"Derreen" our happy home from October 1, 1892 – October 14, 1921"

Excerpts from the Diary of
Patience Swanton Day (1860? - 1934)

March 12, 1892

On this date we moved to 308 Dallas Road to a furnished house rented from Mr. and Mrs. G.F. Mathews. We spent six very happy months here, and as there was a nice tennis court Dad *(Robert Scott Day 1858-1920)* and I played almost every evening, and we had many nice tennis parties. During this month we bought a beautiful piece of property on Rockland Ave. from Mr. Tom Gore for $3,150. ($1,500 cash and $1,650 within sixty days – free of interest). This was then called Belcher Avenue, and was only a rough track with a two plank sidewalk leading to the only house on it, that of Major James Peters' (now Colonel) afterwards bought by Mr. C.A. Holland.

April 13, 1892

We are now very busy with plans for our home, the building of which started immediately, and the winding Avenue carefully planned in order to avoid cutting down more of the large oak trees than was absolutely necessary. There was so much "scrub oak" about the place that we decided to call it "Derreen", which is the Irish for "a grove of little oaks".

October 1, 1892

Came into our home at "Derreen". It was in a very unfurnished state but we thought it best to move in before the winter. This turned out to be an unfortunate move for on December 21 a "cold snap" started, one of the worst I have ever experienced, when with a large fire in my bedroom all night the thermometer only registered 36 degrees.

1893

It was a very uncomfortable winter. We had no furnace and on January 27, another cold snap started, which on January 31, culminated in the lowest temperature ever known in Victoria – 3 degrees, 4 degrees, and even 6 degrees below zero with heavy snow. That night our baby Olive was providentially saved from freezing to death when Rose was awakened with the cold herself and went to look at her and found her blue, and unconscious in her cot. She took her into her bed, rubbed her, and kept her close in her arms all night.

April 22, 1899

Went out to stay at Cadboro Bay while Derreen was being finished inside – plastered, etc.

January 6, 1909

Snow and bitterly cold – pipes all frozen.