

wedding to Edward Hodgins in 1912. She could still recall the bride coming down the front stairs on the arm of her Dad, a fine gentleman with a heavy, dark beard. When it was all over, we went to the Union Station to see the newlyweds off on a honeymoon to Montreal. It was all very exciting as it was also the first wedding I had attended.

Christmas Special

Every Christmas there was a big Sunday School concert and the tree went right up to the ceiling of the church with gifts under it for all the eager children to receive.

Another nice outing about New Year's was to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hare whose farm was on Richmond Road opposite to Mosgroves. They had a large family of boys and girls. We had a wonderful time playing games and enjoying the refreshments. We were all very sorry when the Hares left to settle in Rosetown, Saskatchewan.

About 1912, the Mix family came to Britannia and the daughters became active in the church. Then a Mrs. George Connelly and her family arrived. She became organist and her family too were musical.

When Dorothy married in 1914, the choir gave her a wicker rocking chair, which came in handy for rocking the first arrival.

She always loved the old Church and its Choir, and when the basement was added as an improvement to the church, annual suppers were held. And for years, she never missed this affair for it was a place to meet and greet old friends and chatter about old times.

(As related to me by Dorothy (Taylor) Hobbs in 1958. Mrs. Hobbs died in Victoria, B.C., June 1982, at the age of 89.)

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*School Section No. 3 Nepean Mosgrove School.
Photo taken around 1904-15 school year.*

School Days of 75 Years Ago

We were a healthy lot of kids. We drank out of the common tin cup in the water pail, that is if there was any in it. For refills a pupil was sent to the farmer's across the road.

The caretaker was usually one of the senior class boys. He was supposed to arrive early in the morn and get a fire going in the big long box stove that sat in the middle of the room. As well, he had to sweep up. Many a time he arrived late and we had to keep our coats on until the room warmed up, and cold or not, lessons continued. Our mitts, stockings, toques and scarves were hand knit so we were not as lucky as boys and girls today with the windproof garments.

At noon hour in winter we used to cross the road to slide down the hilly parts using boards which played havoc with our clothes. We hooked rides on the hayracks, cutters, wagons or buggies - what wonderful days of childhood fun.

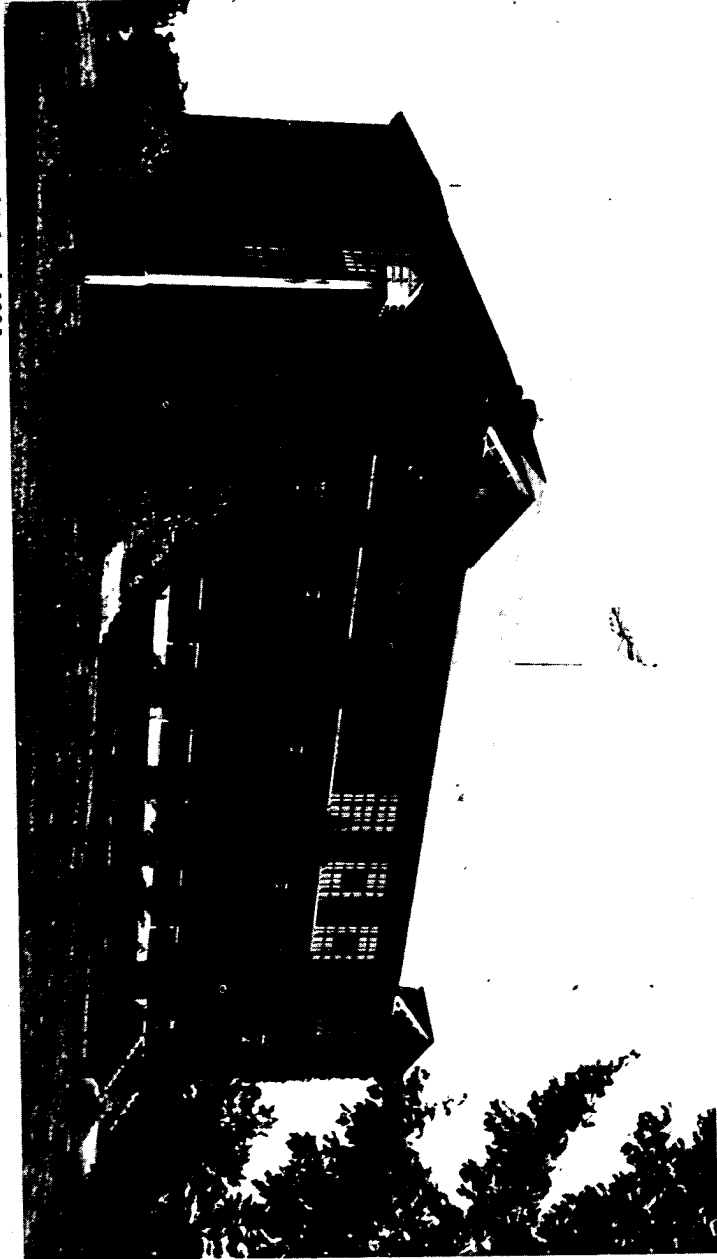
Along the Richmond Road was the Winthrop home with the blacksmith shop, Magistrate Smith's new home at the corner of Pinecrest, Harmers (where now stands Richmond Heights Apartments), Albert Hare's farm, Mosgrove's vineyard, and the farm of George and Peter Bell.

One of my escapades I have never forgotten. Harmer's had some choice apple trees, and to this day I recall the terror of being caught by Fred Harmer as I tried to get through the barbed wire fence. I was so frightened I came home with wet pants. But an apple was an apple to the children of my generation, not like today when children have at their asking fruits of all kinds all the year'round.

Well, boys and girls, I wish you a very happy year, and remember what it was like to go to school 75 years ago in Britannia.

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Grant Consolidated School, 1925



Saluting Grant School's 60th Anniversary

Greetings to the good teachers and students at Grant, in this memorable year, and may the success of the past continue for future years. I greet Mr. James Watson, a beloved principal of many years, now retired who in his years guided the steps of so many who passed through this fine old school.

Clearing out an old photograph album recently, I found the photograph appearing in this issue, which will be donated to Grant's archives. One of my brothers appears in it, but as he spent only one year in Grant he was unable to name all the pupils appearing. So the listing is incomplete, and I leave it to the oldtimers to come up with the unnamed.

The end of World War One and increased population in the Heights area necessitated a larger school to take care of its growing population, so a new school was to be built. Tenders were called and its first cost was estimated in the \$90,000's, but sadly increased to \$110,000, which met the displeasure of ratepayers who saw the increase, especially to the farming community, which still flourished. It was dubbed a "white elephant", but the future years proved otherwise. Built with the blessing of the Ontario Government's Department of Education and its Minister, the Hon. R.H. Grant, a leading farmer of the Hazeldean area, and the United Farmers Government, the new school was named Grant Consolidated School, honouring him.

But, like "Topsy", it grew and grew, and Grant School presented a fine asset to the community, with classrooms filled up, guided by excellent principals and teachers.

I pay homage to Grant School for its hospitality in those early years, for its School Board opened the doors to the community. It became a meeting place, something to build on.

I recall being present at an open meeting in its assembly hall in its early years when the guest speaker was none other than the first woman to be elected to our house of Commons in 1921, Agnes Campbell Macphail (1890 to 1955), elected under the CCF banner representing the riding of South East Grey County. She was a former school teacher, a great humanitarian as well as a pacifist. One thing I vividly recall of her speech, was when she pointed to two large framed prints adorning the wall of the assembly hall,

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battle scenes of the war. "Take them down, they are no credit to a school", she said. I often wonder if they were removed.

A little club was formed sometime in the 1920's permitting use of the gym as a badminton court, and I spent many a happy evening with the like-minded locals prancing about to get exercise.

In the 1940's, the Britannia Community Club formed a Boy's Club and the school was used for its activities, and had quite a large attendance of its youth promoting good morale.

In the years 1948 to 1963, the Britannia Women's Institute enjoyed its hospitality. It was in Grant too, that a group of women met and formed the Britannia Institute Branch, April 1948, with Mrs. G.B. Acres as its first president. What wonderful times we had in those years, involved with community affairs. One thing that I will point out to the public of this community was that one of the projects of the Institute was to compile a history of the area covered by this branch. The first proposal for this project was made in 1939 by Lady Tweedsmir, wife of the Governor-General, who suggested it, speaking to a local institute. Immediately it became a project of country wide work, and today thousands have become a source of local history.

Bless Grant School, for you too have made history, as "Tweedsmuir" has proven in the pages of the *Flyer* over the past two years. At the first meeting, I was appointed historian, and have built up its gathering of what made this community tick. It was not an easy project. When confronted with the gathering of history, gone were most of the farms, and so it was a tremendous effort. Over the years I have had the great pleasure of telling the history of the Old Britannia to local schools, clubs, churches etc., and today, rarely a week passes when somebody is not searching for information. But it has been a wonderful labour of love, and it was the Britannia Women's Institute project that made it come to pass.

Blessings on Grant School, you have served the community well and have a history to be proud of.

School Days, a Flashback to 1922

I received a very surprising and historic visit during the latter part of August which I desire to share with the readers of the *Flyer*, especially the youngsters in school today. Perhaps there are some about who will recall the school history as one of those beginnings.

Mrs. Bob Switzer, who has lived a number of years in Britannia Heights, introduced me to her guest, Miss Lillian Dool, who had taught in 1922 - 23 during the transition to Grant Consolidated. This visit revealed the fact that Miss Dool was a niece of Miss Laura Moffatt, who was my teacher during my last four years at Mosgrove. We both left in 1917, I to pass my entrance to high school and Miss Moffatt to be married. Laura Moffatt was a most dedicated and understanding teacher, and had a great influence on my life, as well as the other students in classes from primer to fourth class.

Miss Dool is a sparkling personality, abreast of the times after a lifetime of teaching, and a true teacher of that fine old breed.

It was a wonderful visit, as she recalled names of many of her young students, and she had nostalgic memories of incidents during those teaching days. Following the first Great War, there had been an increase of people coming to live in the Britannia area, and it caused old Mosgrove's one room to overflow, and a new school was planned for. Under the guidance of the Ontario Minister of Education, the Hon. R.H. Grant, a school to cost in the \$90,000's began to be built. The cost crept up to \$110,000 which caused much concern to the farmers in the area, as they would have to foot much of the cost in taxes.

Miss Dool's interesting visit was of such historic school history, I suggested to her that she write up a little story of what it was like during those years. A few days after her return to her home in Guelph, along came a letter with her story.

So it is with much pleasure, her story is passed on to you.

Britannia 1922

Britannia's Mosgrove School was overcrowded, so a new one was in the offing. As a rule, schools are never ready for September. And the final completion of Grant was no exception.

As a result the older pupils attended Mosgrove School. For the younger ones, a summer cottage on High Street was rented by the

School Board. This cottage had two sections - what had been a kitchen was for the beginners, the larger room for the older ones (first class, second, etc) not grade one, two in those days.

This arrangement was fine for the summer weather and not too bad for the autumn, but come winter, it was a different story. There was a stove in the hall to heat the rooms. But it was a very cold place to enter when the caretaker was tardy by not arriving early enough to have had a good fire going and the place heated. Some mornings it was necessary for me to dig in and stoke up with wood to build up the heat, so that it would be fairly comfortable when the children arrived. Some very cold mornings we used to stand around the stove for our first classes. Then came spring and we had a new caretaker. He was wonderful for he kept the rooms warm and nicely swept out and dusted.

It was extremely hard to heat this cottage as there was no foundation, so you can imagine what the floor was like especially the odd day when it hit 40 below zero. However, in those days, mothers dressed their children warmly, for there were no ploughed roads and no buses, and some of the little ones had a way to walk. Except for the ones living nearby, the children brought their lunches - no hot soup, etc. was provided.

One teacher taught all subjects - no music supervisor, art instructor, cooking, manual training. No frills, but reading, writing and arithmetic provided good basic learning.

Mr. Maxwell was the inspector who visited the schools. He arrived early in the fall and before he left he showed me his report (something I haven't seen for years). At the bottom, he had written, "The class of beginners is enough for one teacher without the others". However, I still had them for a year. Once the cottagers and their children returned to the city for the winter, my class was not so crowded.

Next year we moved into Grant Consolidated as it was ready to be occupied. It was named for the Hon. Mr. Grant, then Ontario Minister of Education.

Now we had lots of space and three teachers, and I taught the intermediate pupils. This fine big school was a vast improvement with all the indoor facilities. But there was still quite a lot of confusion about, as the workmen were still there finishing up uncompleted work. There were doors that did not close properly, but eventually everything became normal. There was a large sized



Lillian Dool

playground and a gymnasium, which was used by the community for activities during the evening.

One day one of the head men from the Department of Education in Toronto arrived at the school. Miss Kilfoyle was called away because of the death of her father. He came to me for some information and as he looked at the size of the school - still some rooms vacant - his comment was, "Do they ever expect to use all these rooms?" This was in the early 1920's when there was only a smattering of houses or cottages, the farms still were active, and no such things as apartments.

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There were very few paved roads and these not ploughed in winter. It is indeed hard to believe when one returns to see all these four-lane highways snaking through carrying such heavy traffic. No wonder children could walk safely on the roads in those days.

I found it difficult to find a boarding house in those days, no apartments, and one had a bit of searching to find a place.

I do look back with the fondest of memories of my teaching days in the transition of change to such a fine new school. I pay tribute to the many clever pupils who have done well in their different lines of work, who were in my classes. I can recall many names of these bright youngsters.

Lillian Dool

What a wonderful remembrance of school days in 1922 - 23. May we hear from anyone who had Miss Dool as their teacher in that period.



1923 Grant Consolidated Public School Miss. L. Dool's class.

*1. Mary Acres, 2. O. Wagner, 3. Marguerite Viens, 4. P. James, 5. Peg. Arkell,
6. . . . 7. Irene Hurdman, 8. . . . 9. . . . 10. Elma Hunter, 11. Isobel Lillico,
12. Kathleen Anderson, 13. Grace Richardson, 14. Joe Arkell, 15 . 16. Llew Jones,
17. . . . 18. Fern Morrison, 19. Eva Graham, 20. Thelma Lillico, 21. Bill Brown
22. Lindsay Brown.*

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Aerial view of Britannia Pier, Britannia Beach and area, (approximately 1920)

Do You Mind When . . . ?

Out walking recently, enjoying the flora and fauna in the open field, my foot chanced to upturn a large well-bleached bone. Once again my childish memory heard again the sing-song of the rag-picker, "any rags, bottles, and bones today".

Down old Main Street circling up Bradford in his express wagon drawn by a lean horse clopping along at an easy gait, he was the forerunner of our up-to-date garbage collector, and, oh my, today's collection day makes me shudder at what is thrown away.

Bone and Bottle Collector

Anyway, in the days of my youth, I was a bone and bottle collector, lots of bones about from the large joint of beef that had adorned the Sunday table. After a turn in the soup pot, the dogs finished them off and the rest was left to nature.

Nice whiskey bottles picked up were carefully kept, not broken as they are today, and I kept a watchful eye at the back of cottages when they became closed in the autumn. Mother had her rag bag, and I might tell you they were rags, after all useful parts were cut out for making quilts. But how I anticipated the ragpicker's visit, and dreams of a fortune from my collection. Alas, but a few pennies, but carefully put by for spending at the Exhibition. But gone are the bones, and throwing bottles into the garbage makes me weep at today's wastefulness.

It was a great day when the old Syrian woman made her summer rounds. She carried a large suitcase, and, my, what it contained. Enchanted with the contents, for me it was a regular 15¢ store. Pins, needles, safety pins, thimbles, wool, material, baby powder, shirts, and lots of thread, I can still hear her sorrowfully say, "My Good, misses, you buy", and, of course, Mother always found something she needed. A very gentle lady, always dressed in black, I can still see her lugging that heavy suitcase around the village.

Old Maud

Father, being caretaker of the old canal project land, kept a cow, old Maud. She had a bad habit — she liked to chew on rags. One day Maud discovered a pair of white duck pants drying on the fence, and

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was given chase by a howling cottager as he rescued his garment.

Maud freshened in the spring, and we always fed well on milk and its products. Sunday, when cousins came to visit, out came the ice cream freezer, ice chopped, and real cream, a bit of salt and vanilla, with everyone taking a turn working the handle until it refused to move. What a feast we had accompanied with a big layer cake covered with chocolate frosting.

Old Maud provided we young fry with a tag game called "silver stick". It was like playing tag, and great fun getting our city cousins tagged with the stuff on the end of the stick!

Father used to keep a kennel of hound dogs for a city club, about 30 plus offspring. My eldest brother was their caretaker, feed, water, etc., and he loved them. Coming home late at night, rather than face a scene, he would just crawl in with his charges. Knowing him, they did not bark! We loved dogs and had several house pets, and many a cold night they shared our beds.

Memories of Grandma

My, how I used to love when Grandma came for a visit, and two things stand out of memory.

We young ones always had a cup of milk with bread in it sprinkled with brown sugar. Widowed early in life, Grandma raised six sons, all over 6 feet, and a daughter, and after meals always lit up her clay pipe. When I saw Mrs. . . up the street with her clay pipe one day, it did not bother me as it did my girl friend.

But do you mind in the 1920s when a father and son of Indian lineage took up residence? Young Joe was a fine looking tall lad, a great teller of Indian tales complete with a war whoop. Poor Joe! Often the boys played tricks on him, whereupon he told them he was going to tell his Papa and he would scalp them. We missed them when they left the village. Sometime after I was crossing the Plaza on my way to work, when once again I heard that war whoop. Coming up Rideau Street was Joe, dressed in full evening dress, complete with silk hat. Do you know he really looked handsome! Wonder what happened to him? He was fun too for the Park visitors on Sundays when he took down his weekly wash.

Spring Flood Waters

When the flood waters of Spring came, we had troubles being marooned below Salina Street. One of the locals made a little cash rowing residents across. Rivermen came through in their boats because the current was so strong. One day as the waters receded Mrs... attempted walking on the plank sidewalk only to slip in and had to be rescued.

Sometime in the late 1920s we had a colorful lady take up residence. My first introduction to her was coming home from work, and feeling a nudge, I was asked for a car ticket. A quiet little lady with beady eyes, she minded her business, but often called on neighbours for a loan of sugar, etc. Many a time at night, I was frightened when she suddenly came out of nowhere. I often wonder if she was one and the same lady as Dave Brown wrote about in his *Citizen* column not too long ago.

Well, friends and neighbours, we've had a jolly summer, and, my the Park beach once more hears the shouts of happy kids, but mind, if it rains tonight, no swimming tomorrow! Pity!



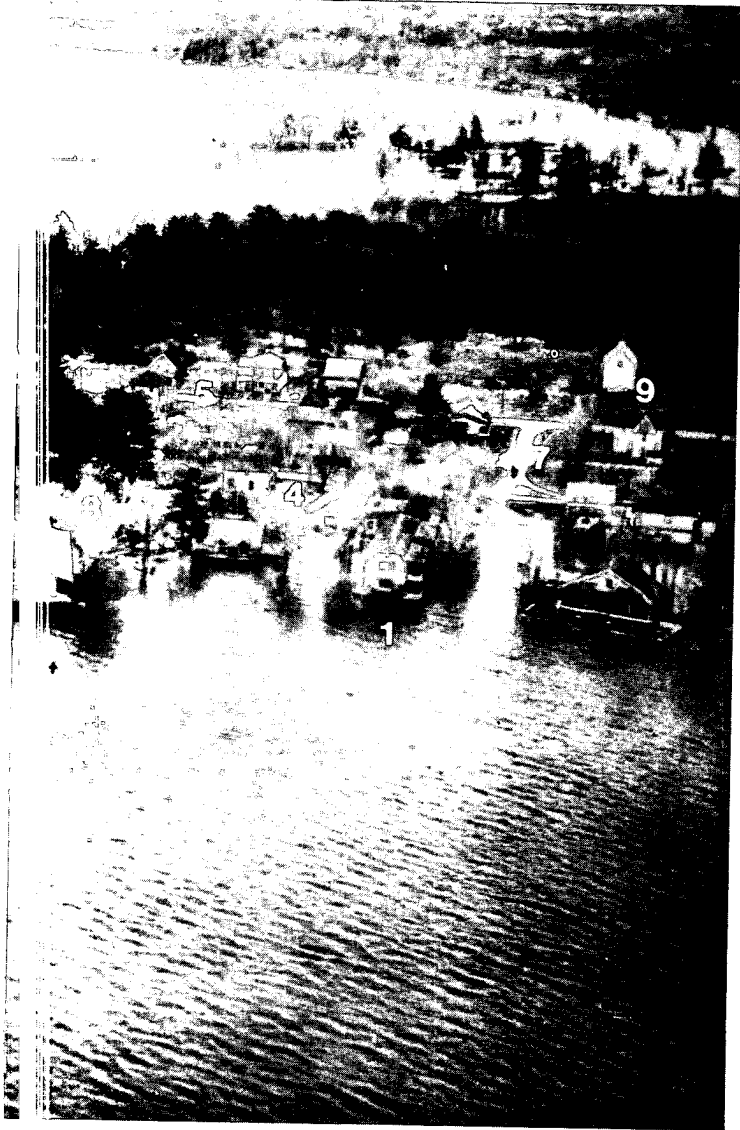
1928 Spring flood waters, looking south along Britannia Road (Roy's store on the left) towards the Salina intersection and railway and streetcar tracks.

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1928 Spring flood waters.



- 1. - *Jamieson's Apartments*
- 2. - *Jamieson's Mill Apartments*
- 3. - *The Grove*
- 4. - *Bradford Street*
- 5. - *Britannia Road*



- 6.- Rowatt
- 7.- Jamieson
- 8.- Taylor home
- 9.- St. Bonaventure Chapel

In the Days of the Ice Trade

A very kind friend loaned me this interesting photo taken by a member of the family many years ago. It brought back memories of how farmers and our early villagers kept their perishables during the head of the summer.

I pass on a bit of history on the ice harvesting, recalled from an article in the *Beaver*, 1977 Winter issue., by W.L. Ostenstad, entitled, "The Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Ice Trade".

Following the 1848 gold rush to California, there sprung up the fast-growing city of San Francisco. A group of its businessmen sent a ship to Alaska to buy ice from the Russian-owned land, and they promptly got Indian help to harvest ice from inland lakes.

The ship returned with 250 tons of ice, which was less expensive than having it brought from Boston with the long trip around the Horn.

In 1853, the Hudson's Bay Company got into the act, as they had a fur trade lease for these parts. They gave it up in 1857, when the Russian and Americans took over the trade. One thing the Company discovered was to cut into the huge icebergs in the inlets. Interesting history...and a profitable service.

Now on the home front - Lake Deschênes and the good clean Ottawa River! The developing summer resort required help to keep perishables during the summer heat. All along the river during mid-winter, the hardy workmen could be seen out harvesting the solid ice. Britannia had from the 1890's until 1948, four Britannia residents who gave faithful service by providing ice, wood, and transport services.

William Henry Murphy, 1843 - 1921, was born in Bytown and came to Britannia with his wife in the 1880s. He set up residence in a frame house on the Main Street and began the ice and cartage business.

In my childhood memory, I can still see that very tall, soft-spoken gentleman with a long, grizzled beard, sitting on the express wagon filled with ice blocks with a tarp over to keep off the sun's rays. A young chap would help him with the delivery.

When ice harvest time came, the lake was a busy place. Trees were placed around the part being cut, so no one would fall in. It was mighty cold work in the biting winds of winter, and it required strong arms to haul out the huge blocks of ice. To get sawdust to

protect it in storage, teams of horses would cross the lake to Fraser's Mill. As my older brothers grew up, they always looked forward to this winter work to earn a few dollars, and many times came home with frozen ears. Ice sold for 5 and 10¢ a block.

Early in 1900, Mr. Murphy moved across the street to a new brick home, built by his sons who were in the contracting business. Some of their workmanship is still standing.

Louis Lahaise was another valuable resident who conducted alike service, ice and cartage, at the same time as Mr. Murphy. He likely came to Britannia in the late 1880's and his obituary, July 3, 1936, said he had lived in Britannia for over 50 years.

His wife, Louise, when interviewed for the *Citizen's* "Old Time Stuff", gave her birth as April 10, 1855, in Bytown. The couple had a large family, four boys and five girls, and lived almost across from the Murphy's. Naturally, the boys helped in the business of cartage and the ice business. They had a busy time during the summer months.

George W. Dagg came to Britannia about 1912 and took over Mr. Murphy's business when he retired. He had just married Mrs. Catherine Foley, a widow with three children. The eldest daughter married the well-known historian, Earl Wilson, who edited the *Citizen's* "Old Time Stuff" from 1920 to the 1940's. The Dags also lived on the Main Street.

Mr. Dagg conducted an up-to-date business, had good horses, and was very busy as Britannia was in its hey-day as a famous resort. He had the contract with the Ottawa Electric to fill their two ice houses, one at the top of the Park and the other opposite where the old Auditorium stood.

On a hot summer morning about 1925, as Mr. Dagg and his helper had the express loaded with ice and the horse hitched up ready for first delivery, screams of "fire!" were heard. The cottage behind his ice house was in flames. It was a bad fire, taking the Von Charles big home. Mr. Dagg lost his ice house, stable and its contents, but fortunately saved his home. It was an unfortunate setback. No fire protection was available then, only a bucket brigade by the residents. Mr. Dagg retired in the early 1940's, and a nephew took over for a short time. He died in 1948 and his wife followed in 1950.

George W. Lillico and son Harry - this family had lived in Britannia for some time, and were to be the last to serve the area. During the war years, many more people had taken up permanent residence, so there was a year-round call for services.

Mr. Lillico and his son acquired a piece of land lying between the CPR line and the streetcar tracks. They built a large ice house about where the CPR had had their cattle enclosure. They also had a stable for the horse, and supplied ice and wood. In the winter, local farmers from Greenbank with good strong teams of horses cut the ice on the lake and drew the huge blocks to their ice house.

The blocks were packed away in sawdust for safe keeping. At the height of the season, they served some 750 customers, extending from a part of Woodroffe out to Shirley's Bay. When the Connaught Ranges had their summer shooting events, they had a contract to serve them. Delivery to residents was given four times a week, but in July and August six times a week, and the cost was \$3.50 per month.

The business ceased in 1956, due to the changing times. Electric refrigerators were plentiful on the market. The property was expropriated by the City and the buildings demolished.

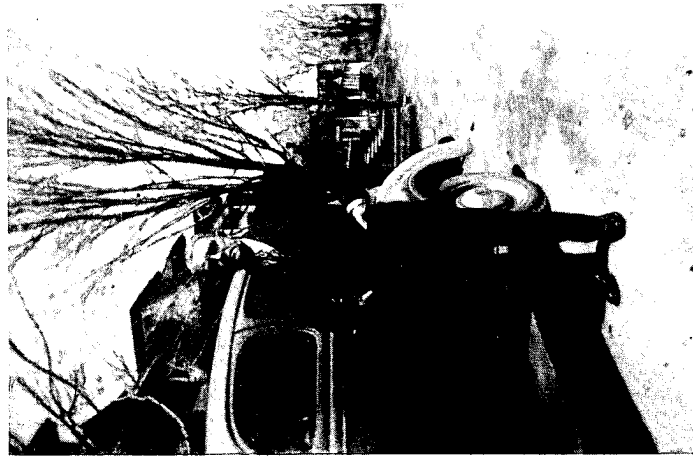
It is good to recall the good services rendered by our Britannia businessmen, who provided so well for the residents, a much-needed service, and we bless their memory.

As a child trudging to school in those early days, I always enjoyed walking the road, for when the farmers were drawing ice from the lake, there was good padded down snow on the road.

I wonder if an oldtimer can recall the old ice frig, lid on top to lift to put in ice and lower shelves for food. And not forgetting the pad at the bottom, which had to be emptied each day or what a mess on the floor to clean up ... the good old days!



Dr. Thomas Potter



*Dr. James S. Nelson, Medical Health
Officer, Township of Nepean.*

Family Physicians of Our Early Days

Today medical services are quickly available. But think back to what it was like in the old days in this area. There were scattered farms, and nearer the city, along the Richmond Road, little budding villages.

Electric lights and telephones were in the future. Roads were a bit rough and full of pot holes, and when the rains came, the mud splashed, and winter snows made driving difficult on the unploughed roads. If sickness came to a home, a messenger must get to the nearest doctor, which took time.

Confinements too, took place in the home, very often with the help of a good local farm wife. Bless our pioneer ancestors, they were hardy stuff.

Dr. Thomas Potter

Dr. Potter brought me into the world in November, 1902. A few years back, a man who lived not far away told me Dr. Potter assisted his entry on Christmas Day, 1882. His mother was up early as she felt her time was at hand, so dressed the goose and gave orders to her 10-year-old daughter and her husband, and before noon a son was added. The Doctor then sat down with the family and carved the goose!

He was not a big man, Dr. Potter, and walked with a slight limp, the result of having lost some toes from frostbite when called out on a wild and stormy night. He could not get his cutter and horse out of a drift, and had to stay until daybreak when he was rescued.

Born at North Gower in 1850 of Irish parents, the eldest son of Samuel, he attended the local Grammer school at Richmond. He taught for a bit, in order to finance his medical course at Queens. Graduating in 1876, he took postgraduate work in London and Dublin hospitals, and then New York and Boston. He spent three years at Hazeldean, so beloved when leaving that he was presented with a \$100 gold watch. About 1880, he set up practice on Wellington Street and from there served greatly in this west end of Nepean. He loved good horses and usually drove a sulky. Some people thought his horses were too wild, but he had good control.

He was a keen advocate of fresh air and letting the sun in, and many a time lifted the blinds and opened the windows. Skinner's

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Drug Store on Wellington Street carried his cures for many years. One was a sure cure for colds, 12 drops of medicinal turpentine with brown sugar. He cured everything with No. 9's which he kept in his pocket when a patient complained of the "vapours". He served rich and poor with no thought of payment, often taking food to the needy.

He was a dedicated man with tremendous humanitarian love for his patients.

To illustrate his popularity in this community, at a Christmas concert at the old Greenbank School, Annie Stinson, a pupil, recited a poem made up about him, which ended after each verse "Good Dr. Potter put a nice soft plaster on". The late Emily Switzer tried to trace the poem.

Dr. Potter was a bachelor and lived at the old Butler Hotel. He retired in 1913 to his old home to take part in this good farming community.

Tendered a big banquet in Ottawa, he was presented with a big set of dishes. Many of his old patients kept on coming to him. He died June 15, 1926, and was buried in the family plot in Rideauview Cemetery, Kars.

His funeral drew hundreds of mourners, both from the medical profession and from the community, in glorious tribute to a beloved comforter and healer to all who called upon him.

Dr. James Nelson

Dr. Nelson was a house-hold name in our west end. He was born at City View in 1877, a son of Robert Nelson and Grace Woods. His grandfather, Thomas, and wife, were natives of Belfast, Ireland, who came out in 1828, to become well-known farmers.

He attended the local school, then Lisgar Collegiate, followed by the medical course at McGill. On graduation, he interned for a year at Ottawa's old Protestant General Hospital.

In 1904, he went to Scotland to take postgraduate work at the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh, graduating in 1905. He then went over to spend a few months for further training at the Coombs Maternity Hospital in Dublin. On returning to Canada, he started up a practice at Vars in 1905. In 1906, he married Jessie Henry also from his home area, and they had two daughters, Grace and Beth.

In 1909, he came to settle in Westboro. At that time, there was no resident doctor, and sick people in need had to call a doctor from

the city. I believe it was through the efforts of community-minded John E. Cole that Dr. Nelson came to Westboro. Mr. Cole was very much concerned about the lack of medical help available in this part of Nepean. Dr. Nelson's home and office was at the corner of Churchill beside the street car line and still stands today.

The street car line opened in 1900 and brought the growth in population westward into little hamlets along the line. Farming was still in evidence. Nepean Council, with an eye on the health of its citizens, appointed Dr. Nelson as Medical Health Officer for the township in 1911. This office he held for 37 years serving with much dedication. In 1928, due to ill health, he gave up his practice but continued as health officer until retirement in 1949.

In those early days, he was the only doctor serving a wide area. He was a quiet kindly gentleman, a real family healer with no thought of payment from those in low estate. A confinement, if paid, was \$5. And as Mr. Mortimer Cummings commented at the doctor's retirement party, "the Doctor had time to converse with more than 4,000 storks". He was on call at all hours, going out and hitching up sometimes to drive many miles.

He was a tireless worker for public health in a day when water-works were not known in the township, except for the odd septic tank. When the Highland Park and McKellar areas were being built, he was concerned that proper supervision be given to construction, knowing too well the dangers of epidemics. In 1947, he organized the Westboro Health Clinic.

He was a familiar and important person to we school children when he appeared at our homes to placard us for the usual attacks of measles or chicken pox. Passing such a home with its sign, we would hold our noses and quickly pass by for fear a germ might be lurking.

In April 1949, Nepean Township Council and citizens gathered together at the Town Hall, to pay high tribute for his faithful service to the community and the township. He was presented with a purse of gold, and to his wife, a bouquet of roses. He passed away on March 4, 1951.



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1930-1950
A Period of Calm

1930 - 1950

A Period of Calm

Before the Great Depression, Nepean feared that overcrowding of lots, high density development, and substandard building construction would accompany future growth within its boundaries. As a result, a by-law was passed in 1930 regulating the use of lands and buildings in Britannia. From this point, only single family dwellings, apartment houses, multiple dwelling houses, motels, retail stores, and similar small-scale buildings were allowed to go up in Britannia. No structure could be higher than the width of the lot, or 50 feet; and, single family homes could not occupy more than 30 percent of the area of the lot. Buildings had to have a suitable foundation of concrete or wood posts and walls had to be built of certain specified materials.

Nepean had little to fear in the Depression years because the bad times brought a temporary halt to the growth of Britannia, already down in the 1920s from the earlier period. No new subdivisions were planned. Indeed, few lots were sold and new homes and cottages built in the existing ones. Some residents had a rough time meeting their current obligations. The larger landowners supported the distressed. Gerald Jamieson, who had taken over his late father's estate, allowed several summer tenants to live in cottages free of rent if they could not afford other accommodation. William F. Bell delivered eggs and vegetables to Belltown inhabitants and did not charge them for the goods at the time.

The payment of municipal taxes added to the anxiety of landowners. Those who owed back taxes were in dire straits. Some tried to compromise with the Township Council. Others inevitably lost the battle and surrendered their properties to Nepean.¹ Some 37 properties once held by speculators in the Britannia Highlands subdivision were up for tax sale in 1933. At this time, the assessment of farms was the same as it was for people with a lot and house. Some of the farmers in the area feared losing their properties because of the Depression and the increased taxes as a result of Grant School. In the same year, the Britannia Highlands Company went bankrupt. The company lost most of its many unsold lots to the Township before 1933, but in that year Nepean listed 263 separate lots and blocks given up by the company for arrears of

taxes.² In June, 1936, the taxes not paid, excluding the 21 properties eligible for tax sale — properties for which taxes had not been paid for five years or more — amounted to 45 percent of Grant Consolidated School Board's annual levy.

The Township had limited success in selling these properties. In 1940, the municipality still owned nearly 250 parcels of land in Britannia Highlands, six in Belltown, 11 in Loma Park and most of the small subdivided parcel that once was part of the McAmmond estate.³ These lots were offered at the reasonable price of \$25 each, but perhaps people could not afford to have a permanent home built within 12 months, which was a condition of buying the lots.

Bell, Poulin and Jamieson managed to hold onto their unsold lots, although sales during the thirties varied considerably among the three entrepreneurs. William Bell sold nine more lots, bringing the total number of Belltown lots sold to 32, about half of the subdivision, in 1940. He had adopted a policy of selling lots for \$10 down and \$10 whenever I could get you , which suited those with little spare cash.⁷ Meanwhile, less than a third, or approximately 40 lots, in the Loma Park subdivision had been sold.⁵

During the Depression, 29 percent of Britannia resident owners sold their holdings compared with 15 percent during the twenties (Table VI). The conversion of seasonable residences into comfortable year-round homes became popular in the 1930s. The cheaper homes and lower municipal taxes encouraged city residents to live in Britannia permanently. In the early 1930s, people could buy Bell's lots and meet his flexible terms. Towards the end of the decade, new cottages were going up west of Scrivens while the older ones east of the street were being renovated and occupied 12 months a year.

Many people found it cheaper and more convenient to rent than to own their homes. Cottage owners, eager to see some revenue from their properties, were glad to oblige them. As a result, tenancy more than doubled in each decade from 1920 to 1940. By 1940 there were 76 tenants in Britannia (Table I).

The growing number of households during the thirties was offset to some extent by people leaving Britannia. In 1930, Britannia's winter population was about 675. By 1934, it had dipped to a low of 506, but it climbed swiftly to 758 in 1937 as new families moved in and cottages were converted into year-round residences.⁶ The number of children who regularly attended Grant School also dropped and quickly picked up again during these years.⁷

The concern for the type of house or other structure built in Britannia was shared by Britannia residents. The 1930 by-law prompted displeased local ratepayers to alert the municipality to undesirable buildings being raised in their neighbourhood. In 1938, the township received complaints about the outhouses of the White Star Inn on Richmond Road and about a shack being put up on Alpine Avenue in the heights.¹⁶ The decline of standards among new structures in Britannia, possibly as a result of the Depression, led the Township Council to pass a second by-law in 1939 regulating methods of construction in the form of a building code for dwellings, schools and other buildings. Homes now had to face a public road and their front walls could not be less than 15 feet from the street. The maximum height for frame houses was set at two-and-a-half stories.

World War II accelerated the growth of a year-round suburban community at Britannia. The civil service grew as a bigger bureaucracy was needed to meet the demands of the military and civilian elements of Canada's contribution to the war.⁸ Housing was at a premium in the Ottawa area as tens of thousands of new civil servants and others filled the capital city. Many came to Britannia, and winterized more cottages. The assessed population of the area climbed rapidly in this period. In 1943, 803 people lived there year-round, and two years later, over 1,000 did.

Britannia grew for several other reasons. Some newcomers responded to advertisements for cheap property and built new homes. Some took over the homes of relatives. Britannia was on the fringe of the city and some people simply wanted to get out of the downtown core. Gasoline rationing during the war provided an incentive to live near a streetcar line.

An alternative to the electric railway after the war was the new Nepean Bus Lines. It was operated first by the O'Brien brothers and subsequently by Emmerson Fallis of Britannia Heights. Hourly service was started between Ottawa and the Heights from 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Initially, the bus began its route along Pinecrest, but this was soon extended to Boyce Street after Belltown residents petitioned for it.

The Township and subdividers gradually disposed of many lots through the war years. An average of eight township-owned lots were sold each year to interested buyers between 1940 and 1945. Of the subdividers, Bell benefited the most from the war boom.⁹ The need for homes also gave new uses to existing buildings in Britan-

nia. The Fresh Air Cottage that had given many needy mothers a summer-time break was used for a rest resort for the women's services during the war and subsequently converted into seven apartments. Dayton's Restaurant on the heights, the future Town and Country Restaurant, was being built when the federal government imposed its war-time freeze on all construction, so Dayton converted the building temporarily into a couple of apartments for soldiers and their wives.

Summer cottaging continued in Britannia, especially in the village and in Belltown amidst the trend towards year-round residency. If they could afford it, many Ottawa residents held onto their conveniently-located summer homes. They did not want to convert their modest structures into permanent dwellings. Gerald Jamieson did not allow full-time occupancy of his cottages and apartments. They were neither insulated nor otherwise suitable for winter use. They were also insured and assessed for municipal property tax purposes as seasonal residences. Jamieson's taxes and insurance premiums would have risen if they had been used throughout the year.

After World War II, urban Canada experienced a building boom as veterans and their families picked up the pieces of their civilian lives. Local landowners in Britannia prepared for the boom by registering new subdivisions. By 1948, all the lots on the Bell subdivisions were sold. This encouraged William Bell to parcel up the land between Scrivens, the highway and a new street, Doane, into 21 lots. These were sold as vacant lots to contractors such as Stanley Pajak, a Britannia resident.

During the same period, the sale of lots that had been forfeited to the Township of Nepean years before picked up considerably. While Nepean sold only nine lots in 1946 and three more in 1947, 106 lots were sold altogether in 1948 and 1949.

Britannia's post-war growth was at first a gradual one, and then it took a great leap as about 800 more permanent residents came to the area. More houses were built and cottages improved and the total assessment for the Britannia area similarly jumped. The average assessment value per resident rose from \$748 in 1943 to \$931 in 1947. In 1948 alone, 112 building permits were issued in Britannia at a time when there were approximately 400 homes there. The relatively low average value of the new buildings and additions compared to other parts of Ottawa's West End suggest that the new dwellings were either not very elaborate or that renovations and

winterization made up the lion's share of the permits.¹⁰

The new children in the area filled up Grant School. About 110 pupils regularly attended the brick school in 1940. Ten years later, 260 pupils were passing through its doors and attending classes there.¹¹ The number of teachers doubled from four to eight, and by the end of the 1940s the school's trustees were planning to have an annex built onto the school.

This growth in Britannia was not distributed equally among its various neighbourhoods. In all areas of Britannia, except Belltown, about 516 or four-fifths of the dwellings were permanent residences in 1950. In Belltown, only about two-thirds or 125 of the 182 dwellings were permanent residences. Britannia Village remained very much a summer residential neighbourhood during the 1940s. Only 30 new permanent residences were added to the existing 75 to give this part the lowest growth rate of the area. A couple of summer cottages were lost during the decade, so that there were 36 in 1950.¹² Belltown and Britannia Village were near the park and the bay, too pleasant an area for Ottawa people who already owned cottages there, to sell. Their cottage atmosphere and the lack of services and amenities that went along with it did not entice as many newcomers as in the other neighbourhoods of Britannia to build permanent homes.

Needless to say, virtually all of the new houses in other parts of Britannia were for year-round use. Britannia Highlands underwent the biggest growth rate as the number of homes in that part more than doubled during the 1940s from 38 to 101.¹³ The sale of township lots, accompanied by the requirement of erecting a dwelling within a year of purchase, accounted for much of the new development. The Loma Park and Jamieson subdivisions saw an increase in year-round dwellings from 46 to 77, or approximately two-thirds, while about a dozen summer cottages continued to exist there. Britannia Heights, west of the Highlands, only grew by half from 40 to 62 as summer residences became permanent ones and new homes were built.

The post-war boom in Britannia property was not free of problems. It happened so quickly that necessary services fell behind. Many of the Britannia Highlands lots being sold were located on unopened roads that hindered access to new properties. In one instance, Nepean Township was forced in 1948 to exchange a lot sold on Connaught for another because it was situated on an unopened street. A similar case was encountered with lots on Rob Roy

Avenue. Requests were heard to open up Connaught Avenue and lot sales were halted on Howe, east of Britannia Road in Loma Park, because no road existed there.

Apart from no access, many lots were in areas of poor drainage or where proper septic systems could not be installed. The Township Council attacked the problem by making a regulation in 1948 that no more township-owned lots would be sold until sewer and water were made available or unless the lots had an area greater than 12,000 square feet - large enough for a septic system. As a result, only 22 of the over 280 lots owned by Nepean in Britannia were released for sale at this time.¹⁴ The remainder either had no roadway leading to them or they were situated in low-lying areas. At the time of the annexation of this part of Nepean in 1950, the unsold lots were taken over by the City of Ottawa.

As in the thirties, Nepean and area residents grew concerned about the nature of development and wanted to control it. Because the older areas still had many cottagers, few dwellings were constructed of anything except wood frame. Relatively few homes in Britannia Village were veneered with brick or stone.¹⁵ Only one dwelling in the oldest part of Belltown was of that construction.

During this boom period, Nepean Township set out to zone the various built-up areas within its boundaries one by one to prevent scattered development and large-scale commercialization. Britannia was the last such part of Nepean to be zoned. A zoning by-law was passed in 1949 which declared most property in Britannia for residential use. Homes could only be single or double unit buildings and were required to have sewage disposal systems at least as effective as a septic tank. Several commercial zones were set aside which conformed to the existing areas of local business. These included the intersection of Britannia Road and the railway tracks, the triangular parcel of property between Forest Avenue and the two provincial highways, the gravel pits, and Quesnel's lumber business west of the intersection of the highways. The by-law also restricted the kind of activity that could be undertaken in the commercial areas. (Map X)

By the eve of Britannia's annexation to Ottawa in 1950, the social composition of the expanding year-round residential community had changed considerably over the past 20 years. Over half of Britannia's residents continued to be Anglican, United Church or other Protestant denominations while one third were Roman Catholic.¹⁶ Many Roman Catholics who had cottages particularly in

Belltown, later chose to winterize their dwellings and live there throughout the year. A small but concentrated Jewish summer community remained rooted in the oldest part of Belltown along the south side of Grandeur near the Park. This closely-knit group occupied 23 lots among them as of 1948. A smaller and less concentrated group of Jewish families continued to live on Britannia Road and on Greenview facing the park. By this time, too, a small group of Scandinavian Lutherans had settled along Ivanhoe while others lived on Ahearn in Belltown.

The post-war growth reinforced the occupational distinctions among Britannia's neighbourhoods that had been apparent years before. Belltown, with its unique Roman Catholic and Jewish character, had the largest complement of blue-collar people, while Britannia Village had the lowest, and seemed to be made up of middle-ranking white-collar people of whom a third were civil servants (Table IV). The heights remained the area for independent business operators, and had the highest proportion of armed forces personnel and the lowest proportion of civil servants within Britannia. Loma Park and Jamieson's parkside subdivision had many residents from both ends of the social spectrum and few from in between.

The wave of newcomers to Britannia in the post-war years spawned a renewed appreciation for the quality of life in that area. Householders wanted changes in local services and amenities, and they were prepared to organize themselves specifically for this purpose. This took the form of the Britannia Men's Community Club in the early forties. The constitution of this group embraced the goal of improving living conditions in the area. It also claimed to be the only local club that was open to all male ratepayers in the district, although women were later involved in the club. Monthly club meetings were held in the Britannia United Church, a place that had become the physical and social hub of the area.

The club's initiatives stemmed from a concern for problems and events. Among its first activities was organizing the homecoming reception of Britannia's war veterans at Lakeside Gardens pavilion in Britannia Park on July 24, 1946, which over 800 people attended.

Much of the club's energies were spent on the familiar but annoying problem of roads and sidewalks. Britannia Road, the village's main thoroughfare, was a troublesome road because of the traffic that it had to bear. After 1945, with many more new families in the area, a greater effort was made to have the streets of the old village

repaired and the poor sidewalks resurfaced. The club also suggested constructing a new road along the Ottawa Electric Railway to provide the village with better access to the city.

Other street-related improvements sought by residents and encouraged by the Community Club were street signs, street lighting and traffic regulation.¹⁷ In 1947, the club asked for the numbering of houses on the streets and the installing of street signs. The following year saw the Township carrying out these tasks in the area, working westward from Britannia's neighbouring subdivision to the east.

A comprehensive street lighting system was first considered seriously in 1944, when a delegation from the Community Club in Britannia asked Nepean Township for street lights along Britannia Road at each intersection. Street lights had gradually been installed at certain points in the area before the club was formed. In 1944, however, the Ottawa Light, Heat and Power Company, which was supplying street lighting in other suburban areas of Nepean, would not provide a similar scheme upon request. The company felt that street-lighting was not warranted where there was a significant proportion of summer residents. By the spring of 1947, with more suburban development at Britannia, the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission and the local company reversed their stand on the street-lighting question and installed 44 lights in Britannia in 1948.

Growing year-round residency in Britannia made snow removal yet another target of the Community Club. In the thirties, major roads were rolled in the winter by local farmers, and local roads were sometimes plowed by teams of permanent residents. In Belltown, for instance, such self-help was demonstrated as six or seven local men often set out after heavy storms on a team of horses led by Bower Boyce. Generally, the streetcar provided most people with a means of getting to town so that plowing for the daily use of cars was not as necessary. Nevertheless, by the winter of 1939-40, the Township had assumed more responsibility in this department. It oversaw the plowing of a half-mile of roads in Britannia that winter. They increased the area covered and were congratulated for their efforts by the Community Club.

Other services such as water supply and sewage disposal remained much the same as they had been before 1930, except that septic tanks, where lot sizes allowed it, increased in use towards the 1940s with the winterizing of cottages!¹⁸The almost primitive use of

privies, cleaned and inspected by township appointees, was no longer suitable. Water was regarded as a precious commodity during the post-war building boom and the Community Club expressed its fear to Nepean Council in 1948 that well water could become contaminated. The club suggested that septic tanks should be more closely inspected and the water chlorinated. At this time, only residents in the vicinity of the park's water supply were given chlorinated water. Annual flooding in Belltown also prompted increased demands for surface drainage in the way of culverts along the roadside.¹⁹

Britannia's social organizations, churches and other services, changed quickly with the Depression, World War II and the post-war boom. By 1950 Britannia was taking on the appearance of a suburbanized community.

The fortunes of the Britannia Boating Club fluctuated considerably between 1930 and 1950. During the depression, the club's future was threatened by debt and unpaid property taxes. This situation was brought about by the dwindling membership and resulting reduced income. Finally, the Township sold the club property for arrears of taxes, but within a year a group of about 20 dedicated members, determined to keep the club going, bought the property back and re-assigned it to the club.

For the first 50 years of the club's existence, the major competitive sport had been canoe racing or paddling. The many successes of the Brits spread the name of the village far and wide. In 1906, for example, the Britannia War Canoe team was declared Champions of Canada. After World War I, followed by the tragic fire and the Depression, interest in the sport waned. Interest was rekindled by the successes of Frank Amyot, who had joined the club in 1927. By 1935 he had won the Canadian Singles Championship six times, and the following year won the Gold Medal for the 1,000 metres event at the Olympic Games in Berlin. When he returned home to Britannia he received a hero's welcome. By the middle thirties, post-depression optimism was starting to blossom and at last the tide seemed ready to turn for the Britannia Boating Club. In 1936 there were 123 members and by 1939 this figure had more than doubled, to 276. With the increased membership, moorings were at a premium and some boats had to be moored out in the wind-swept lake. Although many members served overseas during World War II, the membership did not suffer, as war-time Government employees working in Ottawa joined the club in considerable numbers.

For a dozen years after World War II, membership had hovered around 300. This was mainly because of the lack of proper mooring facilities for keel boats, plus the inadequate clubhouse facilities. This meant that drastic steps were required to improve the clubhouse and provide additional mooring space. By this time the financial situation had improved, with the increase in membership, and the funds were approved to enlarge the clubhouse and incorporate a distinctive tower. The date 1887 was inscribed on this tower to record the beginning of the informal summer colony club from which the Britannia Yacht Club eventually grew.

The second major project was to convert the abandoned canal, which had remained a useless tongue of water for half a century, into a useful harbour. This crude harbour, with its rough banks, was in use by the end of the 1950 sailing season. In the same year the name of the club was changed once more, this time to the Britannia Yacht Club, to better reflect the growing proportion of sail-oriented members. The clubhouse improvements left insufficient funds for the harbour project, which could never have been undertaken without the generosity, expertise and voluntary labour of club members. Most of the rock walls of the present harbour were built by the volunteer efforts of club members on weekends.

The club was not always favourably regarded by residents, who were sensitive to the imagined difference between club members and villagers. Some local people felt they were excluded from the club circle. Yet from the beginning of the community-oriented Boathouse Club in 1896, everyone was welcome and membership available with payment of the dues necessary to maintain operations. Membership drives were an on-going part of the club's activities and fees were kept to a minimum by the self-help nature of the club. Perhaps the degree of interest in the total activities of the club had the ultimate bearing on applications for membership.

A number of members lived in Britannia because it was close to club facilities and felt that they made up a water-oriented community within the village. Some of the villagers had come to resent the disruption to the otherwise peaceful and isolated village community caused by weekend traffic between the club facilities and Richmond Road. At times certain actions of the club did not please the residents such as when the end of Cassels Street was filled and levelled in 1939; this, according to Jamieson's claims, upset his water supply system. Another complaint concerned the erection of a fence by the club to discourage vandals, which it was claimed

blocked a public right-of-way. With the progressive development and improvements taking place in the waterfront area, some conflicts of interest were bound to arise. Fortunately these problems were settled amicably, on one occasion at least with the assistance of the Nepean Township.

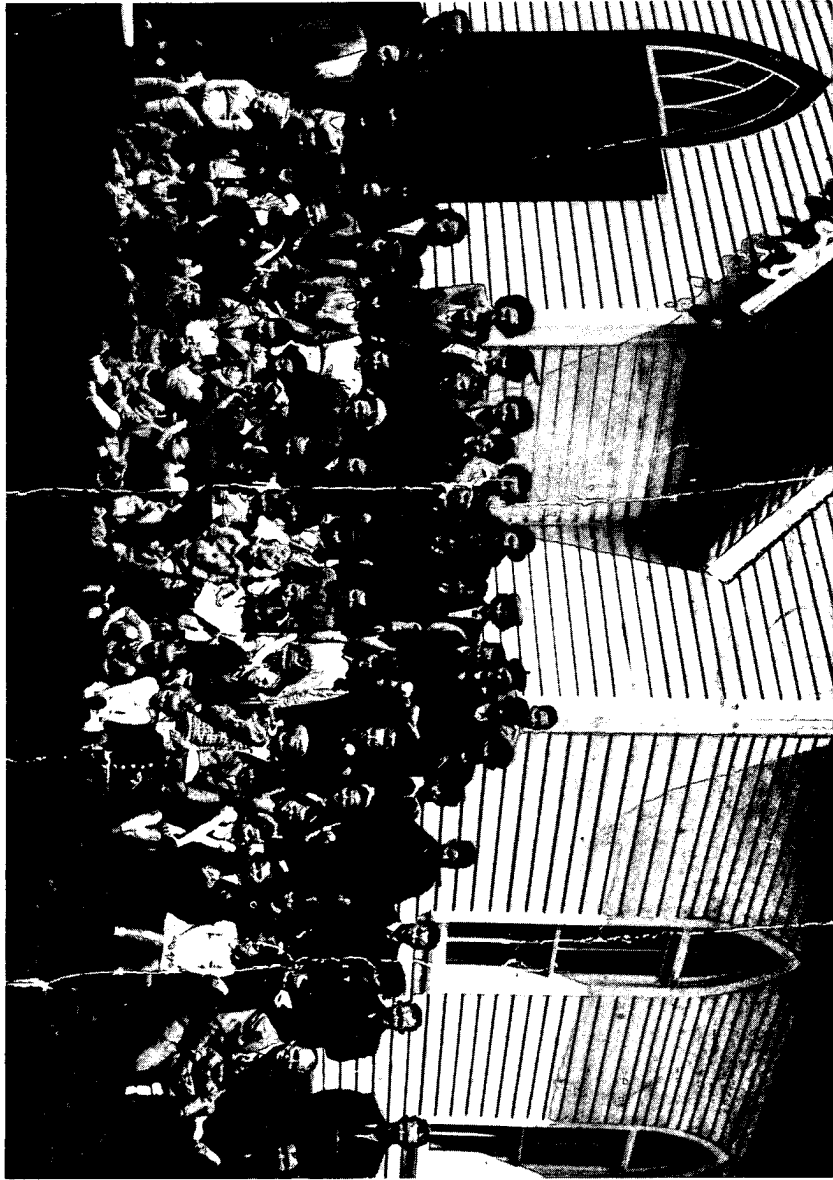
Tennis was another popular summer pastime of this period. Many residents played on the courts at the park or if they were Boating Club members played there. Don McDearmid, a local resident, was a member of the 1946 Canada's Davis Cup team.

The wish among local residents to preserve the natural environment around Britannia also took the form of a bird sanctuary along the lakeshore and the designation of playground areas. A sanctuary for water fowl and migratory birds was first suggested to Nepean Township Council by H.S. Arkell in 1937. Little was done about this until after the war. Then the Britannia Community Club pursued this with the Township. Nepean, in turn, received the consent of the Hydro Commission and Robert Magee, the farmer of the adjoining lands, to proceed with the sanctuary. In 1948, a Dominion Sanctuary was established east of Britannia Village in the area later known as Britannia Woods, thereby preserving the land and preventing any eastward property development. Squeezed in between the park and the reserved land, Britannia could now only grow toward Richmond Road.

Another plan involving open space conservation was the designating of a playground in Britannia. Nepean Township considered Britannia Village for the possible site of one of four municipal parks with an adjoining playground. Although the Community Club agreed with the proposal, there was apparently some objection to it. A delegation of ratepayers suggested that, upon acquiring the Ottawa Electric Railway, the City of Ottawa should provide the area with a suitable park and playground. As of 1948, property was leased from H.S. Arkell for playground space. The Britannia Community Club, however, only wanted to use subdivided land for playground purposes, not farmland. Nepean pursued the scheme and the playground area designation was made in 1949. No further planning in this department seems to have been carried out since, by this time, it was certain that Ottawa would annex the Britannia area.

In the midst of gaining urban services, the formation of the Britannia Women's Institute, in 1948 by Mrs. Harry Hopper of Merivale, was a throwback to the rural life. The Women's Institute

Brianna United Church, 1945.



began in rural Ontario in 1897 in response to the problems of hygiene among farm families and served as a form of self-help and mutual benefit among rural women. Most of the branch institutes were organized in the countryside, although the co-operation of town and country women was also encouraged. It is no surprise, then, that the early members of Britannia's branch were daughters and wives of farmers on the heights and nearby parts of Nepean.²⁰ Mrs. G.B. Acres was its first president.

The activities of the Women's Institute were and are many and varied. Monthly meetings were held, First Aid and cooking courses taught, and money raised through teas, plant sales and other means. The Institute has worked to aid fire and accident victims, the Red Cross, local Boy Scouts, and other groups. Annual flower shows have been held since 1952.

Among its most enduring and best known activities has been the Tweedsmuir History, the local history covering Westboro to Bells Corners. Through talks, slide presentations, and her column in the *Olde Forge Flyer*, Eva Taylor, its volunteer researcher, has raised the level of historical awareness among Britannia residents considerably. Twelve volumes of material and photographs, and several scrapbooks, make up a good part of the collected and recorded history of Britannia.

Britannia's churches continued to provide social and community-oriented activities to their followers during this period. Strawberry socials, bridge and tea parties were organized by the Guild of St. Stephen's Anglican at the Olde Forge tea room in the thirties. A men's club of that parish was formed in 1930. As the congregation grew, the vestry of the church remained strongly tied to the old Britannia Bay village and longstanding non-farming heights people, all well-established and respected citizens of the area. By 1944, St. Stephen's was seeking more land and wanted to build a new church basement. The Britannia United Church provided Boy Scouts, Cubs and Canadian Girls in Training for the youth of the area. These were like clubs along non-denominational lines for the children. There were weekly bible study classes also.

The increased population of Ottawa's West End led to the creation of a new Roman Catholic parish. The new Our Lady of Fatima Church was erected in 1947 in Woodroffe, a central site within the parish. Meanwhile, Britannia residents continued to use St. Bonaventure Chapel. The new church received much support from the strong Roman Catholic following in Belltown. Women there

organized the first Ladies' Auxiliary or the Busy Bees of Belltown in 1948 to raise money for the new church. Two years later, the group was reorganized to include members from all parts of the parish.

The Roman Catholic residents of Belltown and Britannia Village attempted to establish a separate school in the Britannia area. A group met in 1935 at Walter Traversy's house on Britannia Road to form a separate school board and notified the Ministry of Education in Toronto, but nothing came of it. At the time, there were 31 Roman Catholic students attending Grant School, from twelve families.

The continued movement of people into Britannia and the growing traffic along Richmond Road and Carling Avenue of travellers and residents advanced the commercial development of the heights towards tourism and tourist accommodation. The stores and services of Britannia Bay continued to provide for residents, and Belltown, with some year-round inhabitants, now had some stores of its own.

The junction of the electric railway line and Britannia Road kept its place as the main commercial centre for the village and the surrounding neighbourhoods. There had been little change during the periods of Depression and World War II in the membership of the small merchant community there, which reflected the continued patronage of old and the added patronage of new residents. John Farrell carried on as grocer-postmaster on the south side of Howe between Zephyr and Britannia Roads until 1938 when he moved his store to the east side of Britannia Road north of the tracks. He remained as postmaster until 1949 when J.P. Warren took over. William Nesbitt continued to sell groceries on the west side of Britannia Road next to the streetcar tracks until he died. His widow, Nina, took over the shop until 1951. William Roy also maintained his restaurant, corner grocery and ice cream shop all year round on Britannia Road at Salina throughout the period.

Commercial competition resulted in a greater variety of establishments in the village, most businesses occupying space near the business district at the railway tracks. A second restaurant operated for a brief time between Salina and Jamieson on the west side of Britannia Road, and another was run by Alonzo Hill south of the tracks in 1940, but it too was shortlived. After World War II, other places occupied the corner of Britannia and Howe including the Village Inn run by F. Lauzon and later by Ernest Ingoe from the late 1940s until 1951. This period also saw Britannia get a resident



Grocery Store on the south side of the tracks at Britannia Road and Howe, late 1950 s.



General store on the north side of the tracks, on Britannia Road, late 1950 s.

Cam MacLaurin, storekeeper and postmaster on Britannia Heights in the 1950's.



barber. Morgan Clarke opened a barber shop next to the grocery north of the streetcar tracks in the early thirties, but his business closed shortly afterwards. It was not until the early 1940s that Joseph Richer began to cut hair on Howe Street and continued until the 1950s.

Ice and coal dealers operated their small-scale businesses until electric refrigeration spelled the end to ice boxes. George and later Hubert Dagg distributed ice and coal on Britannia Road north of Rowatt until the 1940s, and Robert and Emile LaHaise carried on their operation until the 1930s. The last of this group, George Lilloco, a steamfitter by trade, took over from the LaHaises and erected an ice house on property between the O.E.R. and C.P.R. rights-of-way. He supported himself in his retirement by selling wood and ice until the mid-1950s. His ice house was later destroyed by fire.

As in the village, some businesses on Britannia Heights became local institutions. Cameron MacLaurin, the colourful storekeeper and postmaster, carried on. Only hundreds of yards to the southwest was Corby's Florists, which had opened for business in the 1920s and closed in the early 1930s. But Britannia was not long without a florist, as Eric and Wellesley Fallis opened a nursery in 1937 on the other side of Pinecrest from where Corby's had been located and continued until the 1960s.

Older establishments took on new roles as different services were needed. Throughout Ontario's summer resorts, the Depression, which had brought a reduced money supply in its wake, prompted a call for cheap food and accommodation services. This introduced the snack bar and roadside commercial cabin rentals to Britannia and other such summer spots.²¹

The junction of the two provincial highways in Britannia was ideal for businesses serving the incoming or outgoing traveller. Robert Winthrop converted his residence into Ye Olde Forge Tea Room in the early 1930s. It quickly became a gathering place for church and women's groups, for dinner parties and for accommodating paying guests. Some of the youth of the area would have sleigh ride parties followed by dancing and bean suppers. During World War II, Winthrop operated a taxi service for area residents and a Texaco gas station. The Britannia Garage on the Skuce property, which had been operated by Richard Ross, continued until the mid-1930s when it was taken over by Howard Mooney for a while. An Imperial Oil service station opened at the top of the

triangular property between the two highways and Forest Avenue. It was first operated by Ted Corby in the late 1930s, then by Hiscox and Ferguson, and later still by Fred Showler from the early 1940s.

Along Richmond Road and Highway 17, new businesses appeased the stomachs of hungry travellers. Fast food and more comfortable restaurants emerged. Among the earliest and most enduring of these was George White's Dubl Dipp ice cream parlour. This little family business at the corner of Forest and Richmond began a 30-year success story in 1934. It became a very popular attraction, drawing customers from miles around. Indeed, at one point, police were called upon to direct traffic and prevent roads from being blocked as people swarmed to enjoy five-cent ice cream cones in any of three regular and one special flavours. The White Star Inn, a refreshment booth on the site of the present Peter's Pantry Restaurant, started in the late 1930s and closed in the 1950s. Loran Faraday also opened a restaurant for a short time in 1942 on the south side of Carling between Norton and Forest.

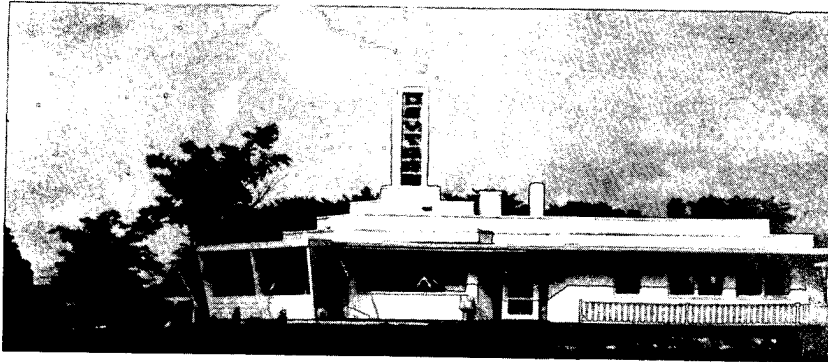
Among the most memorable restaurants in this area was Dayton's, later the Town and Country, and now occupied by Hemingway's. Alex Dayton had operated several small restaurants in Ottawa and Montreal and held the concession at Britannia Park after Mr. Rogers. He built and opened Dayton's Drive-in in 1939, but shortly afterwards it was commandeered temporarily for housing as a duplex. In the mid-forties he remodelled it as a dining room, the Town and Country. It was a fairly large concern, with a seating capacity of approximately 100 in the dining room and four acres of parking space. A few years later the back of the restaurant and kitchen was enlarged. Along Highway 17 east of the junction, Mrs. Bower Boyce opened a restaurant at the corner of the highway and Elmpoint after the War. Later, her business included a sub-post office.

Alongside the rise of food businesses was the cabin rental and later motel trade. The tourist traffic on the provincial highways towards Canada's capital favoured the intersection of the two at Britannia Heights for such establishments. East of the junction, J.P. LeClair began business with seven cabins on the square between Croydon, Forest, Carling and Bond Street in 1940. They were later taken over by George White and James Watson in 1946. Dayton complemented his restaurant with 48 cabins over a period of time with 20 cabins and later 28 motel units. West of the intersection along Highway 17, Robillard began to rent ten cabins on Oakley in

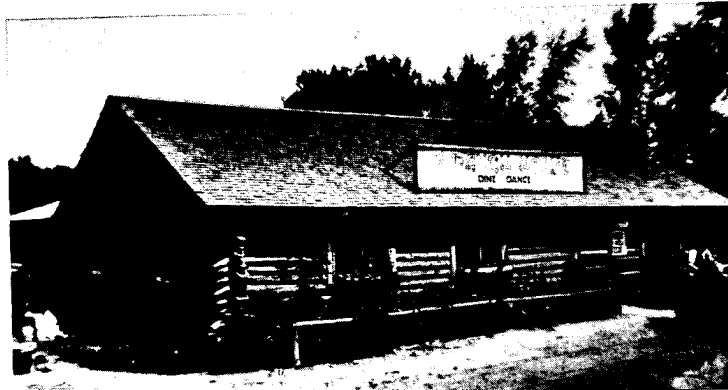
247.



The Olde Forge when it was a Texaco station prior to 1960.



Dayton's Restuarant in the 1940 s.



The Ranch House on the northside of Carling Avenue, 1940 s.

1947 and more cabins were rented along Graham Bay beyond them.

Some of the changes that occurred along the heights were not welcomed by local people. Those who had come to live in peace and quiet among the trees at Britannia Heights were quick to oppose the appearance of commercial premises on the main roads. Dance halls came under attack in the late 1930s as entrepreneurs exploited the open location, the growing population, and the popularity of the park. Britannia Heights householders sent a delegation to the Township Council in 1938 to fight the earliest of these establishments in their neighbourhood. They argued that such amusements and dancing should be kept in the park and away from residential areas. They also opposed the introduction of cabins, feeling that the guest rooms at the Olde Forge were plenty.

Despite these objections, the dance halls thrived. The Ranch House opened its doors to evening entertainment in 1939 under the proprietorship of Mrs. Albert Flockhart. It was built by her brother-in-law, Stanley Pajak, a local contractor. Set up at the corner of the Highway between Boyce and Scrivens, it was popular during the war with dances often frequented by soldiers from the nearby Connaught Rifle Ranges. Winter fun took the form of sleigh rides and skating, with bean suppers awaiting hungry merrymakers at the Ranch House. Lakeside Gardens in Britannia Park was a very popular spot for dancing during these years, as was the establishment at Ottawa Beach further west beyond Belltown.

Others, trying to cash in on the success of this establishment, were less fortunate. When Joseph LeClair tried to obtain a dance license in 1939, he was refused on the grounds of an opposing petition signed by more than 100 concerned residents. Even

Winthrop of the Olde Forge was obliged to take out a dance license although the dancing there was done in conjunction with dinner parties.

Other forms of entertainment appeared along Highway 17 above Belltown. The Britannia Drive-In Theatre screened its first motion picture in 1948, and Quesnel's lumber business nearby became the site of bowling lanes and the home of the Britannia Bowling Club, founded in 1949 by Herbert Stiles.

Belltown began to be served by small confectioners once people started to live there year-round. Ray LaChance's store, Kay's Corner, opened shortly after World War II on Scrivens as a small french fries stand. It was converted in 1948 into a proper portable booth. A grocery store, Elroy's Canteen, at the corner of Scrivens and Walter, began to operate by 1948 and was managed by Thomas Merrifield. Another confectionary, Carson's, operated by Carson Baldry, was situated at the corner of Highway 17 and Primrose. Other small businesses that opened in this period include Dot's Corner, which served ice cream and soft drinks, and another LaChance outlet, Ray's Place, a lunch counter at the corner of Haughton and Scrivens. The clientele of these businesses would likely have comprised both the nearby summer residents and patrons of the park. The park itself had two concessions managed by Charles Rogers until 1938, when his son took them over for a short period.

Local stores, however, could only supply essential goods and wares to residents. For a greater variety of goods, they shopped in Westboro at Turner's meat market or at Robinson's I.G.A. for groceries. A Hintonburg butcher also had a route which extended to Britannia Heights. For clothes and other items, downtown Ottawa was the only place to go.

By 1950, Britannia had virtually lost its character as a summer colony and weekend playground for Ottawans. The need for cheap homes during the Depression and more houses during and after World War II brought new families out to the area and saw the winterizing of many local cottages. As this took place, residents and the township government worked sometimes together and sometimes independently to monitor and shape further expansion and diversification. While such growth and commercializing was on a small-scale at this time, the most significant changes would follow when Britannia became part of the City of Ottawa and a boon to the large corporate developer.

250.



The Britannia Boating Club, 1935.

Britannia's Memories of the 1930s

Perhaps it is fortunate that I do not have an old scrapbook to look back on. For one thing, it would record much of what our families had to face up to, limited spending and many faced with nothing.

The 1930s were grim years. Quite a number of families took up residence in cottages in order to eke out an existence.

One memory I have is the very cold winter of 1933-34. I recall taking a walk up around the Park in a summer dress on October 6, and three days later the snows descended. At the end of March, 28 inches of snow still remained, and it was very cold with December 29th registering 38 degrees below zero.

It continued very cold, and I was almost frozen walking up to the street car and home at night. Even the street cars turned down the heat. But even though cold, it was brightened by the girls and boys on their way to Nepean High School. They would get off at the McKellar Loop and cut across the fields in order to save extra fare.

The Boat Club's membership suffered due to money scarcity, as some 16% of the city's population was unemployed. But old members recall it was a happy time when all worked together to get things done and still had plenty of time to enjoy what the Club had to offer. Short of funds, the Club found itself behind in Township taxes, and faced one day the appearance of a Bailiff taking a seat in the Lounge, ready to seize the Club's chattels. And all the Club had was aging canoes and second-hand lounge chesterfield and chairs. However, the Club's honour was saved when a group of "faithful" succeeded in scraping sufficient cash, formed a management committee, and thus the day was saved.

The year 1935 brought a bit of brightness to the summer scene. It was the year King George V and Queen Mary were celebrating the 25th year of their reign. The Ottawa Electric organized a Venetian night at the Park and enlisted the help of the Boat Club. It was a fine show and the celebration ended with a brilliant fireworks display over the lake with the Club's sailing craft adorned in coloured lights cruising the waters. It was a flashback on an era that had passed, yet why could it not come again....

Berlin, Germany, August 8th, 1936

Frank Amyot, Britannia Boating Club star, brought honour to the capital and to Canada by winning the Olympic paddling title.

From Berlin, August 9th, by the Canadian Press Staff writer Elmer Dulmage...the Canadian Standard was hoisted atop the main pole of the Olympic Stadium today for the first time in these 11th modern games when Frank Amyot of the Britannia Boating Club, Ottawa, was honored for his triumph in the Canoe Singles on Saturday. The blond champion, six times winner of the Dominion Title, raced the 1000-meter course in 5 minutes 32.1 seconds...

"The greatest thrill I ever experienced", said Frank Amyot, reliving the scene of his recent triumph in Berlin, was the moment he was called to stand on the Olympic dias in the gigantic Stadium and heard the National Anthem played while the Canadian Flag was hoisted atop the main centre pole.

"Having the laurels placed on my head and the Olympic Medal presented to me, even while the strains of O Canada brought close to 100,000 people to their feet, is something I will never forget."

Frank received a royal welcome back in Ottawa. Twenty minutes before the train was due to arrive, thousands inside the station and along the parade route eagerly waited to welcome the tall, handsome Frank Amyot. To officially greet him were Mayor Stanley Lewis, other notables, and of course Club members. The G.G.F.G. Band and Ottawa Boys' Band provided music. Even "Bungo", his pet dog and faithful companion, was there. It was indeed a Royal Welcome feted with many dinners and gifts, not forgetting the Club's big homecoming dinner.

But he was the last of the great paddlers and retired from the sport. He will not be forgotten as he was given the honour of being in the Sportsman's Hall of Fame. Frank served during the Second War in the Navy on patrol duty. He died at the age of 57, November 21, 1962.

And during the depression, how did young people find places to congregate?

There was the old Ranch House on the old March road, where many happy hours were passed in happy comradeships listening to the jukebox and sipping a Coke or eating a hot dog. And another favourite spot was Beebe's at Woodroffe.

Will Winthrop had a few years previous renovated his old home and called it "The Olde Forge". His wife was a marvellous cook and



Frank Amyot, August 8th 1936, winner of the Olympic paddling title.

so afternoon teas and dinners could be had. During the winter months, many a good bean-feed was had after a sleigh ride.

And we must not forget Mrs. White's "Double-Dip" when she held sway about where the recently closed down Town and Country Restaurant is now. It was the place to come to get a real double-dip. She had such a big clientele that she often ran short, so you had to get there early on a hot day.

In the 30s, there was much to keep us busy and we enjoyed simple living.

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First Public Health Nurse, Jennie Aris.

Grant School's First Public Health Nurse

After the wonderful evening commemorating Grant School's 60th Anniversary, there was one outstanding and surprising person I met who had played a part in its history.

This very bright lady was bubbling over with enthusiasm relating her days in this area as its first School Nurse. Her name is Miss Jennie Aris, and she retired in 1961 after many years of faithful service. She has a vivid memory of episodes, of happy results, as well as the tribulations in this new venture.

Lack of time that evening made me resolve to bring to light the part played by this dedicated health nurse who watched over the children of this fast-growing West End of Ottawa.

I contacted Miss Aris, and she very kindly consented to "tell her story". Today she is still brought to memory by many who came under her care.

Thank you, Miss Aris! We consider it an honour to record this part of school history, and the part you played so that posterity will record it in the "Hall of Dedicated Service".

JENNIE ARIS - HER STORY

Previous to 1922, the Provincial Department of Health was organizing school health units. A doctor and a nurse from the department made a survey of a school area examining all children. A survey was made of the three Westboro schools, Hilson, Churchill, and Broadview, and a report made to the school board.

As a Registered Nurse, I had done private duty for four years and I heard Westboro and Woodroffe were planning to form a unit. I went to Toronto in the summer of 1922 and obtained a certificate as an approved School Nurse. This short course was given at the University of Toronto by the provincial health department.

I applied for the position and started work in September, 1922. Later Britannia and Maxwell school boards asked to join the unit, which gave me a total of six schools. I started work at \$1,000 per year and paid my own streetcar fare. Travelling in those days wasn't easy with no ploughed roads in the winter.

My time had to be divided and as Britannia and Maxwell each had only three classrooms, I only had half a day per week, but principals

could always call me if needed. This half-day included my home visiting for that area after my school work was finished.

My work in the schools included a routine rapid class-room inspection of every child every second week. In these rapid inspections, we were looking for any sign of communicable disease, skin rash (scabies was a problem in the early days and also head lice). Every year each child came to the Nurse's office for a more thorough check-up.

These inspections included vision testing and hearing, throat and dental, posture and weighing. If defects were found, a written notification was sent home advising the parents of an abnormal condition. We never diagnosed, but advised them to seek medical advice.

A complete record card was kept for every child which followed him/her from class to class and to other schools. This time alone with each child gave the nurse time to discuss many problems with the child. After notifying parents of defects, I followed up with a home visit.

In the early days, we had no access to any clinic, no baby bonus, child welfare, etc., so it was very hard to get defects corrected. The Lion's Club were interested in vision and gave me glasses for children with impaired vision. During my home visits parents discussed their preschool children.

I recall finding two babies with club feet and the Rotary Club looked after them. Parents didn't always take kindly to nurses' visits. A Grade 1 child had very poor vision, but the father said it was impossible for a nurse to check vision. After persuading the mother to come to the school to see how we checked them, she saw that the child really had poor vision. He had congenital cataracts on both eyes and lost a year at school. It changed their attitude to school nursing.

I usually made 30 to 40 home visits every month, walking the roads in all kinds of weather.

Mass immunization for diphtheria and whooping cough started in 1936. Dr. Nelson, Medical Officer of Health for Nepean Township, held immunization clinics in the schools every year to which parents brought their pre-school children.

Every year the school boards allowed Dr. Nelson to have me work with him to hold clinics in every country school for children and pre-schoolers. This meant four visits to each school to complete the series. In those days we had to carry a coal oil stove to keep

needles and syringes boiling. To-day, everything is in pre-sterilized packages and is discarded after use.

These clinics ended in 1945 when the Nepean Health Unit was formed and Dr. Whittall was the Medical Officer of Health. As the Provincial Unit did not pay a grant for school nurses when there was a health unit, I had to work with the unit but still had two schools along with generalized program.

In January 1950, Ottawa annexed part of Nepean and the public schools were now under the Ottawa Board of Education who had their own school nurses with Dr. MacHaffie as School Medical Doctor. They expected to have a great amount of work to do to immunize school children, but found instead a complete record for every child!

In the early days, I discovered mild smallpox at Hilson School. After much discussion, Dr. Nelson called out Dr. Sheriff, Ottawa Medical Officer of Health, who confirmed that it was smallpox.

Within an hour, the schools were closed and all children had to produce vaccination certificates or remain at home for two weeks. Dr. Maloney, Provincial Department Medical Officer of Health, brought in some extra nurses and we had clinics for school and pre-schoolers. This action probably averted a more serious outbreak of smallpox.

After 39 years in school work which I enjoyed, I retired in June of 1961. I meet many adults who were school children during my years of work and I enjoy having a visit with them.

I thoroughly enjoyed my evening at Grant School meeting so many former pupils and hearing of their success.

Sincerely, Jennie Aris, January, 1983.

258.



Charlie Taylor (right) and fellow officer on duty at the corner of Rideau and Sussex Streets.



Scene from "The Policeman" with lost little boy and blind newsboy, George Blake, 1947.

To the Memory of a Britannia Boy

As I watched the passing scenes of recent months, memories drifted back to the Royal Visit of 1967. Canada was celebrating the 100th Year of Confederation and it was the great year of Expo.

It was the last day of a happy Royal visit in which they played a big part in the celebrations. Lieut. Charles Taylor and his traffic officers had had a busy time directing the royal progress, as usual did a noble job in the performance of duties - and all had gone well. Back at Rideau Hall, the Royal couple were resting prior to departure, but not entirely, for they did not forget those who served.

Returning to the Police Station after the busy day, Lieutenant Taylor was informed by his Chief that he was to present himself at Rideau Hall to receive the Royal thanks. The past days had been very busy ones for the traffic department!

Driven to Rideau Hall, Lieutenant Taylor, really towering his 6'6" stature at this honour, was ushered into the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip to receive their personal thanks to him and his officers for the work carried out so efficiently. I am sure he must have almost burst with pride as their hands were extended to compliment the traffic officers. He so often recalled the ease of conversation which followed, and how delighted he was as the Queen recalled him from previous visits.

They talked about their families and with much pride, Lieutenant Taylor told her a daughter married an Englishman and he had two grandchildren living in England. With Prince Philip, conversation turned to the flora and fauna of our country about which they were both fluent.

Concluding the visit, Her Majesty presented him with a signed portrait, and Prince Philip, a pair of cufflinks bearing the Royal crest from the royal silversmiths, as a remembrance of their visit.

Early that evening he arrived at my home to relate the surprising event of the day, and we were invited to touch the hand that had taken the hand of his Queen and Prince Philip, and as well to admire the gifts. And his comment, "to think I was once just an ordinary kid from Britannia."

Charlie's advent into this world took place in the afternoon of September 14, 1909, with Dr. Stuart Evans officiating with the required help of two local mid-wives. They had the honour of

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presenting twin boys to a much-surprised father on his return from work. The birth of twins in old Britannia made history.

Charlie and his twin brother, Arthur, grew up in the healthy outdoors of Britannia, trekking up to the Mosgrove School on Richmond Road, one room, one teacher, and about 25 students. Orchards along the route received their attention, and sometimes they were given a chase!

In the early spring, almost before the last of the ice had left the lake, they joined up with the local boys as they made for the perch hole for the first run. This hole was located just below the causeway built by the Yacht Club. Here the fish-minded youngsters, equipped with odds and ends of rods, made huge catches which could be seen as they returned proudly to present them to their parents.

Perch freshly caught in the spring cold water, then fried in butter was a delicious meal, except for the small bones. I wonder how many recall the old perch hole?

Charlie joined the Ottawa Police Department on his 21st birthday, and was a longtime traffic officer at the busy corner of Rideau and Sussex streets. One late afternoon as he was on duty, a street car jumped the switch and threw him about 30 feet. Fortunately, it was winter and he had on his greatcoat, so ended up with a severe shakeup. He was also known as the "maestro" of traffic for many years.

In 1947, the National Film Board was interested in doing an educational film to be used in the schools to promote the role of the policeman as the guardian of children.

Charlie Taylor, then a Sergeant, was loaned by the Police Department to take a leading role in the movie, entitled "The Policeman". The film, I was told some time after, was sent all over Canada, as well as outside Canada, and was much appreciated.

Following his long career in traffic work, Charlie Taylor was promoted to Traffic Inspector in 1970, then retired in December, 1971. He passed away September 1st, 1981.

Following his death, I was visited by his daughter, Marian, living in England. She and sister Lois expressed the wish to see the film, "The Policeman". Through the courtesy and help of the Public Archives, John Turner located it and presented it for a private viewing.

Still in excellent condition, it was interesting to view a film portraying the work of our Police Force, and especially what the city looked like in that year.

Charlie was an old Britannia village boy and proud of his birthplace, and the happy days of growing up there.

The War Years Recalled

The 1940s

After the triumphant visit of King George and Queen Elizabeth and their cross country tour of 1939, the memory was quickly erased as the clouds of a Second World War came upon us.

The dawning of the 1940s found the whole country changed into a working machine. Ottawa was overflowing with an increased population that spread itself into the outlying suburbs of the city. Homes had to be found. Britannia got its share - cottages that could be winterized and every available house occupied. Young people enlisted in the services, the finest and the best, and those at home worked in many fields of effort.

August 16th, 1940, was a day to remember at the Britannia Boat Club. For months the Ladies Auxiliary planned a "Marine Fete" in aid of the Red Cross. Members worked for weeks making articles for the booths and cooking for the tearoom. Mrs. W.T. O'Regan was a guiding light directing the affair. The outstanding event of the day was to be a visit of H.R.H. Princess Alice, wife of the Governor-General, the Earl of Athlone, who had graciously consented to open the event.

Widely advertised, it attracted hundreds of visitors during the afternoon and evening. It was most exciting to entertain Princess Alice, and how thrilled the convenors were to be presented to her as she was most interested and bought things at the various booths. In the evening, visitors were invited to go for a sail on the lake for a small fee. At the end of a most successful day, the Auxiliary were able to make a most generous gift of over \$1000 to the Red Cross.

These were trying years, and our hours of work increased. So many had members of their family in the services both at home and abroad. Club members were depleted, but the club offered a bright

spot for members of the services who came out to be refreshed. In the summer of 1942, away off in England, boys stationed there felt the call of kindred spirits. And with the dreams of sailboats, tennis, and swimming at the old Club, in some remarkable way, some 17 members of the Boat Club were rounded up for a get-together at the Holborn Restaurant in London. It must have been some effort to get the group together, and for the event Lieut. Donald Kirby was chairman. During the course of the evening these boys stood in silence to remember two gallant members who had laid down their lives, Don Smith and Don McKenna.

And in the war news, time and again newspapers reported on the exploits of Tom Fuller who became known as "The Pirate of the Adriatic".

With the increased population of year-round residents in Britannia, it became apparent that improvements to the village should be made, roads improved and ploughed in winter, and an effort to keep the little brick waiting room clean, as it was being messed up by hoodlums.

As a result, a group of interested men got together to talk things over. The result was a Men's Club known as the Britannia Community Club and a constitution was drawn up, for the improvement of living conditions. Monthly meetings were held at the supper hour in the basement of the Britannia United Church. Their efforts accomplished much, street lighting, repairs to roads, better conditions at Grant School. On December 21st, 1944, a Boys' Club was formed and at its first meeting, some 18 boys were present. Grant School was used for their meetings and the Community Club supplied supervisors. The Community Club did much to provide better living.

Reception for Returned Soldiers of the Area

Early in 1946, this subject was brought up by Club members of the Community Club - to do something for members of the armed forces who had returned. This project called for much planning, and a working committee was formed. A letter was sent to all householders, and later a door-to-door canvas was made to raise money. The response was good and plans were made to have a big affair at Lakeside Gardens on Wednesday, July 24th. A souvenir program, "Britannia Veterans Homecoming Reception", was printed for presentation.

This affair stood out as the Club's outstanding event, and on July 24th, some 800 veterans and their families and citizens swelled the attendance in the old Lakeside Gardens to do honour to those fine young people of the area who had laid down their lives and to those who returned.

The Honour Roll of our Glorious Dead listed – Killed in Action – Robert Acheson, Frederick Blyth, Arthur A. Bussell, W.M. Ellis, A. Forsyth, Dennis Foy, Frank Halcro, Allan Lillico, Grant Morrison, Earl Piche, Keith Richardson, David Roberts, Ned Roberts. Died on Active Service – Ray Snow. Missing – E.H. Viens.

They Served Their Country in Her Hour of Need — Listed by name which numbered over 200.

Settling down after the long war years, the Community Club closely watched the development of the greater Capital Plan, and made many suggestions to ensure better conditions. The Club served its area well before the City of Ottawa took over. The following are members who gave generously of their time: H. Burwash, G. Cuthbertson, Rev. G. Dangerfield, E. Fallis, J. Harrison, I.W. Mix, G. Parker, J.G. Perdue, E.R. Richardson, J. Scott, O. Skuce, J. Watson, H. Stiles, G. White, G. Shannon, E. Hebert, H.R. Moffatt, J. Sheppey, and others. When the City of Ottawa took over in 1950, the Club folded but it did play an important role during the 1940s.

1948 Items from the News

April 28, 1948 - The Britannia Women's Institute was organized with Mrs. G.B. Acres as its first president and Miss E. Taylor as convenor of Historical Research for the Tweedsmuir History.

Britannia Park opened May 15 with complaints about weeds overgrowing on the beach making it unfit for bathing. The question was - what future had the Park?

Extensive building of permanent homes - to eliminate the old cottages with building restrictions.

Drive-in Theatre built at Britannia West on Highway 17.

Bird Sanctuary was created in old Britannia by special act of Parliament, through the efforts of resident John Perdue of the Parks Branch.

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The Year 1949

Passing of old residents - Robert Magee on January 29th, last male survivor of an old pioneer family whose great grandfather, Alex. Magee, came from Ireland 135 years ago and settled on Concession 1 Lot 22f and farmed. Fred Harmer, son of Frederick, Wm. Harmer, whose family came in 1858. Mrs. John Whitton, who lived on Britannia Road for over 50 years. Mrs. George Dagg came from Scotland as a small child, first married James Foley, then George Dagg, lived in Britannia for over 50 years.

The 1940s ended an era. The winds of change were fast developing as the 1950s loomed with a fantastic future.

6

**Ottawa and Britannia:
City Planning in the Making**

Ottawa and Britannia: City Planning in the Making

At this point it is necessary to stand back and take a look at how Britannia fitted into a much larger and ultimately critical pattern of events that affected the Ottawa area after 1950. As urban growth continued, planning of land use and major transportation routes for the area and around Ottawa became a main concern of various levels of government. Planners knew that areas such as Britannia would soon be absorbed into the city. Being so close, Britannia was dealt with in many grand long-term plans for the nation's capital, some of which were carried out and others only aroused the concern of Britannia residents.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier stated at a meeting held at Cartier Square in 1896, that he wished to make Ottawa the Washington of the North.¹ Three years later, the Federal Government concluded that if Ottawa was to become a worthy capital, the unsightly appearance created by its haphazard growth had to be eliminated. As a result, the voluntary Ottawa Improvement Commission (O.I.C.) was created, made up of four members, three named by the Federal Government and another by the City of Ottawa. The Commission's first task was to clean up the banks of the Rideau Canal. It began a park system, but had neither the authority nor the financial resources to do much else.

In response to growing criticism by architects and town planners, the Government of Sir Robert Borden established the Federal Plan Commission, chaired by Herbert S. Holt. Its mandate was to draw up a comprehensive plan looking to the future growth of Ottawa, Hull and surrounding area, and considering convenient arrangements for traffic and transportation, among other things.

The Holt Plan was published in 1916, but nothing came of its recommendations at the time because of the fire at the Parliament Buildings, World War I, and the poor shape of the national budget. In later years, planners studied the report and incorporated many of its recommendations in subsequent plans, which were eventually implemented.

After 1924, the financial condition of the country began to improve and attention again focused on improving the Capital. In 1927, the O.I.C. was reorganized into the Federal District Commission (F.D.C.), with much greater powers and a healthier budget.

After World War II, difficulties began to arise among different parties interested in Ottawa's development so in response the Federal Government took steps in 1945 to increase the responsibilities of the F.D.C. and declared the "National Capital District" to have some kind of central authority to control the planning and development of the area.

At the same time, Jacques Greber, chief architect of the 1937 Paris World Exhibit, was invited back to continue the basic plan he laid out in conjunction with his work on the War Memorial in the late thirties. Greber agreed to come, but only as a consultant to a National Planning Committee, made up of Canadians from across the nation. His Master Plan for the National Capital, or the Greber Plan, projected a far-reaching impact on the whole metropolitan area.

The main recommendations of the plan were the relocation of the railways that ran into the downtown area, the extension of the parkway network, decentralization of the federal public service complexes, the creation of a greenbelt, and the enlargement of Gatineau Park. (Map XVIII)

Britannia had its place in Greber's Plan. As in the last century, its strategic site on a narrow point on the Ottawa River gave the area an important prospective role in the regional transportation network. One of the proposals was the age-old idea of a bridge across the Deschênes Rapids. Schemes for a Deschênes Bridge date as far back as the 1890s when there was interest in building an electric railway line across the rapids. In the thirties, the Reeve of Deschênes approached Nepean Township Council regarding a possible road bridge there, but Nepean did not treat the matter seriously until the late forties when it asked the F.D.C. to consider the project. Moreover, Greber wanted to extend Pincrest Road as part of a ring road system which would carry Highway 16 traffic away from the few existing bridges in the downtown area. Another was the extension of what became the Ottawa River Parkway to link up with the Deschênes Bridge. The same plan called for the removal of the railway tracks and the subsequent construction of the Queensway to take through traffic out of the city centre.

The F.D.C. was succeeded as the federal governments watchdog on the enhancement of the national capital by the National Capital Commission in 1958. The N.C.C. had even a larger budget than its predecessor and greater powers to carry out the major recommendations of the Greber Plan.

While all this was being planned at the federal level, the Province and City were also on the move. In 1946, the Legislature of Ontario passed The Planning Act which provided for the establishment of area planning boards. The following year, Ottawa City Council was successful in obtaining a joint Ottawa Planning Area Board made up of representatives of the City of Ottawa, the Town of Eastview, the Village of Rockcliffe and of several townships including Nepean.

The post-war building boom and projected growth in the Federal Government and local industries led the Ottawa Planning Area Board to report that, to ensure the orderly urban and suburban development and to co-operate with the efforts of the National Capital Planning Committee, the City of Ottawa should consider annexation or the establishment of an interurban administration area. Ottawa City Council adopted the report of the Planning Board and chose annexation. Before annexation could be carried out, local public utilities had to be integrated. The Ottawa Electric Railway Company was in private hands and beyond public control. The City acquired the franchise and physical assets in 1948 and set up an independent commission, the Ottawa Transportation Commission (O.T.C.). In late 1949, the Ottawa Light, Heat and Power Company was purchased and placed under the existing Hydro Electric Commission of the City of Ottawa. A report on water supply and sewage disposal for the area was also accepted by City Council.

The stage being set, City Council applied to the Ontario Municipal Board in 1948 to extend its control through annexation south and west into Nepean Township and, in the following year, to the east. The original 1948 application for annexation included City View, the future Parkwood Hills, Ottawa West, Westboro, Britannia and the farms and other communities in between. Ottawa apparently wanted not only the existing suburban parts, but also the property they knew would be prime targets for subdivision and development, over 12,000 acres of Nepean Township. (Map XIX)

The Ontario Municipal Board accepted Ottawa's annexation proposal, and this triggered a contest between the two municipalities that became an issue of town against country. Nepean Township Council filed its objection, claiming that the unilateral action would antagonize and confuse the planning of the National Capital Area, that Ottawa had nothing to offer the residents of the annexed area except a stab in the back to farmers, that the city had no plans to

extend water and sewer services to the rural areas, that any services provided would be almost prohibitive in terms of cost, and that the resulting higher taxes would be a financial burden on those farmers engulfed by the annexation.

Ottawa offered city fares on the Britannia Line of the electric railway, police and fire protection, city mail services, schools under one board, and sewer and water services sooner than would otherwise have taken place. Nepean considered that roads would have to be hard surfaced in the densely-populated areas as soon as possible, and that assessments would have to be fixed until sewers and water mains were extended to the annexed areas. Ottawa accepted these terms and in 1949, before the issue was settled, recommended the installation of a new trunk sewer along the Ottawa River to Britannia Bay and planned a new underground water reservoir at Carlington.

After a series of closed meetings, the two municipalities suddenly made peace. They agreed upon the annexation of 7,420 acres, only half of the territory originally requested. This coincided with the existing built-up areas of the township, including all the Britannia area except the far end of Belltown. In signing, the Mayor of Ottawa and the Reeve of Nepean turned Britannia from a developing residential area in the still predominantly rural Nepean to a rather backward residential area at the edge of urban Ottawa.

In the face of this annexation flurry, orderly planning, one of the objectives of the Ottawa Planning Area Board, was being sought. In 1953, the Official Plan of the Ottawa Planning Area was approved by the Ministry of Housing. This plan, which included the Official Plan of Highways, Parkways and Railways, provided the general guideline, the goals and objectives for development. It incorporated many of the Greber Report suggestions including those pertaining to the Britannia area: the route linking Highway 17 and Toronto via Highway 16, the Britannia-Deschênes Bridge to Quebec, and the extension of the Ottawa River Parkway to the bridge.

According to the Greber Plan, the construction of the Deschênes Bridge was slated for the late 1950s, but it was continually delayed as the federal government's priorities changed and problems were encountered. Planners and residents began to come to grips with the consequences of having the bridge built. The arterial was initially intended to proceed north from the junction of Richmond and Carling through the open lands east of Britannia Village and across

the river. Furthermore, in 1956, the F.D.C. announced that it would relocate Highway 16 so that it would enter Ottawa near the intersection of Pinecrest and the new Queensway. In 1960, Ottawa's Board of Control approved in principle a right-of-way for this and the Deschênes Bridge. It would use the Queensway-Pinecrest interchange and pass under Richmond, interchange with Carling, skirt the west edge of the park, run eastward along the C.P.R. and O.T.C. rights-of-way and then northward along the west edge of the Hydro property.

As time passed, many items in the original plan of the Ottawa Planning Area were not considered appropriate or adequate. Federal policy changed to such a degree that amendments had to be made. It was also found that the old system of city zoning by-laws was cumbersome and obsolete. The free enterprise nature of development was passé as it grew in scale and impact. It was felt the City was part of a grand design, yet to solve planning problems, goals had to be re-examined to ensure that a balance was maintained between expansion, the environment and the needs of the people.

In 1963, the Official Plan of the Ottawa-Carleton Planning Area was amended to include as a subsidiary, the Ottawa Planning Area, which consisted of the area within the limits of the City of Ottawa. Subsequently the City of Ottawa was laid out into districts and neighbourhoods, which were defined by natural features, major roads, geography and land use. It was at this time that Britannia became part of Pinecrest-Queensway Planning District One which figured prominently in the seventies. Major land use amendments and road changes were made. The Official Plan no longer contained the Deschênes Bridge or the connection with Pinecrest Road to Highway 16. Greenview, the northerly extension of Pinecrest, was only a possible transportation link for the future, to Howe street and the location of the proposed parkway to the Deschênes Bridge, now no longer called a freeway, passed on the extreme east side of Britannia Woods rather than being an extension of Britannia Road. (Maps XXII & XXIII)

Large scale development in the City of Ottawa raised a lot of questions concerning landsite zoning. Urban planners and municipal politicians saw a need to regulate the extent of development within Ottawa as well as the size and nature of buildings being built.

Ottawa City Council carried the Official Plan one step further by adopting in 1964 a single comprehensive city-wide zoning by-law, known as AZ-64. It was more specific as to land use than the

Official Plan and also listed restrictions and exceptions. A letter-number zoning scheme was used to indicate the kind of structure that was allowed at a particular location, its size, its height, the density of development, among other details. Prospective builders, both large and small, either had to abide by the by-law or appeal it, and if successful, secure an amendment to suit their plans. (Map XX)

Within two years of the new amended Official Plan, another set of transportation objectives, the Ottawa-Hull Area Transportation Study, was released in 1965. Federal, provincial, municipal government and the C.N. and C.P. Railways participated in the study. They recommended a freeway system and bus-rapid transit and express routes for 1986, based on statements contained in official and master plans, forecasts of growth, etc. The Deschênes Bridge concept and the related parkway link were dropped completely. The Lemieux Island river crossing, closer to the downtown area, was preferred (mentioned in the Greber Plan and as a conceptual link in the 1963 Plan). The Britannia Arterial, along the abandoned railroad track, was recommended as a bus, rapid transit route.

The planning process remains an ongoing mixture of hindsight and foresight, involving several levels of government. While the changing transportation routes have been added and deleted from the landscape, it has had a more important impact on Britannia. While planners maintained their visions of the distant future, residents of Britannia were mindful of the consequences of proposals for roads and development on their neighbourhoods in the nearer future. Their feelings about such plans and the community organizations that evolved out of them were part of an important social development in Britannia that peaked in the 1970s.

7

1950-1970
Catching Up

1950 - 1970

Catching Up

On New Year's Day 1950, Britannia residents awakened as citizens of the City of Ottawa, despite their division over the annexation issue. Some welcomed it for the services they hoped Ottawa would soon provide but most viewed with dismay the prospect of bearing the burden of higher taxes without receiving benefits. Some of those who opposed the move were simply loyal to Nepean Township. New services were in fact long in coming, and old services such as snow plowing were soon thought to have fallen in quality.¹

Annexation did present some important and immediate changes. Taxpayers now voted in Ottawa's Carleton Ward, which extended from the city's new western limits to Churchill and Clyde. This was a large area in which the influence of any one neighbourhood, like Britannia, was bound to be insignificant given the growing population of the West End.

Street names were changed in order to avoid being confused with existing Ottawa streets with the same or similar names. Some of the suggested new names were not acceptable to area residents. Bay Street was originally to become Sand Road; Osborne Avenue was to be Finchley Road; Graham Avenue was to be Switzer Avenue; and Park, was to be Lafreniere. These and others were changed to their present names (Table VIII). Graham was not changed at the time since the residents of that street felt strongly about the association with the family that owned the land immediately before its subdivision. They fought change in the courts but lost. The street name was changed to Maplewood in 1960.²

Ottawa's rapid growth continued after the return of veterans and the sustained growth of the civil service. Farms were subdivided by developers and new single and double homes were constructed. Britannia quickly became an important area for this surging development.

In the early 1950s, Britannia's expansion was directed by local landowners and small scale contractors. The 174-acre estate of George and Peter Bell, which was sold in 1940 to various people, was gradually subdivided. The part of this property owned by W.S.H. Wilson east of the drive-in theatre, between the two provin-

cial highways, was bought and subdivided by George Cooper and Stanley Pajak, two local men, in 1950. They laid out 46 large, deep lots along Roseview, Penny and Richmond Road. Pajak built on and sold some of these lots himself while others were purchased by contractors. A smaller section of the estate along the south side of Richmond was parcelled into 20 lots by A.G. and K.M. Cowan in 1951, and became Highfield Crescent. (Map X)

Larger firms and corporations became involved as the post-war building boom called for development on a grander scale. A.L. Achbar and E.M. Glatt, the developers of Glabar Park near Carlingwood Mall, were primarily interested in filling in the vacant spaces in older Britannia subdivisions. They bought the well-treed, unsold lots of Loma Park and built 100 homes to help ease the housing shortage in the Capital and suburbs.³ The first homes, available in the fall of 1951, were two-storey, three-bedroom dwellings intended for middle-income families.

Large-scale interests were developing the open spaces and expanding westward from central Ottawa. The Honeywell farm was subdivided in 1953 and the nearby McKellar Golf Course was sold and subdivided for several apartment buildings and houses. Carlingwood Shopping Plaza opened in 1955 in the midst of these new neighbourhoods. Carling Avenue superseded Richmond Road as the main artery for the growing population, and a long-term pro-



A 1954 view from Grant School showing Winthrop's Olde Forge, the United Church, Richmond Road and Carling Avenue.

gram of widening the street in anticipation of further expansion and greater traffic in this period.⁴

Towards the end of the fifties, the Campeau Corporation, a rapidly-rising company established after the war by an enterprising Ottawan, acquired the 114-acre Arkell farm and subdivided the part north of the C.N.R. tracks in 1958 to form Queensway Terrace North. Campeau built single family homes on about 300 lots and reserved a site for a public school. Shortly afterwards he extended the subdivision, with about 130 more residential lots along Hanlon, Connaught, Roman and Hopkins Street. (Map X)

These various plans, providing hundreds of new homes in Britannia and other recently annexed parts of Ottawa, fell under municipal government regulation and scrutiny. Nepean Township's last zoning by-law remained in effect until the city passed one of its own in 1953, which repeated the terms of the 1949 Nepean by-law. This was the same year that the official plan of the Ottawa Planning Area was approved.

The following year, City Council passed a by-law stating that subdivision roads and drainage works were to be constructed by and at the expense of the developer. After a subdivision plan was registered, the subdividers were to petition for water and sanitary sewers on all streets. As a result of these provisions and of the national trend towards large subdivisions, the small land developer who simply sold vacant lots gave way to the incorporated builder who erected and sold the homes. The impact of the new pattern was felt in all parts of Ottawa and urban Canada.

Population growth in the Britannia area in the fifties was the greatest it had ever been. Summer cottages were now anomalies. The number of permanent households nearly doubled through the decade from approximately 486 to 915 while the number of summer residents dwindled from 111 to 35 (Table I). The last cottages that were converted to year-round use in the late sixties were situated in Belltown.⁵

While the population grew, the social make-up of Britannia changed little. In terms of religion, the people of Britannia were representative of the major denominations. Approximately 80 per cent were either United, Roman Catholic or Anglican, as they were in the forties.⁶ The Jewish and Roman Catholic communities in Belltown remained very much intact, and there were several Lutheran and Presbyterian and a few Greek Orthodox families.

The most notable change in the people of Britannia was the

passing of the local farm families. The Arkells, Magees and others were going or had gone from the area by 1960. Only the Honourable Richard A. Bell held onto the family home while the remaining lands around it were taken over by new houses.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the City of Ottawa's Department of Planning and Public Works conducted a series of urban renewal studies in a number of locations across the city where it was thought urban renewal action might be warranted. In 1959 the homes in Britannia Village and Belltown were surveyed by the city.⁷ In the village, nearly half of the dwellings were deemed poor or very poor, and 16 percent were considered good, while in Belltown, only 31 percent of the dwellings were poor or very poor and 21 percent were good. The rest were somewhere in between the two extremes.

Three years later, a similar survey revealed that substantial blocks of buildings had been cleared and new doubles, duplexes and single family houses had been erected in both areas.⁸ The provision of



Sipolins townhouse units along the waterfront, 1982.



A small walk-up apartment unit by Sipolins on Jamieson, 1982.

sewers and city water was considered partly responsible for the improvements and it was concluded that urban renewal by the municipality was not necessary at the time because of the swift rate of improvement by private means.

Much of the change noted by the city survey in Britannia Village was the work of Leopold Sipolins, who bought the Jamieson properties in 1960 from Ida, widow of Gerald Jamieson.⁹ Sipolins demolished the Old Mill apartments in the summer of the following year to make way for new waterfront housing. Twenty-seven townhouse rental units were built along the waterfront and some doubles, and duplexes were built along Bradford Street at this site. High-rises were also planned for the spot where the mill had been, with storage for boats and underground parking, but were never built. (Map X)

In the same years, Sipolins subdivided the Jamieson property along the east side of the park and put up small walk-up apartment blocks, doubles and duplexes. Recreation and the peaceful atmosphere of Britannia remained a good marketing strategy for development. The advertisements for Jamieson's parkside tenements boasted quiet tree-surrounded dwellings with exclusive resort facilities, a safe swimming beach and private mooring conveniences.¹⁰ A high-rise was planned but was replaced by the present southernmost block. The local alderman of the day, Howard Henry, was concerned that the building, though limited by the city by-law to 110 feet in height, would dominate the area.¹¹ Sipolins could not begin development on a third parcel of property along Carling west of the park because the National Capital Commission had plans for the Deschênes Bridge and parkway.

Glabar Realty, the partnership of Achbar and Glatt returned to Britannia ten years after building its first homes there. In 1961 this company built doubles and duplexes along extensions of Regina, Don, Conn and Priscilla Streets.

The most ambitious and most contentious building scheme was Assaly's Lincoln Heights. Assaly, like Campeau, was becoming a large-scale developer in Ottawa. Assaly bought the remainder of the Magee farm and outlined plans in 1958, pending the arrival of city services, for Lincoln Heights a luxury housing development of 137 ultra-modern homes, an exclusive club for its residents with various recreational activities, a shopping centre, two 11 storey apartment buildings, office buildings and a motel. By the following year, Assaly had extended Regina Street and Croydon north of Richmond and had constructed some three and four - bedroom

homes for rent with a view of the Gatineau Hills.¹² Other plans were delayed since, in order to accommodate Assaly's plans, the city had to rezone the area along Richmond Road in 1960 in order to permit higher density development and commercial enterprise. The property north of the commercial area on Richmond, south of Regina and west of Croydon was zoned for a 110-foot apartment building. The following year, Assaly applied to the city to build three 17 storey apartment buildings. The city stuck to the provisions of the zoning by-law, and, instead, the seven-storey Le Voyageur Apartments was built there and opened in 1963.



The Voyageur Apartments, 1961.



Poulin Street, looking north from Richmond Road in 1959, before Glabars development was built on the east (right) side of it.

280.



A 1956 view of the Carling Avenue, Richmond Road intersection, looking east, showing the Skuce (left) and Hunter (right) homes and the Imperial Oil service station.



A 1983 view from the same spot.