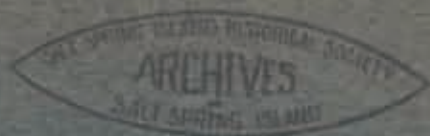


Peep



at

the

Past

with

## THEY PLAYED THE GAME

by

Elsie Worthington

"We wanted to enjoy ourselves, so we had to make our own fun," says Basil Cartwright, an 85 year old Salt Spring pioneer. He recalls that when he came to the Island, in 1904, to farm with his brother in Beddis Road, in his trunk was a soccer ball already blown up, as well as a cricket ball and bat..."I was mad about sport, any kind of sport!" he declares.

Though he found 'organized' sport did not exist, games were being played. Any lack in knowledge of rules, or a polished performance, was made up by enthusiasm. Basil Cartwright introduced team play, but the rules remained flexible. Captains were chosen by a toss of a coin, on the field. Progress was slow but in time, Islanders boasted a champion soccer team.

On one occasion the Island group played a crew from the warship, HMS Rainbow, anchored for a three-day visit in Ganges Harbor. Navy won 3-2! The losers promptly challenged the English boys at rugby, trouncing them 29-0! Local morale was further restored by Rainbow being soundly beaten at grass hockey!

Playing games with the sailors was only a part of the fun. Basil tells of dances held for the visitors, with the ladies in evening gowns and tiaras; the men in "tails", or in dinner jackets. "We wouldn't get to bed for three nights in a row," he laughs, "dancing went on until 4 in the morning, and milking had to start at 4:30".

One soccer game stands out clearly in Mr. Cartwright's memory. During play, a sailor on the sidelines called "Look out they're going to sandwich you". Basil put his foot firmly on the ball and just leaned back...his two opponents collided head-on!

He recalls an amusing incident at his own expense. It followed a cricket match over at Cowichan. The Island team was waiting for a return trip and had a few drinks to help to pass the time. "Well, I must have had one too many," Basil laughs, "it was dark when I got home, and I had to gather the eggs. I opened the henhouse door, and there was an egg down on the floor. I bent to pick it up - it had vanished! I stood up - it was back! I bent down again, it was gone! I had to stop and think about that...turned out the "egg" was laid by moonbeams shining through a knothole!"

Salt Spring women were just as keen about sport as were the men...wearing skirts that touched the ground: playing on mixed teams, they gave as much as they took! "And more," Basil says, "they did very well."

An Annual Regatta, championship swim meets, duck hunt races (where a duck is caught with bare hands, in the water), log rolling...log-cutting, picnic sports, tennis and badminton, all flourished in those days. And people improvised! If you needed a stick for grass hockey, you'd use curved cedar root. A tennis court, any one of thirty on the island before World War 1, could have been made from clam-shell and gravel.

Philosophical about spectator sport today, Basil says, "We had to make our own fun! Now people watch television. I don't blame them, but they miss so much," he says it wistfully. 30

BETWEEN TWO CENTENNIALS

A DREAM FULFILLED

by

Elsie Worthington

In 1958, British Columbia celebrated its Centenary. Every city, town and village in the province had its centennial project.

Salt Spring Island couldn't decide whether to build a museum to house local artifacts, or a library. A compromise was reached...the log museum would be erected; part of the building would be reserved for a library. The location was to be next to Mahon Hall, where the School Board Office now stands.

A cement foundation was laid, but a series of discouraging setbacks eventually thwarted the museum plan. Residents voted the remaining funds \$1103.00 to the year old, go-ahead library association. The funds were promptly invested as the start of a library building fund.

Meanwhile a tiny library had been started in a small room at the back of Mouat's Store. A hard-working group had collected 1300 books and cash donations for the project.. They built some shelves...and the dream of a Salt Spring Island Library became a reality.

With high courage and \$7.68 in the bank to meet \$15. minimum monthly expenses, the Library Group, in November 1959, proudly opened up the doors. From that day, the Salt Spring Island Library never looked back.

The allocation of the Centennial funds was a great morale booster for the Library Group. All too soon their young project had begun to develop a severe case of growing pains. Only a fraction of its fast accumulating stock could be placed on shelves. The need of a children's section was apparent; but one small shelf had to suffice. The library must have a building and soon!

The building fund had grown to \$3000. With their same high courage, the Library Committee bought a sturdy building in Ganges which had formerly been a boat-building workshop...the acquisition of the property left only \$600. in the bank, but undaunted, the Library Board set about transforming the large workshop into a modern library. The new building was opened by Mrs.W.A.C.Bennett, February 1, 1964, little more than four years from that other proud day, in the tiny back room of Mouat's Store.

So thanks to the instigator of the project and first treasurer of the library, Mrs.S.H. Hawkins (now retired), whose unflagging spirit was supported by other hard working committee members, Canada's 1967 Centennial Celebration found Salt Spring Island with a modern debt-free, handsome Library...housing 9000 volumes well indexed, a reference section, reading room, an office and children's corner.

That's a mighty fine project to accomplish from scratch in nine years! And it's only one example of Salt Spring Islander's zeal.... for turning dreams into reality!

## WHERE GRANDFATHER WENT TO SCHOOL

by

Elsie Worthington

Located a short distance behind and to the right of Beaver Point Community Hall on the Beaver Point Road is a little red schoolhouse, last of the small schools on the island to close when the new larger "consolidated" school was built in Ganges in the 1930's.

The little school stands at the top of a neatly-mown hillside, where the grass is white with daisies in springtime. The building is not visible from the road, so when one comes upon it from a tree-lined trail, the sight of this small red school, with its white trim, set in a sea of tiny white flowers fills one with delight and nostalgia... a longing for the time when life was more simple.

The schoolroom is furnished just as it was when grandfather went to school, and there are any number of the grandfathers on Salt Spring Island who were students in that school room. There is the heating plant...the pot-bellied stove. There are the 'black' blackboards. Even the chalk is there, replenished no doubt by caretakers (unpaid), who watch lovingly over the tiny building. There are exercise books, scrap books, maps and other instruction aids, all revealing conscientious work by both teacher and pupils.

Quaint furnishings in the small school enchant the visitor and bring back happy memories to the "old" boys and girls who learned the three r's in this schoolroom. Above the end blackboard, a large plaque bears the names of all the pioneers, who built the place almost a century ago. The descendants of some of these fine, early families are well-known highly respected present day citizens of Salt Spring.

During recent restoration work done by Salt Spring Island Lions Club, a copy of "British Columbia Public School Report 1892-93" was brought to light. The antique document, a story in itself, is now in the possession of Gulf Island School Board.

The blackboards are covered with names of visitors, many from far places. We Salt Spring Islanders appreciate our visitors who enjoy looking around the tiny school then thoughtfully, leave its interesting relics intact for others to enjoy also. We welcome you and we hope that you will come again.

