

AGRICULTURE

2nd tape on: Harold L. Steves, Sr.
287 Steveston Highway,
Interview: January 17, 1973.

Grandfather Manoah Steves, grandmother, 3 sons and 3 daughters, all born in New Brunswick . . . disembarked from ship to rowboat to land . . . first lived in house of driftwood, split boards, built on stilts by bachelor Sharp, on 7th Avenue (Steveston) . . . four blocks away . . . curved rickety stair made of cut driftwood . . . door with latch string pulled through to shut.

. . . c 1881 built larger house, dated by paper on wall with newspapers underneath, where holly bush now grows in Steves front yard.

. . . grandfather Manoah was a horticulturist by trade in New Brunswick . . . where farmed . . . then moved to upper Canada at Chatham, Ontario . . . then bought peach farm in Maryland . . . got malaria there . . . came to Fraser Valley . . . toured Ladner area with Mr. Bensen, then whole Fraser Valley, located south-west corner of Lulu Island as most suitable place.

. . . nearest neighbors when in first house at present site were at No. 4 Road and No. 5 Road, Woodward's Slough . . . Dan Woodward . . . odd one on Green Slough by the church at #3 Road.

Fishing started . . . people started coming in . . . building canneries 1880.

Grandfather Manoah came to Lulu Island 1877 and looked around . . . May 24, 1878 grandmother and children landed at Garry Point, rowed ashore and put ^{THEM} on a log . . . all they could see was trees growing all around them . . . saw Sharp coming through tall grass . . . he was 6'4" so just saw top of his head . . . sidewheeler from Victoria couldn't get into shore so sailors carried youngsters down on their backs, put them into rowboats to row ashore.

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Grandfather put in big orchard, 10 acres . . . apples he grafted on wild crabapple tree . . . Richmond's native tree is wild crabapple. . . brought many varieties of pears . . . story about receiving fruit cheque for .50¢

. . . 1881 Manoah brought in first purebred Holsteins to B.C. from Ontario and New York, also some imported through agencies from Holland. c. 1912 . . . story of large sturgeon wrapped (tangled) in fisherman's net, weighed close 1200 lbs, put into local 3-ton milk truck van and tied tail to roof . . . took into Vancouver . . . part of fish shipped to New York.

. . . big sturgeons ruined nets. . . good salmon fishing earlier off Sturgeon Banks . . . go to "drop-off" in boats from river side, around by jetty, by lighthouse formerly the light ship . . . this was recently changed . . . at low tide you can walk there at real low tide. When lightship broke loose, Harold Steves saw it come up river several times . . . George Fentiman worked on lightship some time so could tell more . . . he came here in 1905.

. . . early days ward system agriculture more represented than fishing (only one member in Steveston).

. . . early Steves family had 400 acres farm at one time, some of it marsh . . . drained marsh . . . still own part of Sturgeon Bank (outside).

. . . early days owned from Williams Road to Steveston, #1 Road.

. . . 1890 son Herbert Steves (W.H.) sold part to make townsite of Steveston. . . another branch of family, distant cousins had stage route, Freeman Steves . . . Walter "Billy" Steves killed as stage driver . . . stages ran after Marpole Bridge opened in 1900 until 1902 when C.P.R. came in . . . 1906 B.C. Electric came in.

. . . earlier days grain grown was feed for cattle, oats, hay . . . all milk in Vancouver came from Richmond one time. Family milked 60 cows

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average. . . . from 1900 family showed at Provincial Fair at New Westminster 1905 at Dominion Fair at Vancouver. . . . took top awards for dairy (Holstein) cattle and Suffolk Punch horses (purebred English horse).

. . . . at 1909 Seattle World's Fair had reserve grand champion cow, took all championships in horses, Punch horses went by Great Northern Railway in box cars.

1903 first testing T.B., sold 3 head to U.S. Dr. S.F. Tolmie, vet. did first test (later premier). 1909 cleaned all herd kept Bang herd separated from main herd.

Herd was a major winner at fairs till late 1930's depression knocked out sales.

. . . . best breed cow in B.C. was worth about \$25.00 Steves got \$75.00 for it today similar cow sold for four figure price.

. . . . in depression Steves sacrificed a breeder herd of cattle to Agassiz farmers, Frazee Farm, Carnation Stock Farms of Seattle took three carloads shipped cattle to China, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa. . . . now only have 4 acres so doesn't farm one original cow is left Young Harold waiting permission to renovate historical village here and meanwhile storm blew down two buildings. Original cow is now milked by her calves original's great grandmother was milked - 100 lbs. milk a day (twice a day) once kept a cow that averaged 105 lbs. daily over three months.

c. 1912 Steves family opened dairy in Vancouver at 4th Avenue of "approved milk" which met certified standards before they had certified milk as dairy grew handled other farms bottled on Steves farm under approved conditions, then shipped. . . . originally milk sent (in early days) in cans by interurban freight car to Vancouver and they came

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back full of drinking water . . . either that or the rain barrel for water . . . story about 'licking' he got when five from Dad for bathing dog in rain barrel. . . Dairy was first on Davie St., then on 4th Ave. Milk taken in by horses . . . later by truck . . . Mellis (stage coach driver) was Steves . . . first car Steves had was 1915 model Ford with brass front . . . one of first on Island . . . a "pusher Ford" called . . . had to polish front.

c. 1914 One of main cattle feeds was mangels . . . Steves got special seeds from Denmark . . . Agriculture Dept. wanted them to grow some for seed . . . culled them for type, so nearly perfect mangel . . . sold seed all over Fraser Valley . . . Steves delivered it . . . shipped a carload to Ottawa . . . loading car they put light weight mangel seed in oat bags they sewed . . . watchers surprised as they tossed them onto car . . . each sack only weighed 30 lbs.

Dad branched into flowers, gladioli as a hobby . . . sons took dairy farming . . . Dad propagated several new varieties of glads . . . brother carried on growing acres of bulbs . . . caught in rainy season with no labor in World War 2 when Japanese sent away . . . before war many Japanese market gardeners rented Richmond land.

. . . pigs were raised during World War 2 on the Island. Harold Steves, Sr. judged many agricultural shows for the Canadian National Exhibition.

Steves lists for interviews many early agriculturists of Sea Island and Lulu Island.

Dellis Cleland