

# Statement of Significance

5642 Mintie Road, Electoral Area B, Halfmoon Bay BC

**Halfmoon Bay General Store ~ 1937, 1939 & 1949**



Prepared by Elana Zysblat, CAHP :: Ance Building Services :: September 2019

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## Statement of Significance



### Description of the Historic Place

The Halfmoon Bay General Store comprises of three one-and-one-half storey wood-frame commercial buildings clustered together on Mintie Road in Halfmoon Bay on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia. The grouping is sited at the water's edge, one bay east of Priestland Cove and the Halfmoon Bay wharf - all three structures face the road with their backs to the bay. Two gabled buildings stand on either side of Redrooffs Trail which leads down to the water, and a third, false-fronted building, is attached to the south-western gabled building.

### Heritage Value of the Historic Place

Established in 1937 as a general store for the small, rural community of Halfmoon Bay, the Halfmoon Bay General Store compound is valued as a continuous commercial, communications, social, cultural, and political hub for the community since its inception. The unincorporated, rural community has always had very few public amenities, and beyond its crucial role as a retail and business centre, the General Store has additionally been cherished and perceived as a physical and social gathering place in Halfmoon Bay. Most often sponsored or enabled by the storeowners over the decades, community parties, meetings and events were regularly held at the store, as were the odd music lessons and beauty and health services.

Its siting right at the water's edge stands testament to the settlement's early decades with no road and later limited road access. The place is historically associated with the Union Steamship Co. which had a passenger and cargo stop at the Halfmoon Bay wharf between 1895 and 1950, the All Red Line passenger service (1909-1919) and Gulf Lines (1946-1951), all of which made possible the almost



exclusive delivery of services and arrival of residents and visitors to this spot on the coast until regular car ferry services and highway improvements were introduced to the area in the 1950s.

The Halfmoon Bay General Store is also directly associated, historically and physically, with the former Redrooffs summer resort (1909-1985) which was connected to the store compound across the bay via a trail and footbridge, and was a key economic, social and cultural entity in the existence of the Halfmoon Bay community. It is additionally associated with the late 1930s growth and development period on the Sunshine Coast generally, and in Half Moon Bay specifically, when acres of property once owned by community pioneer Clara Lyell, including the store property, were subdivided, sold and developed in the years after her passing in 1933.

The Halfmoon Bay General Store is further valued for its historical connection with industrial economic activities on this area of the Sunshine Coast - logging, ranching, fishing and seasonal tourism, through the property's services and various owners over the decades. This connection was in part made possible by the store's role in local travel, transportation and delivery routes as a stop or depot on - Tait's/Mervyn's Taxi service (est 1939), the former rural postal route, and the passenger and freight bus service from Gibsons to Pender Harbour (est by Cecile Lawrence c. 1943, later known as Sechelt Motor Transportation Co. from 1945) - services that were crucial in the functioning of Halfmoon Bay and its nearby coastal communities.

Apart from its important role in providing basic necessities and goods to local residents, the Halfmoon Bay General Store held the rural mail delivery service licence starting in 1950 and for several years until 1989 functioned as the local post office. It is also remembered as one of the first and only places with phone service in the Halfmoon Bay community.

The Halfmoon Bay General Store is significant as the longest running business in Halfmoon Bay, as one of the longest running on the Sunshine Coast, and as a source of income and housing to a string of local merchants and their families for over 80 years. As many of the storeowners were immigrant families from diverse ethnic backgrounds, this place illustrates both the diversity of the Halfmoon Bay demographic over the years and the strong connection between immigrant families and the general store vocation in BC. The Halfmoon Bay General Store is valued for its connection with local Halfmoon Bay families - Wall, Tait, Beasley, Burrows, King, Graves, Clark, Mahar, Schultz, Nelson, Lucas and Shoemaker, and the historic Tait House which survives in the vicinity of the store.

The store buildings themselves, with evidence of living quarters, retail and warehouse functions, illustrate typical vernacular wood-frame buildings along the BC coast from the first half of the 20th Century.

## Character-Defining Elements

- Original location on current Mintie Road the water's edge in Halfmoon Bay
- Continuous retail and residential use since 1937
- Redroofs Trail between store (B) and original warehouse building (A) and evidence of former footbridge connecting to it
- Commercial/residential form and scale as expressed in the one-and-one-half storey buildings with commercial doors, signage, display windows and evidence of former loading doors on building A
- Wood-frame construction



### Building A - original warehouse building

- Commercial form and use
- Medium-pitch front gable roof with exposed wood soffits
- Vertical board and batten wood cladding
- Evidence of full-width loading doors on facade ground floor
- Evidence of loading door on side elevation, facing store building

### Building B - store building

- Dual commercial and residential form and use
- Medium-pitch front gable roof with exposed wood soffits and prominent bargeboard
- Vertical board and batten wood cladding
- Two canted bay windows with divided light wood windows on facade ground floor with full width shed roof above
- Central, partially glazed wood entrance door

### Building C - store extension building

- Commercial form and use - rectangular warehouse building
- Shallow-pitch front gable roof hidden by false fronts at front and rear elevations
- horizontal wide-plank clapboard wood siding
- Rectangular divided-light wood windows on front and sides
- Partially glazed wood entry door

## Research Findings

**Civic address:** 5642 Mintie Road, Halfmoon Bay BC V0N 1Y2

**Legal description:** Lot 6 Block H&J Plan VAP10826 DL 1638 LD 1 Land District 36

**Dates of construction:** 1939 (building A) 1937 (building B) 1949 (building C)



**Builders:** 1937 - Thomas H. Beasley and Thomas Wall. 1949 - Edmund B. Pratt

**Landowners at time of initial development:** Blanche M. Tait and Harry & Lily Sawyer

**Business names:**  
Beasley's Store (1937-1948)  
Halfmoon Trading Post (1948-1952)  
B & J Store (1955-1968 and intermittently until 1994)  
Halfmoon Bay General Store (1992-current)

### Residents/Storeowners at Halfmoon Bay General Store:

**1937-1948** - Thomas & Orma Beasley (three children).

**1949-1953** - Store owned by Ed and Mary Pratt who lived for a short time on the property. Gordon King and family (four children) moved in as store manager starting in 1951, and Mary Kingston (nee Burrows) was the butcher.

**1953-1955** - Store was vacant but the Clarence Nygard family lived at the back.

**1955-1968** - Jim & Billie (Williamina) Graves (two children) and boarders including Charlie Reese.

**1968-1974** - Bill & Rita Clark

**1974-1981** - Ralph & Maria Mahar

**1981-1984** - Hans & Charlotte Schultz

**1984-1989** - George & Maxine Nelson

**1989-1992** - Bill & Uli Lucas

**1992-2018** - Scott & Marian Shoemaker

**2018-current** - Kristen Annable and Peter Pearson



## Current Photographs



**Above:** front view of the two gabled buildings with the Redroofs Trail between them.

**Below:** front view of 1949 extension building, attached to the store building.







Current entrance of store building entrance



The trail between the store and cafe building





**Above:** view of the compound from the water

**Below:** view of the rear deck and rear of the store from the side







Two views of the rear







view of the  
roofline off the  
store exposition  
showing the  
false fronts, front  
and rear.



view of the bay  
and the historic  
Tate House from  
the store.



## Archival Photographs



**Halfmoon Bay in the early 1930s.** The cottage on the left was supposedly the Tait's summer cottage. The gable roofed house with the white trim is the permanent home they constructed in 1931. Between the two the footbridge is faintly visible. Helen McCall photo. Source: Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives



**The footbridge in the early 1930s,** connecting Halfmoon Bay store with Redroofs resort. Helen McCall photo. Source: Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives





**Halfmoon Bay in the late 1930s just before the construction of the Beasley Store.** The footbridge is partially visible on the right. The area circled in red is the future location of the two Beasley buildings. Helen McCall photo. Source: Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives

The Beasley Store circa 1938, recently constructed but not yet painted, with the young family standing in front. The Redrooffs Trail can be seen on the left, just beyond the fence. Source: Beasley family private collection.





Beasley Store delivery truck being hoisted off of the Lady Cynthia Union Steamship onto the Halfmoon Bay wharf in 1939. Source: Beasley family private collection.





The Beasley Store in 1939, now painted with store signs and awning, and a delivery truck recently arrived by ship. The warehouse/garage building is clearly not yet constructed. Source: Beasley family private collection.



The warehouse/garage building recently constructed in 1939, before painting. The gas pump and taxi sign are visible. Orma Beasley stands out front. Source: Beasley family private collection.



**Above:** Tommy & Orma Beasley with sons Bill and Dave outside the store c.1941. The original store entrance door is visible. **Below:** The Beasley Store, living quarters extension and warehouse/garage building in the snow between 1939 and 1948. Source: Beasley family private collection





Two photos of the store circa 1949, soon after Ed Pratt bought the business from the Beasleys.

**Right:** Bill Mervyn ran the taxi service his father-in-law started, from around 1945 until 1950. He is standing outside the store, the garage in the background, now both painted in white, a new paint job likely applied by Pratt in 1948 or 1949.

Source: Mervyn family private collection

**Below:** The store (middle) the warehouse/garage building (left) and the flat-roofed addition (right) built by Pratt in 1948 or 49. The addition is not yet painted, but the store and garage building are now light coloured, likely signifying the change in ownership between the Beasleys and Pratt. The store name has also been changed to Half Moon Trading Post. The bus stop and bus (run by Sechelt Transport) are visible as is the gas pump.

Source: Grant Hanney private collection





Two photos of the store circa early 1960s (front and rear), during the Graves family tenure. Note the dark green colour scheme and the name change to B & J Store, a name which endured into the mid-1990s.



Source: Carson Cooledge/Graves family private collection







A panoramic photo of the footbridge leading from the store property to Redrooffs across the bay.  
Source: Graves family private collection



The store between 1974 and 1981 during the Mahar family tenure. Note the colour change to brownish red and the change of the sign location. Source: Bob Mahar private collection

## Brief Site Chronology

### Since time immemorial

The Halfmoon Bay area is in the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Nation, specifically the shíshálh people, from which the town of Sechelt took its name. Archaeological studies have recorded 38 recognized sites containing shell middens, rock shelters and stone fish traps, now protected by the provincial Heritage Conservation Branch.

### Late 1700s

European exploration of the area began by the Spanish (Captain Galiano and Captain Valdes) and the British (Captain Vancouver).

### 1890s - early 1900s

Vancouver resident, Charles Priestland, pre-empted D.L.1638 in 1892 in what would become known as Halfmoon Bay (125 Acres). In 1894, his 32 year-old wife Clara Priestland left him and settled alone in Halfmoon Bay which was to be her home for more than 40 years. In 1908 Clara purchased D.L.1638 from Charles for \$300.00, including water frontage right at the head of Halfmoon Bay. Later known by her subsequent husband's name, Clara Lyell, she built a log house (on Lot A, the site where the historic Tait House now stands) and became postmistress for the tiny community, a position she held from 1904 until 1931. In her early days at the Bay, the Post Office was known as Welcome Pass. Other non-natives began to pre-empt and settle along the coast here for the ease of water transport to Vancouver - with logging, fishery and commercial canneries being the major early activities in the Halfmoon Bay area.

### 1895

The first record of Union Steamship activities in the area, providing passenger, mail and freight service. The Union Steamship Company played a major role in the development of the area at this time, providing a vital link to the outside world.



A Union Steamship Co. ship approaching the Halfmoon Bay wharf in the 1930s. Helen McCall photo. Source: Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives



**1913**

**Redrooffs Resort** formed at the site of what is now Coopers Green Park, Halfmoon Bay, located at District Lot 1427 Block 8. The property contained a general store and six log cabins.

**1910-1913**

The Bay was surveyed in 1910 and the name "Half Moon Bay" first appeared on Admiralty Chart No. 2078 published in 1912. Logging started in the area in 1913 by Gordon Development Co., followed by Halfmoon Bay Logging Company in the 1930s.

**1920s**

A community of 38 to 100 permanent residents made up Halfmoon Bay which contained the summer resort with a store, a school and a post office with a government telegraph office. According to the 1921 census, its residents either worked in logging, ranching or served the nearby Redrooffs resort. The resort store, built in 1912, was initially run by Ernest Baden (Ben) Powell (reputedly a nephew of Sir R. Baden-Powell) who by 1920 was aided by retired Imperial Army Sergeant George King (1855-1940). Both men resided in living quarters at the back of the Redrooffs store. When Powell retired to England in the mid-1920s local resident Thomas Henry Beasley joined George King on staff as store managers and off-season caretakers of the resort. Part of their job was to drive a small boat to meet the Union steamer out at the bay, and bring passengers and freight to and from it.



Sergeant George King. Source: Virginia Dalton private collection



May 2, 1914 ad in the Province newspaper



Half Moon Bay listing in Wrigley's British Columbia Directory for 1921

## 1925

George Cormack (1883-1957) and Sadie Priestland (1885-1950), niece to Clara Lyell, occupied 16 acres of land gifted to them by Clara, where they opened a small store. George Cormack had been a resident of Halfmoon Bay since 1919, working in both logging and ranching. He married Sadie in Vancouver in 1924. Their store operated as a commissary that mainly served the logging camps. This shop, at the top of the Halfmoon Bay wharf, would be the location of the community's post office for decades to come.

## 1920s - 1930s

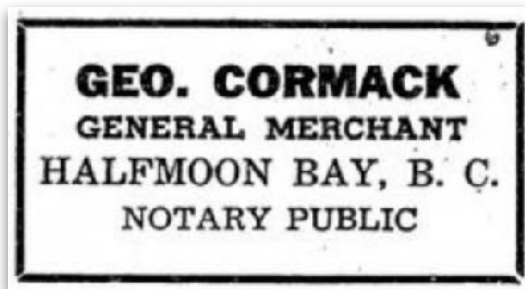
More cabins built at Redrooffs resort on the "Green". A wharf was built in front of the resort store. This helped to bring guests to the resort who were arriving via Union Steamship vessels from Vancouver or the *S. S. Selma* belonging to the All Red Line. The Halfmoon Bay region was not connected to the rest of the Sechelt Peninsula by road until 1928 - transport until then was by water. The new road from Sechelt to Halfmoon Bay followed not the present route, but what is now known as Trout Lake Road. The first car to drive from Halfmoon Bay to Sechelt on the new gravel road was Thomas Wall's 1927 Dodge Bros. 128 Coupe. The passengers were Thomas Wall, his 2-year old daughter Pat and the road engineer, Dalgass. These infrastructure improvements, which may have sparked the big population growth in the 1930s, brought significant changes to Halfmoon Bay.

## 1931

The Post office was moved from Halfmoon Bay (in Mrs. Clara Lyell's home at Welcome Pass) to the Redrooffs resort in a room next to the Redrooffs Trading Co. store. William Ernest Milne, the manager of the resort, succeeded Clara Lyell as postmaster for the community.

## 1937

The Post office returned to Halfmoon Bay where it was incorporated into the small commissary/store run by the Cormacks. George Cormack was appointed postmaster.



Ad in the Oct 17, 1945 Coast News



Cormack's store in Halfmoon Bay circa 1930s.  
Source: Vince Parkin private collection



### 1937

The Halfmoon Bay General Store was built by Thomas Henry Beasley (1903-1995) with the help of Thomas Wall, his friend and former off-season employer at the Wall farm. England-born Tommy Beasley grew up in North Vancouver. His mother was a housekeeper for some of the wealthier families on the North Shore. When he was in high school, he and his mother took jobs working at the Redrooffs resort where many of her clients would spend the summer. It was at Redrooffs where he met his future wife, Orma Tait, whose family were regular guests. Orma's father, Thomas Hilton Tait, nephew of wealthy lumberman William Tait (for whom Glen Brae Mansion was built in First Shaughnessy) was the manager of E. C. Atkins in Vancouver, but moved his family to Halfmoon Bay soon after his daughter's marriage to Beasley in 1931.



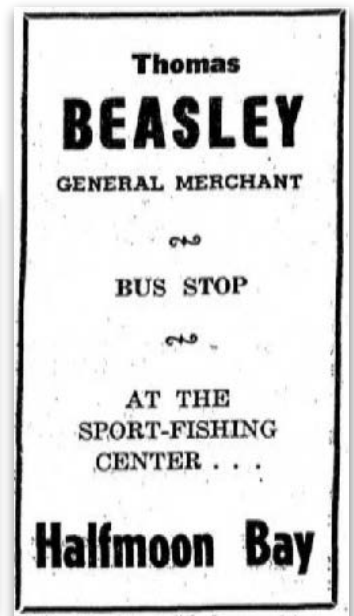
Orma Beasley standing in front of the newly constructed warehouse/garage building and the Beasley delivery truck c.1939. Source: Beasley family private collection

Amongst various properties the Tait's bought from Clara Lyell, they purchased the store lands (then known as Lots H, J & K) where Beasley built two side by side buildings - first, a general store with living quarters, and following about 2 years later, a warehouse and garage, which would also house his father-in-law's taxi service and a gas pump. The two gabled buildings stood on either side of the Redrooffs Trail that led over the footbridge to the resort. This meant the store property was located on the most strategic pedestrian path in the community.

The general store filled a gap for the community, where until then, only limited provisions were available from the Cormack's post office/commissary and the seasonal resort store. Beasley's Store sold everything from groceries, fresh produce and fresh meat to clothing, fishing and sports equipment, and it delivered as well, using the business' Chevrolet Panel Van, which arrived on board a steamship. Its services even included a women's hair salon and dress shop run by Beasley's sister-in-law, Lillian Mervyn (nee Tait). During its early years, the Beasley Store had one of the only phone lines in Halfmoon Bay.



Tommy & Orma Beasley with sons Bill and Dave outside the store c.1941. Source: Beasley family private collection



Ad in the Oct 17, 1945 Coast News

In the same year the store was built, a 'Citizens Committee of Halfmoon Bay' lead by J. Sutherland, Thomas Wall and C. E. Moorehouse, opposed the federal postal office's decision to appoint George Cormack and not Thomas Beasley as postmaster, but the decision was never changed.

Beasley had been a full-time resident of Halfmoon Bay since 1925 and apart from working at the Wall farm offseason, he had also managed the Redrooffs Resort store and served as offseason caretaker of the resort.

Beasley was a well-known badminton player who played in professional matches at the Redrooffs Hall, as did his wife Orma and the Mervyns. Thomas Beasley suffered from recurring pneumonia in the wet coastal winters, and on a family trip to Kelowna in 1947, he discovered the positive effects the Okanagan's drier climate had on his well-being. Beasley sold the store to Edmund B. Pratt in 1948 and the family moved to Kelowna in 1949.

Bill Mervyn outside the store, with the warehouse/garage building in the background (married Lillian Tait). Bill took over the taxi service in the 1940s.

Source: Mervyn family private collection.



Ad in the Coast News Jul 12, 1946



Ad in the Coast News Sep 24, 1948





### 1948-1953

Ed Pratt owned the store but hired Gordon (Gordie) King, previously the Manager at the Gibson's Co-op, as the general manager. Local girl Mary Burrows was the butcher. They renamed the store Halfmoon Trading Post and built a third building as an extension to the store. In 1950, the Post office at Halfmoon Bay (and presumably the store that housed it) burned down and was rebuilt. Pratt was granted a rural postal delivery route licence from Halfmoon Bay to Pender Harbour. Coast News classified ads in 1951 mention that for a while, a VON (Victorian Order of Nurses) nurse, Miss A. Baker, ran clinics out of the Halfmoon Bay Trading Post on Wednesdays; and a public health nurse, Miss Jones, ran clinics from the Trading Post every 2nd Tuesday afternoon. Additionally, Gordie King was congratulated in the newspapers for installing the first hot coffee and sumo dispensers at the store. The business closed between 1952 and 1955 when Pratt sold the property and business.



Mary Burrows and Gordon King in front of the store, likely in 1951. Photo: Sechelt Community Archives # 6.4.30



The store (middle), the warehouse/garage building (left) and the flat-roofed addition (right) built by Pratt in 1949. Source: Grant Hanney private collection

## 1955 - 1968

The Halfmoon Bay Store reopened under the new management of Billie and Jim Graves, and was renamed the B & J Store. Immigrants from Australia, the Graves had run a store in Vancouver for a few years, but their business location was expropriated for the construction of the new Granville bridge off-ramp. They saw the Halfmoon Bay for sale ads and decided to relocate to the Sunshine Coast. Knowing that the previous business model wasn't sustainable, the Graves built a large meat cooler in the rear of the taxi building (they designed the cooler themselves using a book from the library). This allowed them to significantly expand the meat selection and delivery service to Thormanby Island, which became a significant additional source of income during the summer months. They also ordered

and sold shoes, clothes, boots, hardware - anything locals needed, and took orders for items to be picked-up in other businesses in Sechelt and even Vancouver, to keep their customers and maintain a steady business all year round. The Graves built an extension to the living quarters at the rear of the store.



Ad in the June 23, 1955 Coast News



The B & J Store in the early 1960s. Source: Carson Cooledge/Graves family private collection



The B & J store was a community hub, screening National Film Board films for the community's children, hosting an annual New Year party/open house and enabling music lessons to be taught by Mary Brook in their living room. The family regularly took care of the Redroofs Trail maintenance, even though it was government property. Amongst many other roles in the business, Billie (Williamina) was the butcher. B & J Quality Meats gained a reputation of being very high-quality and well-aged and became popular with locals and summer visitors in the region. They also offered meat-aging services in their cooler for hunters. The Graves kept tabs for all the local residents and in several cases, ended up getting paid in property when people didn't have the cash to pay their debts. In fact, when they sold a portion of the store property & business in 1968, due to Jim's health issues, to Bill and Reta Clark (the remainder was sold to the Nelson's in 1984) they accepted property in lieu of cash payment.



The store buildings as seen in the 1960s. Note the view of the Redroofs Trail between the two gabled buildings. Source: Carson Cooledge/Graves family private collection

**1968-1974** The store was owned and run by Bill and Rita Clark

**1974-1981** The store was owned by Ralph & Maria Mahar. Maria Mahar was the principal storekeeper. Ralph Mahar was very active in local community initiatives, especially as a leader in the business community. Mahar was instrumental in getting the Halfmoon Bay Fire Hall established.



The store buildings as seen during the Mahar's tenure. Source: Mahar family private collection

**1981-1984** The store was owned by Hans and Charlotte Schultz

**Throughout the 70s and 80s** under new owners, the store was still known as the B & J Store. A liquor licence was obtained shortly after the Graves sold. The general store functioned often as a voting (polling) place and for election related community meetings. Tickets for community events were sold at the store.

**1984-1989** The store was owned by George and Maxine Nelson. During this period there was a separate post office room within the store and Maxine Nelson was the postmistress. There were about 600 people on the mail delivery route and about another 50 who picked up their mail in the store. The mail was sorted in the store and then delivered by Pete Tchaikovsky. The Nelsons started a children's fishing derby in conjunction with the Halfmoon Bay Annual Fair. This became quite popular with kids of all sizes with prizes for the largest minnow, crab, boot, or whatever else might befall a fish hook. Ex-premier Gordon Campbell's wife, Nancy, owned a summer home by Coopers Green and she was often a volunteer BBQer for the event. This event still continues.

**1989-1992** Still known as B & J Store, with owners Bill and Uli Lucas.

**1992-2018** Owned and run by Scott & Marian Shoemaker. Marian Shoemaker ran a beauty salon at the rear of the store for many years.



Throughout the 1980s and 90s classified ads for the Coast News newspaper could be submitted at the store, along with other local general stores on the Sunshine Coast.



Dec 16, 1991 Coast News newspaper

**Today** The Halfmoon Bay General Store is often referred to as the 'heritage' or 'historic' general store. It remains a community gathering spot with a grocery store, liquor sales outlet, cafe (in the old taxi/garage building) and great ice cream.



## **Research Resources**

### **Books and Publications**

BC Ministry of Transportation and Highways. Frontier to Freeway: A short illustrated history of the roads in British Columbia

Gillis, Rob. draft chapters for history of Halfmoon Bay book.

Historic editions of Coast News, Times Colonist, Vancouver Sun and Province newspapers

Leslie, Rosella M. 2001. The Sunshine Coast: A Place to Be. Heritage House Publishing

Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives. 2003. Helen McCall's Community Album. Regal Printing

Tinkley, Mary. 1971-72. History of Halfmoon Bay articles in the Sechelt Peninsula Times newspaper.

Nov. 25, Dec. 1, Dec. 8, Dec. 15 and Dec. 22, 1971; Jan. 12, 1972

### **Websites and webpages**

[Ancestry.ca](http://Ancestry.ca)

<https://shishalh.com/video/the-shishalh-story/>

<https://www.bigpacific.com/destinations/halfmoonbay.html>

<http://www.garylittle.ca/history/redrooffs.html>

Sechelt Community Archives

### **BC and National Archives**

Indexes to births (1854-1903), marriages (1872-1938), deaths (1872-1993), colonial marriages (1859-1872) and baptisms (1836-1888). Archival photographs. Government of Canada Censuses for BC

### **Regional District of Sunshine Coast Community Heritage Register**

#### **Interviews**

Rob Gillis (who also made possible the contact with the below Halfmoon Bay residents)

Dick Derby

Carson Cooledge (nee Graves)

Mary Kingston (nee Burrows)

Virginia Dalton

Grant Hanney

#### **Interviews and correspondence with**

David Beasley

Gil Mervyn

Blanche Von Paul (nee Beasley)

Maxine Nelson

#### **Site visit July 2019**