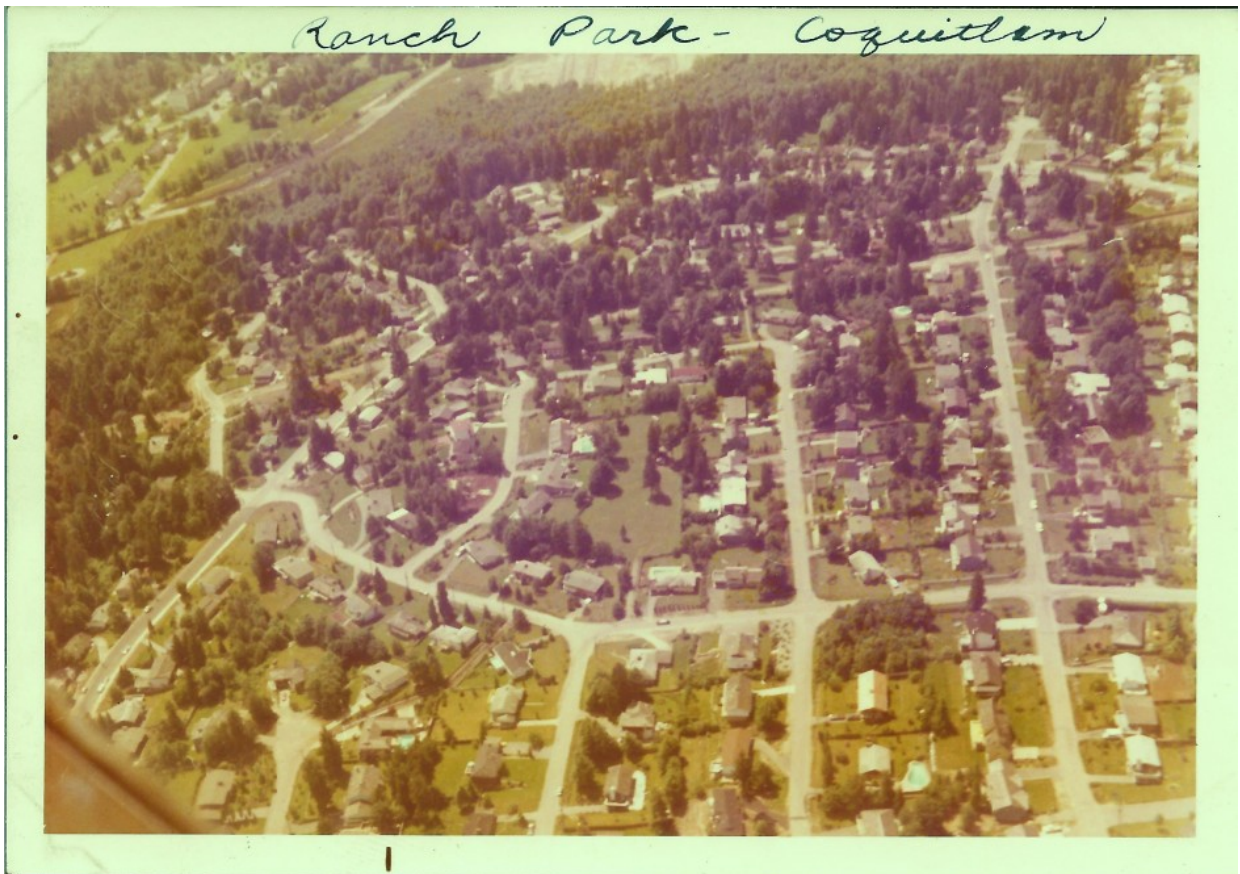




Growing Up in Ranch Park in the 1960s

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Lazy A and the surrounding streets were filled with young families. There were so many children of every age, shape and size. We were like one big family. There were no play dates in those days, you just went outside and you immediately found someone to play with. Or you would knock on their door and out they would come ready to play. Our mothers knew we were around somewhere.

Ranch Park was very isolated in the 1960s. There were no corner stores in Ranch Park. There were no services of any kind. Harry's Corner, which was an old dilapidated gas station, was at the corner of Westwood and Dewdney

Trunk. In the 1960s, Westwood was the Lougheed Highway. There were still farms along Dewdney Trunk. Children who lived on those farms went to school with us. During the summer when we were bored, we would walk to Como Lake Village to get candy. It was a three-kilometre walk one way.



Ranch Park was surrounded by bush. Oh, the adventures we had. We would cross streams on logs, manoeuvre through swamps, knock down spider webs as we traversed through paths surrounded by giant, moss-covered cedars and endless ferns. Ranch Park Elementary School was surrounded by forest on two sides. Summer nights, the kids in the neighbourhood would just all naturally come together. We would play kick-the-can and hide-and-seek until the street lights came on, which meant it was time to go home.

One winter, when I was probably around six years old, we had a tremendous snowstorm. We often would slide on our sleds, toboggans or crazy carpets down the slopped pathway into Ranch Park. But this particular year, someone decided to slide down Daybreak. So soon everyone was sliding down Daybreak. I'll never forget my father trudging up the hill in his suit carrying his briefcase looking miserable. He couldn't get his sports car up the hill so had to leave it somewhere at the bottom like everyone else. I thought he was pretty cranky that day until a police car with chains came up Daybreak and told us all to go home and told the adults that they should be ashamed of themselves for allowing Daybreak to become a sheet of ice. We all ignored him and basically went back to sledding.

Lazy A is a crescent that surrounds the actual park, Ranch Park. Every summer, the Coquitlam Parks Board put up a shed in the park as in all the other parks in Coquitlam. There was an activity person on site every week day. The shed was filled with every piece of sports equipment you can imagine. Every morning we would all flood into the park. We spent our days there playing every game imaginable. We had field trips once a week to places like Alouette Lake and White Rock.

I am so blessed to have grown up in such a fun and beautiful neighbourhood. Our panoramic view of the Golden Ears, the Pitt and Fraser River Valleys and Mount Baker was spectacular and I wish I had appreciated it more growing up.

- *Images and story submitted by: Kathy Goodridge Poulin*

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