

July 20, 2014 (June letter)

Dear Samantha,

I love that you are working as a park supervisor – mostly because your Grandmother did this as well. She was a bit older – about 18 and 19 years old. She worked for two years in Vancouver parks. She should be the one telling these stories, but since she is busy I will give it a try and pass it by her to make sure I remember correctly. You can tell her additions since I will put them in italics.

The first year (the year she graduated from High School) she worked in a park in Chinatown (Maclean Park). *There were plenty of little kids but also some older guys (“China Boys” they were called because they came from Hong Kong). The ‘park’ was divided between a High School where the older kids and the China Boys hung out because of a basketball court and an empty lot with a trailer for a club house where the younger kids hung out.*

I have a few photos from a party that she attended with them near the end of her tenure at the park. I expect you will appreciate the clothing styles.



Fran, the “China boys”, and their friends. Why is she holding on so tight?



This was how we danced in those days!

The following year she was at a park in the Italian section of town. Her father told a story about how she would bring the basketball team’s uniforms home to wash. He laughed how busy she was on their behalf. Fran’s story was that they foolishly washed them all in the same batch so they came out pink because of the red sweaters – so she brought them home to make sure they were done properly.

This was a real park with trees and a clubhouse, swings, a sand box, teeter-totters, and a field the older boys used for soccer.

I don’t have any photos of that summer (except for one of Fran and Nick – her boyfriend during the summer). I didn’t know who the other two people in the photo are, but Fran added the following comment. *Geoff lived up the street from me and he is with a girl from the park (I think). We were out on some sort of date. Nick is wearing my school sweater. I never got it back.*



Geoff, his girlfriend, Nick, and Fran

Fran organized a party for the teens from the Italian park that year. I don't have any photos, but it was famous for the fact that there were 6 cop cars that turned up! I heard the story from Fran and Jack (*both Jack and Dorothy were home while the party was taking place*).

*Jack was out cleaning up beer bottles from the lawn when the cops showed up.* The cops showed up because a number of the party-goers were confronted by a neighbour waving a gun and demanding that they stop peeing in his yard. The neighbour also thought they were making too much noise.

As soon as the gun appeared someone phoned in the incident to the police and the troops arrived. By the time the cops left things had calmed down, the loud music was off, and most of the revellers had left. *The following day we learned that one of the revellers was picked-up several blocks away drunkenly trying to get into someone's car.*

This was also the summer of Joe Cornuto! I don't think I need to tell you this story since Fran filled you in on our trip.

As you can see, your grandmother's experiences as a park supervisor were enough to keep the story-tellers in business for quite a while. That's even without elaborating on her

other parties (when she was working at the White Spot). I will leave those to another time – or better yet – you can get her telling them herself!

I hope your summer adventures are less 'adventurous' than Fran's – at least with respect to the cops and Cornuto. Perhaps you will have some stories to tell of your own once the summer is finished. I hope I get to hear some.