

1914 1925
AS I REMEMBER NANOOSE BAY

Sometimes when I'm day dreaming, doing nothing,
A distant sound will take me away.
Like magic, to the northwest I'm transported,
And once again I'm back in Nanoose Bay.

Cut in on the east side of the island,
The Indians had named it, so they say.
This inlet was a peaceful natural haven,
They liked it, and they named it 'Nanoose Bay.'

From two months, past my tenth year, I have lived there,
Those precious days of childhood I recall.
My mom and dad, our house and pets, our garden,
Surrounded by those maple trees so tall.

We were first of families to live there,
Nestled on the northwest hillside shore.
A company owned the homes, employed my father,
Giant powder works supplied the noise of war.

Other folks with children came to live there,
Most names and faces now just fade away.
But it seems to me, we has such good times
In growing up together by the bay.

Ferguson's, the Watson's and McKenzies,
The Devonshires, the Barfoot's, Collins too.
Turner's, Stratton's, Cleggs, the Beers and Crosses,
Parks and Suey Chong to name a few.

The Nanoose School was few miles from our village,
The company truck would drive use to and fro.
The driver picked us up and down at the milk house,
And safely drove us through wind, rain or snow.

The village had a lake and field for outings,
Dominion Day meant picnics and some fun.
Tug-o-wars and contests of endurance,
For years I prized a knife that I had won.

The company boarding house was used for dances,
They even hired a band that cost a lot.
We kids would skulk about to watch the old folks,
As they danced a waltz or a fox trot.

The Chinese workers had their separate housing,
On Chinese New Year how they'd celebrate.
They invited all the families to their party,
And gave out food and gifts at every plate.

Special names were given different places,
Indian or Spanish, English, Scotch.
But the rugged mount that rose behind the village,
To everyone t'was simply called 'the notch.'

On a clear day we would hike up to the notch top,
Might barely see Vancouver 'cross the way.
Below steamed ships to near or distant places,
To Comox or to far off Mandalay.

Across the bay a lumber mill named Red Gap,
We'd see it from our window clear and bright.
We'd hear the whine of distant buzz saws working,
As the glow of sawdust burner lit the night.

We'd also see the railroad 'cross the water,
Victoria to Courtenay was its route.
The engine showed off fire box and smoke stack,
We'd hear its distant bell and haunting toot.

A big event was driving to Nanaimo,
The round trip took a good part of the day.
What with flats and unexpected motor trouble,
Along with lots of stops along the way.

The last few miles to Power Point had problems,
The drive with low filled tank could be a curse.
The steep gate hill prevented gas from flowing,
So sometimes dad would drive up in reverse.

In Vancouver how we all enjoyed the theatres,
Pantages or Keith Orpheum acts and show.
Magicians, dancers, comics, jugglers, singers,
My eyes were brighter than the marquee's glow.

My Dad knew lots of songs, and how he'd sing them,
I think he yearned to be in vaudeville.
'Singing Scott' was famous 'round the village,
At parties Dad was always on the bill.

In nineteen twenty-five the company closed down,
Transferred to James Island, but short stay.
Then in three months, off to California,
And waved a sad good bye to Nanoose Bay.

I hope there still are others who remember,
That happy little village by the bay.
Like Brigadoon I'd like to see it come back,
Once more to see my old friends for a day.

Of course those days have left us all forever,
Nostalgia's only mental souvenirs.
It's fun to gather special bits of memory,
That recall good times of passing years.

If you've ever see a far west golden sunset,
As it shines on mountain snow caps far away.
While below the same scene sparkles in the water,
Then you've surely seen my Nanoose Bay.

William Arthur Scott -1986
(Now living in Hollywood, California)