capuchian Order took a personal interest in the chapel, and had improved the interior decorations. To defray the costs, Mr. and Mrs. L.N. Poulin donated one of their lots which was raffled, and at a later date the church was enlarged. (Note: This early history was obtained by Mrs. J.M. Connolly, of the Women's Institute, from an old Record Book kept by the Capuchian Order at St. Francis Church).

With the growth of the city westward after the Second World War and increased population, there was need for all year services. In the 1950's the church was winterized and so served its day. A new church was in the planning to be erected on duMaurier, just off Pinecrest Rd. It was dedicated in 1965 to St. Remi and now serves a French congregation.

The old church which had served its day was demolished in 1961. For over 50 years it was a joy to welcome the Sabbath Morn when the bells of St. Stephen's and St. Bonaventure called forth the faithful. Sadly today, you rarely hear a church bell ring. When the wind is in the right direction, I hear Deschênes Parish bell, a welcome sound.

### **An Interesting Flashback of an Event at the Chapel in 1906**

Looking through a precious old scrapbook which had been kept by an old resident, I came upon this interesting story. Mr. L.N. Poulin, retired merchant and prominent citizen, was being interviewed about his early automobile, a 7 h.p. chain drive Rambler

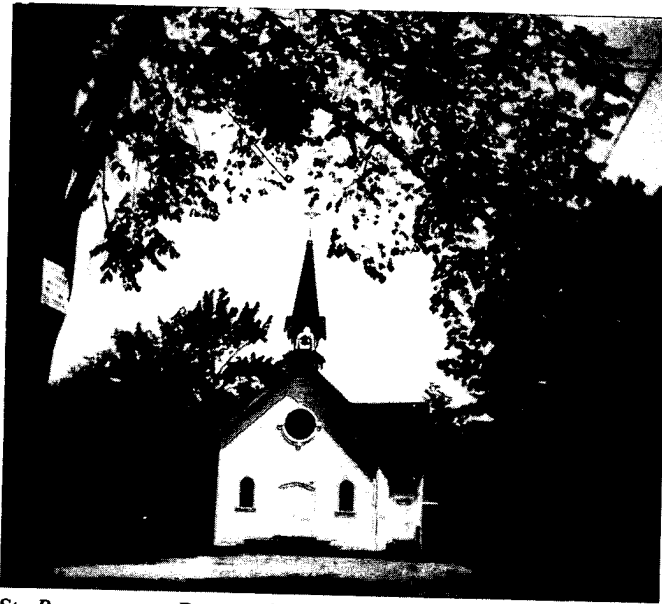
purchased in 1902. This car was built by Thomas B. Jeffries Co. at Kenosha, Wisconsin.

In 1905, he had it fitted with an adjustable top for delivery purposes. Not the first man in Ottawa to own a horseless carriage, he was the first to revolutionize Ottawa's mercantile delivery system by introducing a gasoline-propelled vehicle. It was adjustable for business and pleasure.

Mr. Poulin's dual-purpose car figured conspicuously back in 1906 at a notable event - the blessing of the extension to the Catholic Chapel at Britannia. This took place on Sept. 21st.

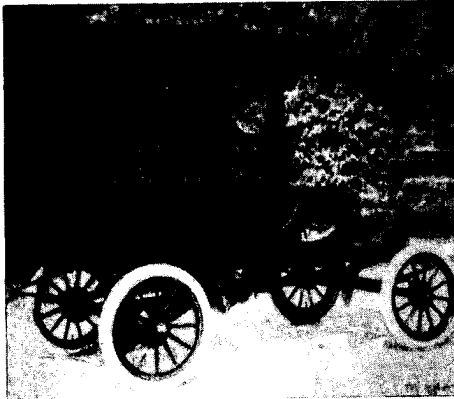
The ceremony was performed by His Grace Archbishop Duhamel, assisted by Rev. Father L.J. Kehoe. These notable dignitaries were driven by Mr. Poulin to the event, in his horseless carriage bereft, of course, of its mercantile top.

Mr. Poulin was a long-time resident of Britannia Heights. His home still stands, a part of the West End Villa.

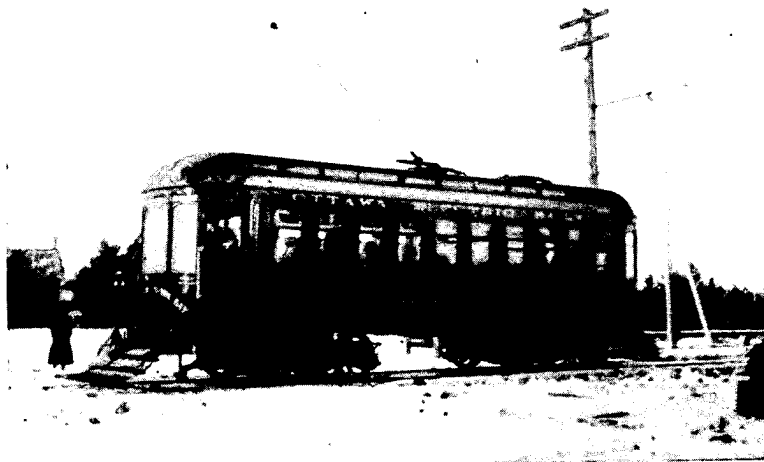


*St. Bonaventure Roman Catholic Chapel, built in 1894.  
Demolished in 1961. (1950)*

102.



*This 7 h.p. single chain drive Rambler was purchased by Mr. L. N. Poulin in 1902*



*Ottawa Electric Railway Company's main stop at Britannia in the early 1900's. Note the street car is marked Britannia-on-the-Bay.*

## The Winds of Progress Disturb the Peace of the Summer Resort's Residents

### Street Cars on Britannia's Streets

The evening Journal, dated Sept. 23rd, 1896, gave the following report:

"A lively meeting of Britannia's ratepayers met at the Club House, with Mr. Wm. Wyld in the chair and Mr. E.L. Brittain as Secretary. The following gentlemen and a sprinkling of ladies were present: Ex-Alderman Jamieson, A.N. McNeill, John Fraser, W. Rowatt, A. Tache, R. Chisholm, W.J. Lynch, Chas. Robinson, W. Murphy, L. LaHaise, Ed. McNeill, R.A. Sproule, J. Rose Smith, George Burland, George Howe, J. Godard, and many others.

The discussion was lively, and the interests of the village fully considered. Mr. Jamieson reported for himself and Mr. Rowatt, as part of a committee named at a previous meeting to interview the Street Railway authorities. In his report, it was stated "that the Electric Company had applied for permission to the Nepean Township Council to use the streets of Britannia for the rail right-of-way having already secured to the Britannia limits."

The Company, although dealing with the Township, desired an expression of opinion on the scheme from the ratepayers of the village. The taxpayers dwelt at length upon the interests involved and the pros and cons of this intrusion, but the bulk of opinion was against the project.

The following is not a verbatim copy but gives the gist of the resolution passed by a considerable majority...

**"RESOLVED - THAT THE RATEPAYERS OF BRITANNIA REPRESENTED BY THOSE PRESENT EXPRESS THE OPINION THAT, IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE VILLAGE, IT IS NOT DESIRABLE THAT AN ELECTRIC RAILWAY SHOULD ENTER BRITANNIA, AND THEREFORE, THEY DO NOT FAVOUR THE GRANTING OF THE USE OF THE STREETS BY THE TOWNSHIP TO THE COMPANY FOR THIS PURPOSE."**

It may be stated, without giving the reasons, that the feeling largely prevailed that as the C.P.R. had for many years given the people excellent service at a low rate of fare, it was the duty of both

taxpayers and sojourners to continue their patronage to the Railway.

The villagers were much disturbed, just as the city's residents were with the proposal to put horse-drawn street cars on their streets. Charles Roger's book, *Ottawa Past and Present* 1871, said, "The railway was, after prejudices had been overcome, brought into operation two years ago and has been essentially a success." He also said the streets were wide and should not hinder the usual traffic. The first line ran from Rideau Falls to the Chaudière and plans are to extend to other streets. Ending his story, I quote - "The more the streets are extended in town and country, the better it will be for those who earn their bread, until, at all events, men do ride on the wings of wind, at the rate of sixty miles an hour and road steamers have driven horses into pasture-field to become food for men, as pigs, sheep and cattle now are."

### Street Cars have Long Vanished from our Streets

How many today recall the names of Thomas Ahearn and Warren Y. Soper, the Ottawa Electric Company and Ottawa Car Manufacturing Company and their contribution to the city's progress. They must not be forgotten.

I would like to refer to the C.R.H.A. News Report of 1960. The Association had held a banquet in Montreal, and its guest speaker was Mr. Seymour Rathbone, then 82, chairman of the Board of Ahearn & Soper Ltd., the pioneer electrical firm. The title of his talk was "Reminiscences of Ahearn & Soper", whose interests embraced the building of the street railway and its cars.

I wish I could relate his full detailed history of this remarkable story of two men, which reads like a romance. Mr. Ahearn was Ottawa born and Mr. Soper from Old Town, Maine. Their influence on the city's progress cannot be overrated in a very interesting era.

Mr. Rathbone recalled that, prior to 1891, the transportation system consisted of a few small horse-drawn cars, six in all. "I have ridden in those quaint little cars in winter time, the floors covered with straw and heated with a tiny coal stove in the middle of the car."

On June 20th, 1891, the first small street car appeared on Ottawa's streets, sending the horses to pasture.

Besides developing the street car lines on the city streets, the Company, with enterprising brightness, bought up considerable land on the bay at Britannia which had become a fine summer resort. Plans were made for a Park which at that time was very suburban and necessitated transportation by street car when the park was established. On May 25th, 1900, the line was completed and in operation. Development followed and Ottawa people flocked out in large numbers to enjoy the summer breezes, swim in the Ottawa's clear waters, and enjoy band concerts.

The whole Britannia line saw the development of this west end, and new homes and cottages appeared, rapidly increasing the population.

The city residents discovered Britannia as an ideal summer resort, but it was Ahearn & Soper and their electric cars that helped to make Britannia Park world famous as a playground before the advent of the motor car.

In 1896, they worried about street cars on their streets. Today they worry about the buses that use them!



*The Britannia Mill, established in 1860, was converted by J.C. Jamieson into summer apartments in the 1890 s.*

106.



*The lower section of the canal showing the old crib work to the left. (1950)*



*80 Bradford Street, once the manager's house for the mills at the Deschênes Rapids. Later it became part of "The Grove".*



## Britannia in the Late 1890s

According to the *Ottawa Journal* news of the era, a happy picture was painted. A hundred cottages were pleasantly scattered amongst the trees near the lake shore. As well there was a colony of about one dozen tenters. Jamieson's Old Mill had been fitted up as a bachelor's residence, and the Balmoral was well filled with its usual guests. Excellent train service was provided by the C.P.R. You could catch an early train to the city at 6:30 a.m. and if delayed in the city, there was the 10:30 p.m. to get home on.

The big centre of attraction was the Britannia Boat House Club with almost everybody owning a yacht, sailboat or canoe. Energetic youth brought honors to the Club displaying their paddling ability in competitions with other clubs. The year 1898 saw one famous race when the Britannia and Aylmer War Canoes staged a race in front of the Aylmer Club. Every conceivable craft converged onto the lake for this historic event. It was an enjoyable year for the cottagers.

## The Building of the Canal and its Abandonment

About 1898 J.R. Booth, who owned the land beside the rapids and east of Britannia Road, sold the 160 acres to the Metropolitan Electric Co. for the Canal project at the Deschênes Rapids. It was to be a busy area for over two years.

Earl Wilson, writing up "Old Time Stuff" for the *Ottawa Citizen* in 1934, did research on this subject and from his articles I quote. "The long abandoned Metropolitan Electric Power Canal project has been a source of curiosity to those who have viewed it over the years, and who do not know its history."

The promoters spent close to half a million dollars and in 1899 that was a considerable sum of money. How many have seen this old uncompleted project and wondered about its true story and the rock pile extending to the foot of the rapids and the cribwork on the other side? Some have ventured to say it was to be a link in the proposed Georgian Bay project.

This scheme was sponsored by the Electric company whose first president was Thomas Lindsay, then owner of a department store on Wellington Street. It was he who in 1905 built the present Daly Building which became a great department store.

108.

“Old Time Stuff” obtained many of the facts about this work from W.J. Taylor, an old Lindsay employee, who became caretaker of the abandoned works in 1901. It was to be a three-month stay but it lengthened on even after the Ontario Hydro purchased the land in 1926. He stayed until 1941.

At the time the company was formed sufficient funds were available to purchase necessary machinery and to pay for the work of digging the canal. When it came to erecting a Power House, which was to have been at the east end of the channel, the Company ran short of funds, and the work was abandoned. Mr. John Ayles was the engineer in charge of construction, with Charles Jennings of Petrolia following as the second president.

At the height of the work, about 500 men were employed as well as about 75 teams of horses used to construct the breakwater along the south side of the canal. There is an earth core 18 ft. in width at the bottom with three feet of stone on top. The earth was scraped from the land lying east of Mud Lake. All the stone was excavated from the canal, which was dug to a depth of 14 feet and was 150 feet wide.

While the work was in progress, the north end of the village presented a busy scene. There were two camps, each 75 feet long, located on the open land east of Britannia Road. One was occupied by the Italian workers and Jimmie Palangio was the big boss of this gang. There was also a cook house, boarding house, and office in the fields.

A track ran for a distance of 1000 yards along the top of the breakwater. This was for carrying the stone to form the banks of the breakwater, and for depositing the excess stone at the far end.

When the works folded up, some of the machinery used on the job was used in the building of the Connaught Rifle Ranges. The engines and dump cars were sold to a firm in Goderich, Ont. Part of the excess stone was used when the Ottawa Electric was constructing its pier out into the bay at the Park in 1901.

And so the abandoned canal for many years was an accepted eye sore. Early spring brought flood waters torrenting over its head into the gaping unfinished work. I recall from early childhood the barren look of this old stone pile. However, with the years, out of the earth core has emerged a great growth of honeysuckle and trees. It now provides a delightful spot to walk along with a full view of the rapids and the Quebec side of the river.

Fifty years had to pass. Following the Second World War,

“Thinkers” gazing from the Boat Club verandah had a Vision - which since 1950 has made a remarkable change in the topography and a superb mooring for the Club’s increased marineland moorings. It is no longer a gaping hole, but a development worthy of the “Thinker’s Dream”.

### 1899 — Morrey's Business Directory

#### BRITANNIA BAY - Population about 50

McAmmond, Mrs. B. Postmistress and grocer  
 Murphy, Henry Builder  
 Robinson, Charles Carpenter

#### MOSGROVE - Population about 75 (later Britannia Heights)

Skuce, James Blacksmith  
 Winthrop, R.W. Postmaster and General Store

#### BELL'S CORNERS- Population about 150

Blais, Wm. Hotel  
 Dawson, A.G. Postmaster  
 Dawson Bros. General Store  
 Eynough, J. Carpenter  
 Green, George Hotel  
 McGee, A. Blacksmith  
 McKenna, John Hotel  
 Pattern, Henry Cooper

110.

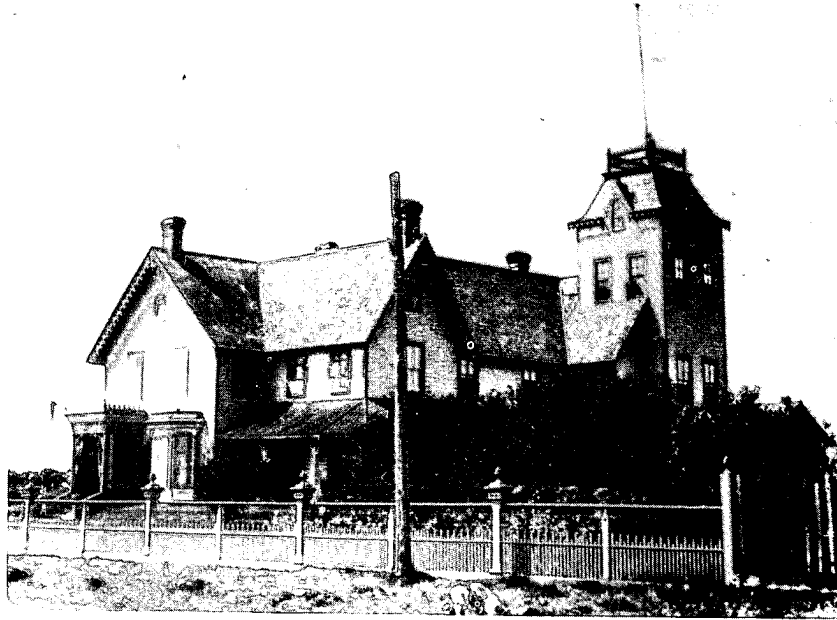
## Britannia's Gracious Homes of the past



### “Bleak House”

Frederick William Harmer came to Canada in 1858 from England with a large family and settled on the old Corkstown Road. He was much interested in the municipal affairs of Nepean and in the 1860s became its clerk holding that office until the early 1900s. The great fire of 1870 razed Bell's Corners and its municipal office and Nepean's affairs were then administered from a building on Parkdale Avenue.

To be nearer his place of work, Harmer erected a fine stone home, to be known as “Bleak House”, on the Richmond Road just past Pinecrest. He saw the erecting of the new Town Hall in Westboro in 1897, and died in 1906 at the age of 82. After the family gave up residence, the home was sold. The last owner was Dr. L.K. Robinson who sold to a developer. In 1969, the house was demolished to make way for the Richmond Heights Apartments.



### Mosgrove Residence

Judge William Mosgrove held the position of County Judge from 1889 till his death in 1903. He was the son of the old Bytown pioneer, Robert Mosgrove, and married Harriet Moore, daughter of David Moore, lumberman. He located on the Richmond Road in the 1870s and on his lands established an outstanding vineyard, known locally for the production of fine wines. On the death of both he and his wife in 1903, two sons William and Edgar continued with the vineyard. Another son, Robert St. Patrick, was serving in the British army.

In 1919 his sons put the estate up for sale. Part of the land was then used as a sand pit. What remained of this fine home was demolished in the 1950s.

The year 1979 saw the erection of an apartment complex, which to my delight took the name of "The William Mosgrove Tower".

112.



### Campbell Residence

The 1851 Canada Census listed Peter Campbell as a farmer from Scotland with his wife Christina, and located on the 2nd Concession (Baseline Road opposite Pinecrest Cemetery). J.L. Gourlay, in his *History of the Ottawa Valley* printed in 1896, said "Peter Campbell built a large stone house on the 2nd Concession, the best then in the whole range, as the shanties began to be replaced, and was a resident for many years." He was active in the Nepean Municipal council and served as an assessor.

The farm came into possession of the Honeywells and was held by them until 1934. It was then sold to T.A.G. Moore who made extensive improvements. In 1947, it was purchased by the late Frank Ryan who made it a showplace. In 1957, the farm was sold for development by the Campeau Corporation. The house was demolished in 1960.



### “Grahamhurst”

John Graham came from Ireland and died in 1892 at the age of 92. He evidently came to Canada in the late 1820s, and he acquired much property by buying up land given up by earlier settlers. The name of Graham is one of the most famous in Nepean, as this family and its descendants have played a prominent part in the development of the country.

William Graham was the son of the pioneer, John. He was keen to develop his land into good farmland, and as well did much to improve the quality of farm animals. Much interested in the township affairs, he was head of the Bytown and Nepean Road Commission from 1862 to 1886. Some of his children included Dr. William F. Graham, Frederick Graham of Ottawa's Bryson-Graham firm, and Thomas James, who remained on the farm.

“Grahamhurst”, the family home, was the residence of Mrs. A.C. Wimberley and family for many years. In the 1960s, it was expropriated to make way for the Queensway arterial, and was later demolished.



### Dawson Residence

John Dawson's home was built on land acquired by Sgt. Vincent who had seen service with a British Unit at Waterloo. Built of Nepean sandstone, its walls were more than two feet thick. Above its basement were hand-hewn pine timbers. The home and grounds were beautifully maintained, a show place with a natural creek meandering close by, where wild flowers bloomed and wild life thrived.

When Sgt. Vincent left, the lands came into the hands of the Graham family, until in 1919 it was purchased by Elijah Dawson, a retired farmer from Bell's Corners, who had a historic part in development of the Township.

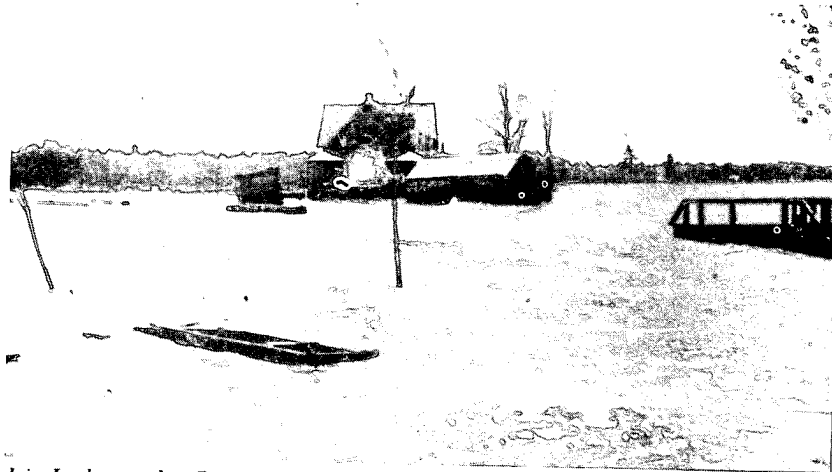
The last owner was John Dawson, son of Elijah, who followed in the footsteps of his illustrious parent and pioneer grandparents in outstanding service in Nepean Township, the County and with the Department of Agriculture for many years. He was also Judge of the Court of Canadian Citizenship.

To make way for an arterial route over the Richmond Road, this landmark was expropriated and then demolished in 1967.





*Memorial to Capt. John LeBreton in St. James the Less Cemetery, Toronto.*



*Iris Lodge under flood water, May 1893.*



3

1900-1930  
The Tide of Growth

## 1900 - 1930

### “The Tide of Growth”

Canada was experiencing growth and prosperity after the depression-ridden 1880s and early 1890s. Prices, markets, construction and other economic indicators were all pointing upward by the turn of the century. This growth also brought urban growth, and city people were spilling over municipal boundaries into neighbouring townships. In the 1910s alone, Ottawa's population rose from approximately 77,000 to over 93,000 and Nepean's population doubled from 5,000 to 10,000. (Maps XIV & XV)

The economic growth plus the new spirit of recreation sparked by the park, the expanding boating club facilities, and the moonlight excursions of the *G.B. Greene* and other vessels, recharged the interest in cottage and year-round residential development at Britannia.

The local papers noted a surge in building at Britannia. New dwellings were built in 1901 when the *Ottawa Free Press* gave a glowing report of Britannia's mounting popularity. At least five new homes were put up, while in previous years Britannia had been growing at the rate of about one or two cottages a year.<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1902, J.C. Jamieson apparently had two offers in one day to buy his lakefront property. Every village cottage was occupied, and another one or two were being built all the time. In July 1903, the *Ottawa Journal* reported that more boarding house space was needed at Britannia since the existing facilities — Jamieson's mill apartments, the hotels and others who had summer boarders — were too few to accommodate the flocks of people.

The anticipated growth of Britannia was much discussed. Jamieson claimed in 1902 that “things (were) likely to boom at Britannia during the next two years.”<sup>2</sup> The abandoned canal and the spoiled rapids area was said in 1903 to have “turned the tide of growth from the lower section to that of the Electric Park and its surrounding attractions...” since many homes were being constructed “in that direction.”<sup>3</sup> “A better class of house” was being put up as this part of Britannia became “more popular with leading citizens.”<sup>4</sup> It was noted in the same year that prosperity was all around at the summer resort, and that the “village grows and will grow until ‘Silver Heights’, (Judge Louis Smith's new stone house at the corner of

Pinecrest and Richmond)... is embraced within its confines..."<sup>5</sup>

Local landowners, caught up in the enthusiasm, registered sixteen subdivision plans between 1900 and 1915. These provided the framework for the expansion of Britannia. Most of the streets and lots here today were originally surveyed roads and lots on these plans. As in most cities, the people who subdivided land were not the ones who built the homes and cottages.<sup>6</sup>

Numerous small property subdivisions were planned on the heights west of the intersection of Richmond Road and Carling Avenue. The first of these, registered in 1900, the year the streetcar came through to Britannia, was prepared for Janet Shaw who had bought the land from local farmer Edward Watson. She had 26 fairly large lots laid out between Carling, John (Pinecrest), Richmond, and the short new High Street. (Map IX)

Five years later, William G.M. Mosgrove, the wine manufacturing son and heir of the late Judge Mosgrove, registered a plan for 24 lots of the customary 5,000 square foot size farther west along Carling away from Richmond Road. The plan introduced a short L-shaped Mosgrove (Judge) Street and a cul-de-sac, Moore Avenue, which was William's middle name.

Edward Harmer, son of Nepean's late township clerk, F.W. Harmer, divided a small part of his father's estate in 1908 into 12 lots along a street he called Vick, his mother's maiden surname. Harmer may have been encouraged to subdivide the property by his uncle by marriage, J.C. Jamieson. Later that year, eight new larger lots were added when Marion Macdonald and Sara Jane Vincent Henderson, widow of Edward Watson, Sr., subdivided a small part of their inheritance along the west side of Pinecrest. Her son, Edward, Jr., followed this with a plan in 1909 for 27 lots, most of which fronted on two new streets, Henderson (Fallis) and Watson, with the remainder along Pinecrest.

This area west of Pinecrest became a neighbourhood made up mostly of year-round residents in this period. The position on the uplands away from the waterfront and from the possibility of flooding probably made it more attractive for full-time as opposed to summer occupancy. By 1920, 56 of the 90 lots were sold, and 19 houses had been built on them.<sup>7</sup>

The subdivision of land east of Pinecrest and south of Carling on the heights came later. The first land entrepreneur in this part was William Mosgrove whose second registered plan in 1908 paved the way for 47 average-sized lots on Pinecrest and a parallel street named St. Louis (Pinewood).



*The Connelly house on Maplewood (Graham Avenue) in the Britannia Highlands, 1934.*

To the east of this, much of the property lay under heavy forest. William Graham, whose family farmed along the bay that bears their name, had purchased the 162 acres here from the Magees in the 1880s. Their new farm passed to Harvey S. Graham who subdivided a small part of it in 1909 into 27 lots along a street named Graham (Maplewood). The following year, Graham sold the rest of the estate for a substantial \$29,000 to a newly-formed syndicate, The Britannia Highlands Company.

The Britannia Highlands syndicate had great plans for the wooded land. It represented the first attempt at development in Britannia by a group of leading Ottawa businessmen.<sup>8</sup> Most of the previous subdividers had been farmers, their heirs, and small Ottawa businessmen.

The property north of Carling Avenue was parcelled into 29 lots, each having the area of two regular city lots, between two newly surveyed streets, Portland (Forest) and Croydon. The area south of Carling was divided into 44 regular lots and over 130 blocks, each having the area of four regular lots. They were laid out along the extension of Maplewood and planned streets named: Rob Roy,

121.



*House at 1832 Richmond Road on Britannia Heights, 1914.*



*Britannia Heights home of the Bouchiers, September 1922.*

122.



*880 Maplewood, formerly Graham Avenue. The Castonguay house in the 1930s in the Britannia Highlands. Note the vast space around the house and the apple trees in the side yard, which one block of the subdivision allowed them to have.*



Dundee, Ivanhoe, Alpine, Portland, Norfolk (Norton), Tavistock, Connaught and Waterloo. (Map XIII)

Britannia Highlands Company promoted their property in large advertisements in local newspapers emphasizing the unequalled facilities for a summer or a permanent home.<sup>9</sup> A boardwalk was laid down between the electric railway line and Britannia Highlands, and streetcars were to stop for passengers at the end of it. The advertisements boasted that Britannia Highlands was only 25 minutes by streetcar to downtown Ottawa, that electric lighting and telephone would be provided to residents, and that the beautiful elevation would avail the buyer of a scenic view and "absolutely perfect drainage facilities."<sup>10</sup>

At first, the company encouraged speculation, since the blocks were suited for people who wanted to build several homes and rent them. The advertisements pointed out that there could be a handsome profit by the spring of 1911 for those who bought them by December. The large lots also may have been designed to encourage the well-to-do of Ottawa to buy property and build large residences.<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note that in June 1912, the company split up the many unsold blocks into about 500 regular lots, perhaps to gain all the profit themselves or because the blocks were not big sellers to begin with.

By 1920, Britannia Highlands Company still possessed two-fifths or over 200 lots. Speculation was great, but many owners did not live in the Ottawa area and the land remained largely undeveloped.<sup>12</sup> At this time, in the Britannia Highlands and Graham subdivisions, there were eight year-round resident owners, one tenant and 14 summer resident owners, all near Carling Avenue where they had easy access to Richmond Road.<sup>13</sup> The streets behind them remained unopened and under forest.

The area west of Britannia Park was the swampy bayfront property of William N. and Richard A. Bell. This land also underwent subdivision as the demand for cottage properties near the park and the bay swelled. The Bell brothers inherited this land from their widowed mother, Elizabeth Scrivens Bell. In 1902, they subdivided the part adjacent to the O.E.R. park and south of the C.P.R. tracks, a prime site for cottages although few of the lots fronted directly on the water because of the railroad right-of-way. The Bells laid out 36 lots along two parallel streets, Bell (Haughton) and Bay (Grandeur), that faced the beach and reserved four blocks of land for future subdivision. Access from this area directly to Britannia

124.

Village was gained by crossing the park on foot, and access to the uplands was by way of a new street, Elizabeth (Scrivens).

The Bells were fairly successful with their first subdivision. They sold all but three of the lots in their first subdivision within eight years, mostly in back-to-back pairs. Some Ottawa people bought several lots: Napoleon Lafreniere, a local restaurateur, bought six, and William Wyler, President of Craig Harness Company and Manager and Vice-President of the Ottawa Car Company, bought seven lots. Cottage building quickly followed. Five summer residences were under construction in this area alone during the spring of 1905.

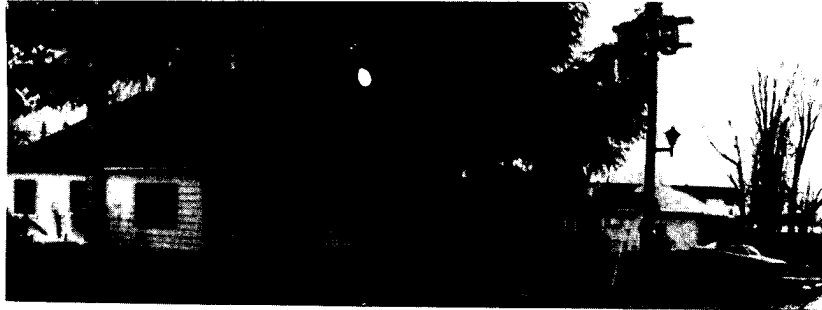
The quick sale of these lots led William Bell to subdivide some of the blocks reserved in the original plan in 1909, making 40 more lots available. The plan was given the name Lakeview Park which, although it was appropriate, was not used as a neighbourhood name.

Further west, in 1911, Thomas J. Graham sold a triangular-shaped property between Carling Avenue and the C.P.R. tracks to William E. Scrivens, an Ottawa real estate agent who, along with the Bell brothers, registered an ambitious plan for 54 small lots. They were laid out along streets named Birchdale, Maplehurst, Elmpoint and Spruce Terrace (Oakley) which ran from Carling to the C.P.R. tracks.

After the C.P.R. abandoned a gravel pit and railway siding that it had on Bell's property, the Bells registered a plan of the land between their subdivisions and Scrivens' in 1915. It called for a whopping 177 lots along four new roads.

By 1920, one-third or 97 lots were sold in this part of the area, including all those in the first subdivision.<sup>14</sup> The earliest plan was the most successful since it capitalized on the soaring summer cottage market that followed the opening of the park and the electric railway's Britannia Line. It appears that Bell did not push the other subdivisions until the first lots were sold. The streets of the latest plan were not opened until the early 1930s.

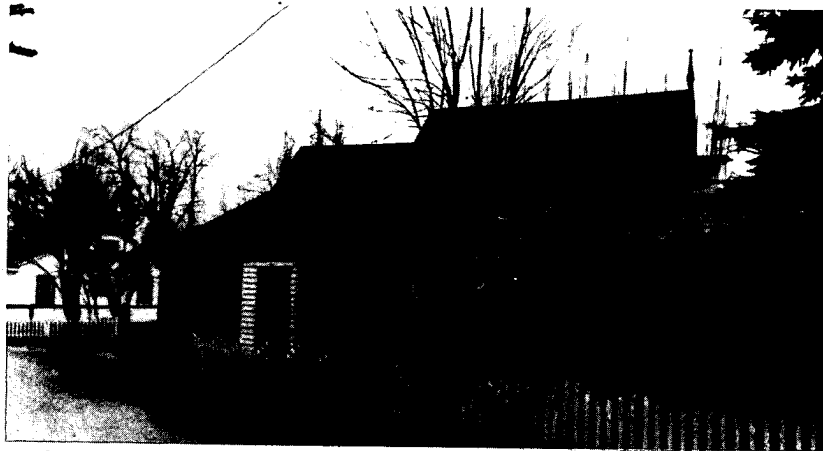
Several lots were bought in blocks or pairs and were not built on, while some of the lots had more than one cottage on them. Bell, who retained full title to the unsold lots, kept a cottage lot for himself and rented two others near the park. In 1910, there were 11 lots with summer cottages and 10 tenant cottagers. Ten years later, there were 20 lots with cottages on them, and 36 households living there in the summer.<sup>15</sup>



*Kempster Avenue, 1982.*



*2853 Ahearn, 1982.*



*38 Moore, the original part of the house can be seen in the early 1920's aerial photograph of the park.*

The last area of development lay between Richmond Road and the O.E.R. tracks. When streetcar service came to Britannia, most of this property still belonged to J.R. Booth. Booth sold this land to Louis N. Poulin, an Ottawa dry goods merchant. At the time, Poulin already owned a fine, palatial summer home, Casa Loma Cottage, recently built at the corner of Richmond and Carling on a four-acre parcel. In 1904, he subdivided the Booth property into 168 regular lots on streets between an extension of Britannia Road, which he named Louis and Poulin Street. Another six blocks were surveyed to the east in anticipation of further development.

Like Britannia Highlands, Poulin wanted to attract year-round residents to his Loma Park subdivision. Brochures called the scheme a "two-in-one" deal, and encouraged prospective buyers to "have a summer cottage and a permanent home combined in one."<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, J.C. Jamieson renewed his interest in development. He subdivided some of his land on the east edge of the O.E.R. park, once part of the LeBreton estate, into 64 lots and called it Britannia-on-the-Bay. Jamieson wanted to both sell vacant cottage lots and rent cottages on this parkside property. This was a change of practice for him since his earlier bayside property continued to be strictly for renting. The remaining twelve acres of his property between Don Street and Carling Avenue was not developed.

In 1910, 20 percent or 67 of the 232 lots available in Britannia-on-the-Bay and Loma Park were sold. By 1920, there were nine year-round resident owners, seven year-round tenants, and 32 summer cottage owners in Loma Park and Britannia-on-the-Bay.<sup>17</sup>

The last subdivision made east of the park concerned the remaining estate of Barbara McAmmond, Britannia Bay's postmistress. She died in 1906, and the executors of her estate had this block from the first subdivision of 1873 parcelled into 13 small lots of which her former store occupied one.<sup>18</sup>

In short, the sale of lots and the scale of development on these 16 new subdivisions varied considerably according to their locations and the time of registration. Some of the more ambitious ones did not do well. Individuals like Poulin and the Britannia Highlands syndicate overestimated the demand for Britannia property that followed the enthusiasm of the streetcar and the park. This zealotness was fairly common in the developing of large cities in North America.<sup>18</sup> The supply of building lots generally exceeded the immediate demand. Before World War I, during Britannia's hey-



*The Poulin - Mulvihill residence near the Richmond Road, Carling Avenue intersection, known as "Casa Loma".*

day, many homes and cottages were built, but the number fell short of the great expectations for Britannia's future. (Maps XVI & XVII)

While lot sales in the new subdivisions headed off to a swift start, and then tapered off leaving many vacant spaces, the older Britannia Bay village area continued to fill up with summer cottages. J.C. Jamieson responded to the scarce boarding accommodation by putting up the New Mill Apartments in 1910. It was a two-storey, 14 unit structure with a verandah on the north side of Jamieson Street. Over the years, he also added cottages to his riverside estate so that by World War I he was renting four on the bluff overlooking Britannia Bay, three on Rowatt, four on Bradford, one on Jamieson, and one on The Grove.

Britannia Village grew quickly during the first ten years of the century (Tables I, III). In 1900, 48 lots had either cottages or permanent homes on them. Ten years later, some 70 had been built on. The village generally stopped growing by the 1910s. Only another five lots were developed in the village during the following

*Top of Briannia Road about 1903 looking north with little Win. O'Brien and Dorothy Latchford.*



decade.<sup>19</sup> While there were only ten summer cottage owners in this part in 1890, and 26 in 1900, there were 94 in 1910 (Table I). The location on the waterfront, and the attractiveness of the park and boating club, served to maintain the summer community atmosphere of the village and draw more cottagers.

The number of year-rounders did not grow at nearly the same pace. Permanent households doubled in number between 1890 and 1900 from 28 to 51, but only approximately 15 were added during the first decade of the twentieth century. The new areas opened up by the several subdivisions on the heights and east of the park seemed to be more attractive to prospective year-round homeowners.

The decade after 1910 saw a reversal in this pattern. The proportion of residents who occupied their Britannia homes year-round were gaining the edge. They increased another 51 households from 72 to a total of 123, while the summer cottage owners only increased another 38 from 94 to 132 households. (Table 1) (Maps VI & VII)

The bubble burst on Britannia during World War I. It marked the end of new subdivisions opening up land for more homes and to the drawing power of the area for fun-filled summer recreation. Hard times hit Ontario when crops failed in the Prairies in 1912. The decline affected Britannia and other summer resorts since the prosperity of those who could afford summer homes and boats was tied to the economic state of the country.<sup>20</sup>

World War I served to prolong this decline. Men enlisted and set off for Europe leaving summer cottages back home empty. Their families now had more important concerns than basking in the summer sun on the lakeshore.

The standstill in Britannia's popularity and growth continued into the twenties. An atmosphere of decline befell the community. By 1923, dead trees were being allowed to stand in the park, infecting and destroying live trees. Advertisements in Ottawa newspapers in the mid-summer months for cottages to rent at Britannia suggest that some owners may have had difficulty in renting them, or could not spend their summers at Britannia themselves. Indeed, J.C. Jamieson had some vacant houses in 1925 and tried to have his municipal tax assessment reduced because of this. In 1924, there were many similar assessment appeals in the Britannia area, and they made up a good part of all tax appeals in the township.<sup>21</sup> The Britannia Boating Club also experienced a slump as membership fell to its lowest point. Prior to World War I, membership in the Britannia Boating Club had peaked at close to 2000, including

130.



*154 Britannia Rd, built in 1910 by Charles Robinson and sold to Joseph Leslie, 1970.*



*The H. Rosenthal cottage, the last cottage on the lakeside beside Britannia Park, 1968.*



social and associate members. In 1923, there were only 78 members. Two years later, the membership was still below one hundred.

At the beginning of this period, Britannia Village was a summer colony for Ottawa's up-and-coming merchants and professionals and the permanent residence of a small number of city and local workers. The heights, on the other hand, was the home of farming and rural service people. By 1930, Britannia as a whole had altered with the new development although some of the features that distinguished the village from the heights remained. Britannia Village still had its summer community, but the year-round community was growing. A third of its dwellings, two-fifths of those in Loma Park and Jamieson's subdivision and most of those in Belltown, were occupied only during the summer.<sup>22</sup> The farmers on the heights now were neighbours to even a greater proportion of permanent residents. The property owners held onto their properties longer as they settled into this area.<sup>23</sup>

The street car and Britannia Park played a strong part in changing Britannia. On summer weekends city folk flocked to the park, but the rest of the time Britannia was still mainly the preserve of well-to-do cottagers up to the 1920's. When automobiles became more easily obtainable, the same people could travel farther afield in search of summer hideaways. They found more secluded waterfront spots at places like Constance Bay, Buckham's Bay and Norway Bay up the Ottawa River and on the Rideau and Gatineau Lakes. As in most of Ontario, the areas nearest the city were fashionable as summer resorts when only the well-to-do could afford cottages. These areas lost their appeal as cottage-owning became available to a greater part of the population.<sup>24</sup>

Better pay, fewer working hours, and streetcar service encouraged civil servants, clerks and working people to rent or own cottages. The civil service group was keen to move out from the downtown to the quieter and healthier haven of Britannia with its open spaces and comfortable homes on larger lots. There, they got the two for one, the summer cottage and a home not far from their workplaces.

At the turn of the century, fewer than one in 25 Britannia residents was a public servant. In those days, the civil service was relatively small, and few departments employed more than a few hundred people. By 1920, one in five householders living year-round in Britannia was a federal public employee (Table IV). This increase paralleled the growth of the public service in Ottawa.<sup>25</sup>

132.



*W.R. Rowatt home on Bradford street, built prior to 1900. (1964)*



*142 Britannia Road, corner of Jamieson, built prior to 1910. (1970)*

By the end of the 1920s, Britannia could no longer simply be divided socially into the village and heights. Each of the various parts of Britannia seemed to develop its own characteristics. In Britannia Village, some very prosperous businessmen and professionals in the civil service lived close to the waterfront and the Boating Club. The tradesmen and resident service people lived away from the river along Bradford and Britannia Roads.

Britannia Heights and Highlands had local service people - shopkeepers and blacksmiths - and some prominent individuals like Poulin, Smith and Supreme Court of Ontario Justice Latchford, who owned large summer homes along Richmond Road. Behind the main roads, civil servants and persons in middle-ranking occupational groups lived in their new homes, and some old farming families like the Bells and the Magees carried on their forefathers' occupation. They were joined by newcomers such as Herbert Arkell, a Department of Agriculture livestock commissioner, and Cedric Goddard, a civil servant, who both had small farming operations on their properties.

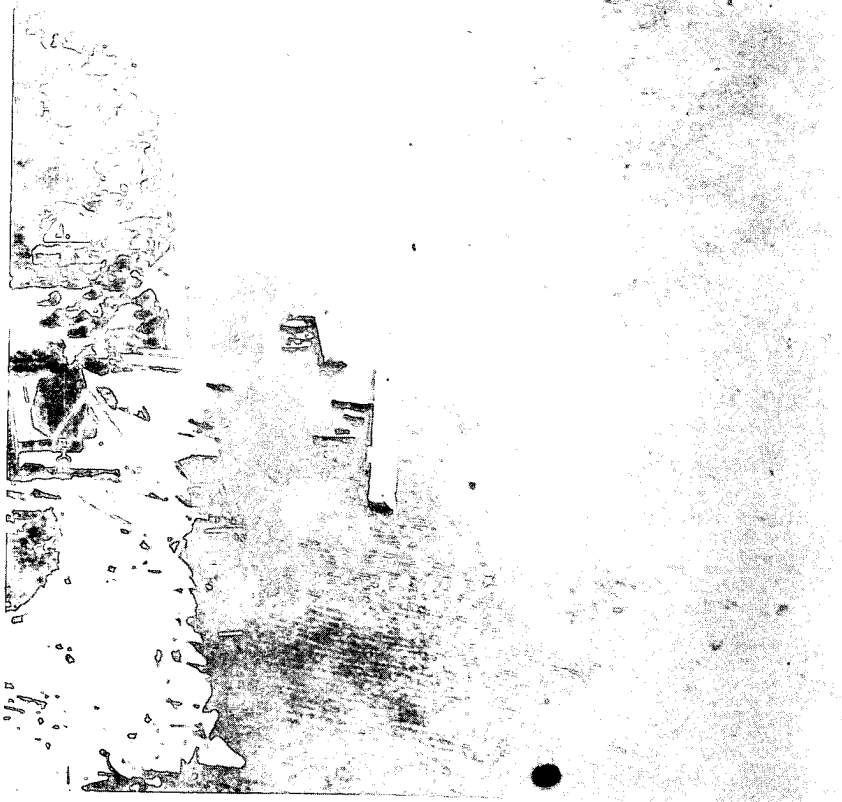


*The Traversy house on the south-east corner of Rowatt and Britannia Roads. (approximately 1914)*

134.



*Britannia Village and Bay, taken in the early 1920 s.*



Belltown tended to draw the Jewish merchant community, tradespeople and workers such as foremen, salesmen and tailors as summer residents. Loma Park and Jamieson's subdivision between the village and the heights tended to attract a mix of civil servants and small independent business operators.

It is interesting to note that, generally, the householders of Britannia Village were the oldest in the area. It was the part developed first and many of the early residents still lived there in 1930. Britannia Heights families were slightly younger, while the Loma Park and Jamieson subdivisions drew even younger families (Table VII). Perhaps many were buying their first home in this area, attracted by a large new school built in the early twenties, the closeness to the park and to the streetcar line, and the open space, among other qualities.

The physical layout and topography of these areas helps in understanding the distinction between neighbourhoods. Belltown was separated from the village and the subdivisions south of the railway and streetcar tracks by the 60 acre Britannia Park, and was too far west along Richmond Road and lower in elevation to feel the impact of year-round development along the heights. Britannia Village, on the other hand, was essentially isolated by having only one major access route and by being limited to the peninsula north of the tracks. The people of Britannia helped to shape the kind of neighbourhoods that emerged in each part. Only the school and the churches provided forums of mutual social activity between these parts of Britannia, and even these often favoured one section of the area over another.

During the first 30 years of the twentieth century, Britannia assumed much of the physical form that it has today. Old farms were subdivided, familiar streets laid out, and cottages and houses appeared. The streetcar and the park sparked this growth and for a while the area boomed as a weekend and summer resort community. Later, the growing use of the car and the expanding population of Ottawa gave Britannia a more settled character as more people chose to live year-round there.

As Britannia grew, it became more diversified. The area filled with civil servants and workers while only some of the prominent summer cottagers remained to enjoy the boating and other advantages of their choice of residence. But Britannia's potential for growth had nonetheless been overestimated and in the 15 years



*The Latchford cottage, Briannia Road and Skuce, and group, taken about 1910.*

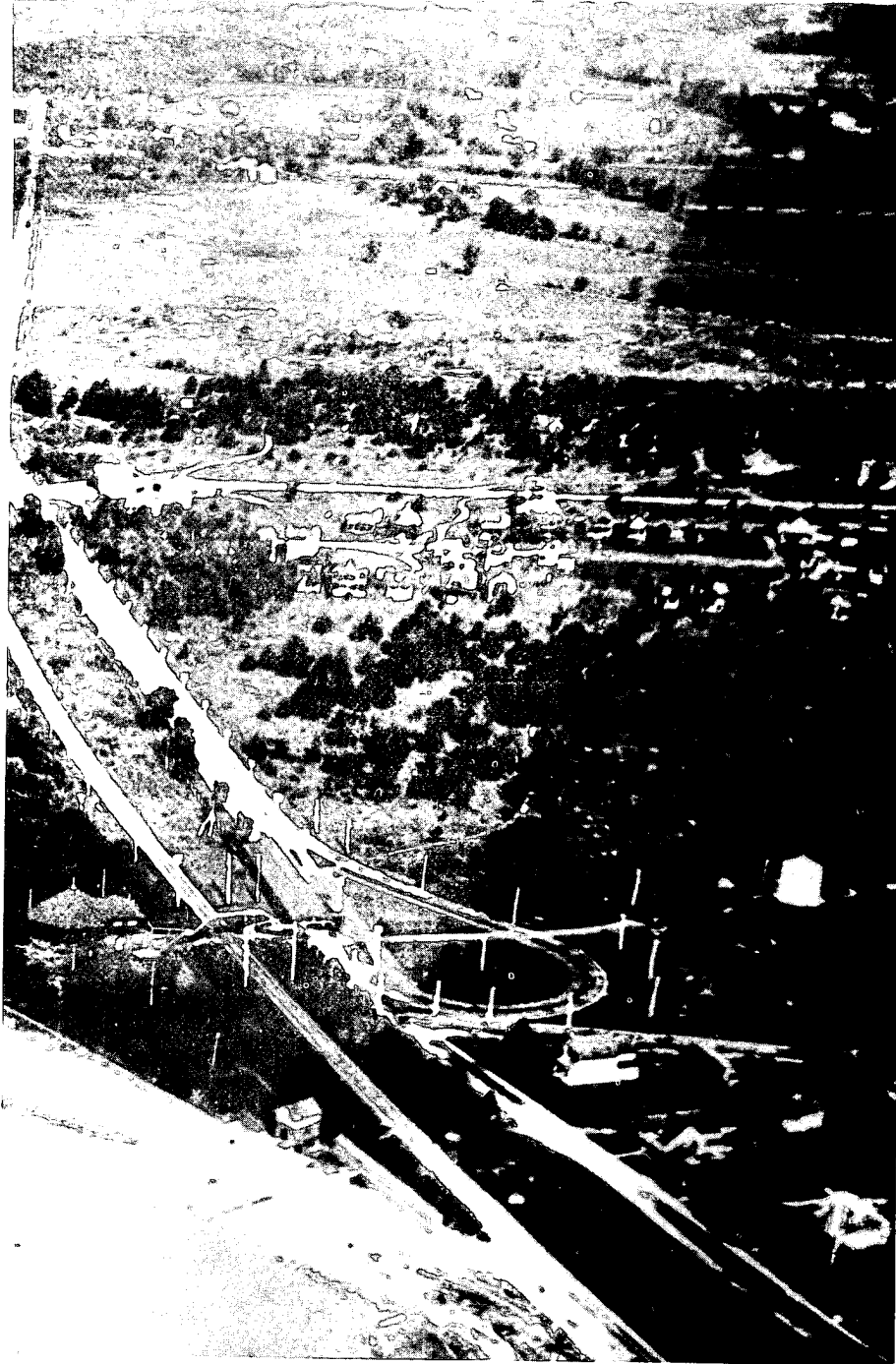
*L to R — Back row: Winnifred O'Brien Van Tausk (mother was Mrs. Latchford's niece, who had a cottage on High St) Blainid & Helen Leonard sisters of Senator D'arcy Leonard, Judge E.J. Daly Front Row — L to R — At wheel of car, Chief Justice F.R. Latchford, Ontario Supreme Court Dau. Norah, Judge Gunn, Mary Latchford. Dorothy Latchford is at left between W. Van Tausk and Justice Latchford.*

138.



*Britannia Village, Loma Park, Britannia on the Bay.*





*Britannia Park and Belltown, taken in the early 1920 s.*

**140.**

after the World War I, the development plans of the earlier years fell by the wayside. Meanwhile, the people of Britannia got down to the job of making their area more amenable to their needs and desires.