

AGRICULTURE - - Dairying, Potatoes, Plant Pathology

George Wright, 1154 No. 3 Road, Richmond,  
and  
Dr. Bud Wright, 1048 No. 3 Road, Richmond,

Interviewed: April 16, 1973.

Dr. Bud Wright, born 1920, family lived in Delta, Father George Wright rented farm from Captain Hornby, Smith Road . . . Capt. Hornby came back from overseas . . . 1922 Wright family moved to Sea Island, rented the Mackie farm - now centre of International Airport - until 1930.

1930 - City of Vancouver bought that farm and others to establish Vancouver Airport which eventually became the International Airport.

George Wright - born 1928 on Sea Island . . . lived there 1½ years.

1930 - family left Sea Island, established home on present site 1154 No. 3 Road . . . 5 boys in family, 2 died young, Jack eldest, then Bud and George who runs the family farm. Parents came from England around 1910 . . . married 1917.

"Bud" Wright. School - attended grade 1 at Bridgeport, nearest school (while on Sea Island and Lulu Island) . . . rode in milk truck . . . kids climbed in with milk cans . . . truck stopped to put cans on a stand then continued on to pick up more kids.

Both recall teachers: Martha Westman - now Mrs. Les Armstrong

Miss West

Miss Murphy

Miss Esterbrook

Miss McNeeley, principal

Miss Pentland

Les Armstrong, manual training

George went to Bridgeport first 4 years . . . then bussed to Mitchell School.

Bud - through Grade 8 at Bridgeport School then to Richmond High which is now Cambie High through to Grade 12. Worked for 2 years on home farm . . . active in Boys Junior Clubs . . . interested most in Potatoe Club, met people in Department of Agriculture. Mr. McLeod in charge of potatoe certification offered summer job. . . went to U.B.C. for Bachelor of Science and Master of Science and University of Berkeley, California for Ph.D in Agriculture.

Family farm rented on Sea Island was 140 acres (the Mackie farm) . . . dairy cattle operation . . . about 30 to 40 head milking cows and young stock all Holstein . . . grew hay, grain, corn for them . . . potatoes a cash crop.

Present farm father bought and George owns is 80 acres . . . continuing with dairying (Holsteins) and potatoe growing.

Re: Sea Island farm - first milking machines being used . . . no electricity to drive them . . . mother did milking until children older . . . milking was done twice daily: 4 to 6:30 a.m. and then in afternoon.

Bud re: Sea Island - highlight memory of farm work being done by horses . . . lived close to North Arm of the river . . . played on the dykes . . . groceries delivered by van from Grauers store on Island corner . . . had telephones . . . summer fun playing on farm . . . father had cousins who visited farm from Vancouver . . . good neighbor was Mrs. Buckingham.

Twin Bridges at corner of Sea Island in use until Oak Street Bridge was built around 1957 . . . seldom came to Lulu Island except to visit Mother's brother's family in Delta . . . went to Delta on ferry from foot of No. 5 Road "Woodward's Landing" . . . was a 40-minute trip . . . later shortened to 20 minutes . . . Deas Tunnel

replaced this . . . father had a 1926 Hudson . . . a big car with jump seats and a huge Ford tractor . . . and horses . . . little disruption moving to Lulu Island as socializing between kids was at school . . . entertained yourself within the family at home . . . not moving away from kids because on Sea Island homes were at least one mile away . . . closest were Bob McDonald and the Buckingham, and Haywards were 3 miles away . . . water was piped into farm . . . no swimming there . . . went to Stanley Park, Second Beach . . . after moving to Lulu Island occasionally swam in Gilbert Beach . . . went over to swim lessons at Lumberman's Arch, Vancouver.

Social centre, Lulu Island, was South Arm United Church . . . Sunday school . . . young people's group played badminton . . . Trail Rangers for boys.

1930 - Steveston looked same as now . . . went down to play pool . . . canneries and fisherman.

Bud in depression years . . . picked strawberries at \$1.00 a day . . . started 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. rate of 10¢ an hour . . . worked for Imperial Cannery stuffing cans, etc. at pay of 15¢ an hour which eventually went up to 25 cents when a "slow down" occurred . . . Sun newspaper route for 7 years . . . riding 11 miles on bicycle delivering 40 papers.

George Wright - now buys more feed than growing it . . . use land for more productive purposes . . . potatoes: 70 acres total-

1st - Early Epicure	Early White
Warba	2nd - Fundy
	Kennebec - for chipping

3rd - Russet: Norgold and Netted Gems

In 1972 there was a shortage of potatoes . . . Wright farm lost 25 acres from heavy rain July 11 and 12 . . . Vegetable Co-operative Board handles potatoes . . . determines price . . . imports and available supplies governs price . . . a lot of Wright's potatoes grown under contract to chipping potatoe market. 10,000 tons of

potatoes in Richmond and Delta contracted by chip potatoe companies.

Netted Gem, a Russet variety, is popular because of storing ability . . . Red Pontiac's always sell at a depressed price.

#### North America

East - demands round, white potatoe  
Central - demands red variety  
West - demands Netted variety (Idaho influence)

Kennebec, first bred in 1948 in U.S. for processing trade . . . turns green readily . . . has few eyes therefore seed uneconomical . . . if stored in cold temperature must recondition. Norchip variety coming along showing promise of not needing reconditioning . . . Chip potatoe research in U.S. In Canada - in Maritimes. Processor here - Nalley's, Annacis Island.

#### Diseases of Potatoes

1. Rhizoctonia, a fungus disease, prefers dead plant material . . . problem in adverse conditions, cold wet spring and oxygen (air) content soil low . . . good for fungus spread. Answer: good management, crop rotation, dairy farm grass rotation and undergroup drainage.
2. Bacterial Ring Rot. Very damaging . . . controlled by good seed (new tubers become mush).
3. Virus Diseases - carried through tuber . . . causes rolling leaves, mottling . . . 200 years ago virus diseases limited production . . . potatoes "running out" reference . . . control was in producing new varieties . . . cross one with another . . . virus doesn't pass through true seed but through tuber so virus free variety.

Control through certification - growing seed in area isolated from sources of infection . . . e.g. Pemberton Valley, 100 miles away ideal for this, no table stock production, all foundation quality . . . also Caribou area . . . no diseases visible or invisible . . . tuber inspection for quality.

Markets for seed: Lower Mainland, Washington, California, Idaho - main buyer this year. Northern latitudes (Canada) excellent for growing . . . more potatoes grown in Idaho than all of Canada. Late blight - disease cause Irish Famine in 1845 . . . looked for fungicide to apply . . . Bordeaux Mixture discovered in France . . . disease control progressed from total ignorance in last 60 to 75 years.

Sprays Used - (all ground equipment.

1. For Late Blight . . . use copper based materials, more recently zinc based material.
2. For insects - Tuber Flea Beetle } used DDT until illegal  
Green Peach Aphid ) end of 1972. Now use Thiodar
3. Herbicides, weed control - Dinitro.  
For couch grass - use Eptam

Rotate every two years in potatoe growing area . . . switch (1) to cereals, oats for seed grain (formerly ground for feed on own land with grain grinder), then (2) to grass - now buy concentrated feed for cattle . . . sells oats.

Forecast: potatoe price to be lower this year than last. Law of supply and demand determines price . . . potatoes come in from afar all year.

George has half of his potatoe crop under contract for processing industry.

Pool system (Co-op Association for selling) - to encourage deliveries spread out in time on a same price basis . . . this aids stability in potatoe price . . . predict (George) no more chip potatoe plants in this area . . . expansion possible in Alberta where lower growing costs . . . easy to grow good quality potatoes on cactus-cleared land (dry land) in Columbia Basin, control size of potatoes by necessary irrigation and fertilization and grow in volume . . .

plateau land . . . grow 350,000 acres in Idaho . . . not that much agricultural land in all of B.C. . . . George Wright's farm grows 75 acres of potatoes . . . have enough land in Ashcroft area and the prairies to grow in volume.

No more than 50% of potatoes grown locally are used in this area . . . this local growing keeps price stable.

Moisture for Wright farm - on dyked land, below sea level . . . have good sub irrigation . . . dig a hole into ground 3 to 4 feet and reach water . . . weather changeable at coastal area . . . expect dry July and August But dry June brings serious water shortage . . . likely to instal irrigation . . . next year rains incessantly . . . freshet time . . . end of May run off comes down from mountains . . . swells the rivers . . . spring floods created Lulu Island (from soil washed down from Caribou, etc.) . . . a natural phenomena, controlled by dykes.

Quality of soil here is such that moisture percolates through well . . . fibrous soil . . . good clay loam with capacity to hold water.

Milk - TB disease long gone from Richmond dairy herds . . . production per cow now much higher . . . cows under greater strain so cows don't last as long . . . average 4 to 5 lactations per cow . . . has 4 to 5 calves . . . lactations periods explained.

Potatoe Planting - earliest planted last week of March . . . usually completed by May 15 . . . earliest harvested last week of June and through to end of September . . . have to beat the rain . . . digging conditions become adverse if rain comes . . . machinery suffers . . . early frost last year hit potatoes in northern B.C. (Caribou area).

George & Bud Wright

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Re: Frost at planting

Have 3-week period after planting seed before tuber comes above ground . . . 1973 is early spring, 2 weeks ahead of normal schedule . . . general discussion of effect on market here of current Texas floods. Agriculture progressing in India . . . need to learn preservation of foods to prevent spoilage . . . George Wright to continue potatoe acreage.

Dellis Cleland