

TEXADA'S RURAL MAIL DELIVERY

By 1897 mining activity on Texada Island had drawn a population sufficient to warrant establishing a Post Office in Van Anda. However, the once weekly arrival of mail and parcels via the Union Steamships was proving inadequate for the expanding population.

In addition the growing population centred at Blubber Bay's limestone operations also required mail service.

In 1909 young Bill Young got the contract for the Blubber Bay mail route using his home-built 8hp boat, *Comeback*. Stormy weather, however, meant a vigorous hike down forest and shoreline trails via Sturt Bay, the Lagoon, past Eagle Cove and Loyal Mine to Blubber Bay. He had no time to spare as he was committed to returning to Van Anda for the 10am ship departure!

In a 1900 article Victoria's newspaper, *The Colonist*, had already called for "better mail service" for Texada, stating that "a road should be built at once" connecting the two communities. In 1910 George McLeod's crew completed a plank road, making Bill's life easier. (Blubber Bay finally got its own PO in 1912.)

The farming community on the "High Road" was not to be ignored. A Post Office was established in McElroy's home in 1914. It operated until 1931 when Central Road was built all the way to the Bell farm. This allowed for direct mail service by road from Van Anda.

The Devaney kids at Davie Bay were delighted. The hike uphill to the Bell farm to collect their mail was easier and safer than rowing 24 miles roundtrip to Lasqueti Island.

For 10 years Haddon Burditt used the back of his truck to deliver Central Road mail along with cuts of home-raised meat. Alex Leaper took over the route later. Rural residents enjoyed the chance to gossip and were eager to speculate on their neighbours' packages.

In the 1960's when Texada Mines was in production, Canus Services Ltd operated the post office in the company's Commissary in Gillies Bay. As the town grew mail was delivered to roadside boxes.



The photo shows: Hilda Foisey (rear L) distributing mail to (L to R) Mrs Dohn, Dr McCallum, ?, ? and Dr Sanderson.

Rural delivery continues to be an essential service on the island.

Thank-you and best wishes to Carol Fisher who retired last month after delivering the rural mail for the last 45 years.