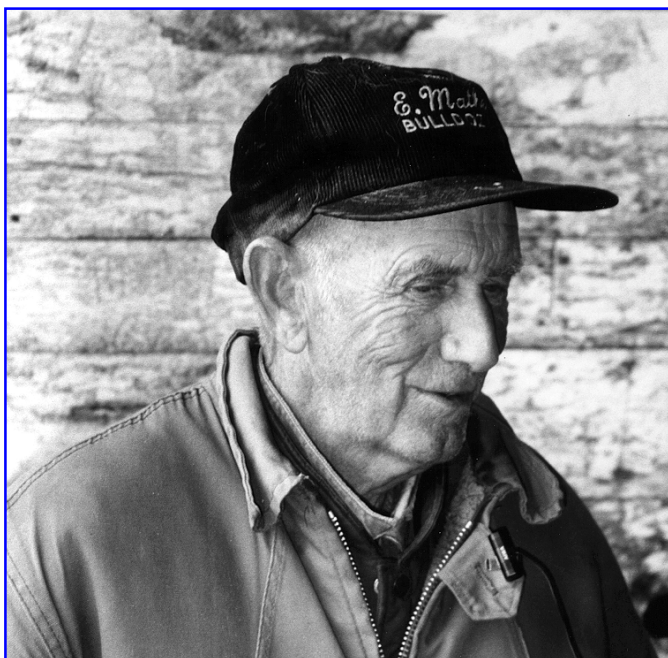


Mouth of the Fraser

Fall, 1999 • Published by the Richmond Heritage Commission



HUGH MCNAIR

True story tellers relate what each knows best, their family histories, so well known it is as though they had lived through all of it themselves. They also have a strong sense of place, a community they call home.

Hugh McNair is one of these extraordinary story tellers. He easily tells his family history, as if he had witnessed it all. The Blair Family arrived in Richmond (Hugh's mother was Winnie Blair) in 1887. His grandfather and father served the community in many capacities as well as being full time farmers.

Hugh relates how his father Mathew (Max) McNair settled on 40

acres at Finn Rd and No3Rd in 1920, where Hugh was born in February 1923. Over the next seven decades, Hugh worked dairy farms and harvested potatoes, first with his father, then his brother, and finally his sons, on various farms on Steveston Highway and again on No 3 Road. Mathew McNair helped to organize the Columbia Potato

Growers Association in 1933 and Hugh formed a potato Club at school which continued to meet until the 1980's.

Hugh recalls the changing agricultural picture, buying, selling and renting farm land to meet changing needs, hand milking giving way to milking machines, horses to mechanized machinery, and a steady loss of the work force. Each time the family having to adapt to changing times and new regulations, that came into play, as Richmond changed from a rural community to an urban one.

Of the 5 children Hugh and his wife Sylvia raised, his two sons followed in his footsteps but over time the changing economic conditions

had made farming in Richmond more and more difficult, despite the protection of the land by the Agricultural Land Reserve. Hugh's operation in spite of the down side, survived until May 30th 1997 when Hugh milked his last cow.

During this long period Hugh gave some of his precious free time to various volunteer organizations; Farmer's Institute, London Farm, Richmond Museum, Friends of the Archives, Richmond High Alumni, Heritage Advisory Committee and was a founding member of the new Richmond Heritage Commission.

Hugh found that retirement was hard to adjust to when he suddenly stopped doing the physical farm work that he had done for over sixty years. Hugh is now busy researching & gathering family history at the Richmond Archives to add to his day to day journals. His daughter is helping organize the **McNair History** for others to read.

In appreciation of Hugh's service and wealth of knowledge of Richmond history, he was declared a Heritage person during Heritage Week 1997.

by Audrey Matheson

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Welcome to the first edition of the Richmond Heritage newsletter (Mouth of the Fraser). This newsletter is produced with the assistance of the City of Richmond under the auspices of the Richmond Heritage Commission. In these pages we hope to support the awareness, recognition and understanding of heritage in Richmond.

In each issue we will provide news and information on heritage issues. Of particular importance will be the activities of the Heritage Umbrella Group. This loosely affiliated grouping of individual heritage societies includes most of the dedicated volunteers who are actively involved in protecting and maintaining heritage sites and activities in Richmond.

At the same time we want to create a vehicle (horse and buggy at the start) to reach a much wider audience. Richmond's heritage sites are bridges that connect all Richmond residents — young and old, old-timers and newcomers. We will be looking for the connections that together form what heritage folks call a "sense of place".

Many communities have discovered that heritage activities not only increase awareness and understanding, but add to the community in very tangible ways. A community is known by what it treasures. What we choose to preserve identifies us to the wider world and draws attention and interest. Heritage is, in short, good business.

What should you look for in this publication? Initially we plan to produce two or three issues annually and explore a variety of angles on heritage: activities of groups, the wisdom of experts, profiles of places and the people associated with them, local urban myths, stories and rumours.

by Mark Bostwick

WHAT IS HUG? (HERITAGE UMBRELLA GROUP - RICHMOND) AND WHY WAS IT FORMED?

In the spring of 1991 I attended a meeting of many societies from the Richmond area, hosted by the Richmond Nature Park. A number of societies in attendance agreed that a body of members was needed to join the various societies and coalesce them into a functioning unit. All the societies at that time were functioning and operating individually to their best ability. What was agreed to at the time was a joining together of societies to assist in multi heritage expositions such as the Heritage Week Display occurring every year.

A strong leader was Don Gordon who vowed to make this goal of a unified heritage committee at the grass roots level a prime objective. A few months later another meet-

ing of all societies was held at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. This meeting saw a show of hands for the election of a loosely knit Board of Directors to oversee the Heritage Week Display at Richmond Centre Mall in February 1992. The first board consisted of Marilyn Clayton, Chair, André Cardinal, Treasurer and Sylvia Cardinal, Secretary.

Over the ensuing years changes have been made. The chair of HUG has changed, Jacqui Turner replaced Marilyn and currently Aileen Cormack has taken on the duties from Jacqui. André and Sylvia continue in their respective roles. The format of HUG has changed little with changes primarily in the number of Societies taking an active role in HUG. Initially one concern to many societies was the sharing of resources. A few societies had much information and many of us had very little with which to work. This has gradually changed over the years to everyone's benefit and the newsletter hopefully will promote more exchange of ideas and knowledge amongst the 30+ societies.

by André Cardinal

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Editorial Board:

André Cardinal, Mark Bostwick, Audrey Matheson, Graham Turnbull

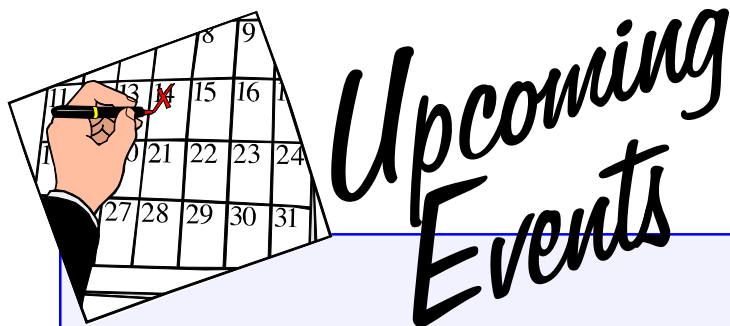
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LONDON FARM

Christmas Craft Fair

Nov. 5th thru 14th

Daily 10am - 4pm • Thur. & Fri. 10am - 8pm

Christmas at London Farm

Nov. 21st thru Dec. 9th

Sat. and Sun. Noon to 4pm • Fri. 10pm to 8pm

Christmas Festival of Lights

Dec. 15th to 23rd

Daily 4pm to 8pm

GULF OF GEORGIA CANNERY

WEST COAST FISHING MUSEUM 664-9203

Halloween at the Spooky Cannery

Oct. 31 6pm - 8pm

Christmas Tree Decorating Contest

for Richmond Secondary Schools

Dec. 4 - 5. 10am - 12pm

Christmas Shopping in the Gift Shop

Dec 4, 5, 10, 11 & 12th

3rd Annual Smoked Salmon Sale

phone for information

RICHMOND MUSEUM

Soaring Saturdays - Native Storytelling

Nov. 27 - Dec. 18 1pm - 3pm

Holiday Hallmarks - Make Seasonal Decorations

Sun. Dec. 5 1pm - 3pm

Christmas Crackers

Make Traditional Christmas Crackers

Sun. Dec. 12 1pm - 3pm

HERITAGE WEEK 2000

Heritage Week 2000 (February 2000) is fast approaching. Are we ready! There will be a meeting in November, all societies will be notified by telephone, and should be preparing their displays soon. You may contact myself at 274-0118 or Aileen at 244-8869. We want to make this another fantastic rendition for the millennium and for Richmond.

by André Cardinal

RICHMOND RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Retired teachers are welcome to join our group of about 200 teachers from Richmond and other areas. Activities include: Social Functions, Contacts with shut-ins, ill or handicapped, Special Projects such as scholarships, and educational heritage.

Help Us Preserve Richmond's Educational Heritage by providing information, identifying artifacts, and gathering memorabilia. We are searching for artifacts such as: chalkboards, wall clocks, hand bells, text books, documents, diplomas, photographs, pupil notebooks, exams, old maps and globes.

For information please contact:

President: Audrey Matheson - 277-7356

Heritage Contact Person: Lorna Robb - 278-1641

by Lorna Robb

RICHMOND HIGH SCHOOL

The Richmond High School Alumni association was formed in 1988 to provide on going support to the students and staff of Richmond High School. The Alumni supports the current staff and students with funds to help augment the cost of programs and special events as well as providing grads with scholarship funds to pursue further educational options. The Alumni supports past grads by participating in Heritage Week, holding special events and luncheons and encouraging reunions where grads can maintain their connections to RHS. The Alumni currently has 1200 members from the grad classes of 1926 - 1999. To join the Alumni or to make scholarship donations please contact Richmond High School at 668-6400.



THE TREE BELOW THE BRIDGE

This weeping willow tree has continued to grow below the Arthur Laing bridge since the bridge was built over it in 1975.

The tree was planted, over eighty years ago by one of the daughters of the Grauer Family, in the backyard of their home. The Grauers were store owners in the area for many years. The store and house were part of the river settlement of Eburne which started on the Vancouver side of the river and when the original bridge was built in 1889, spread over the river to the Sea Island (Richmond) side. Eburne was named for Harry Eburne, an early Postmaster in the area. Carl Grauer who with his brother Gus operated the last store in the area, before the new bridge took all the traffic away, maintains that the present bridge was moved slightly to save the tree.

However, this year, to do a full seismic upgrade of the bridge the soil around the bridge supports had to be compacted and the tree had to go.

Because of this the Airport Authority agreed to donate a small inter-

pretive area with a new tree and the Parks Department has designed and installed one of their Trail Signs which will describe the Eburne area which was at either end of the Old Marpole Bridge. Marpole was the name the Vancouver side became known as, around 1916. The following photograph shows the Sea Island Community of Eburne with the old tree before the present bridge was built.

by Graham Turnbull



HISTORICAL RICHMOND PHOTOS ON THE INTERNET

Looking for photographs of Richmond as it was in days gone by? Check out the City of Richmond Archives web site. Over 4,300 historical photographs have been scanned and are searchable online. Drop-down pick-lists of subject terms and names makes searching easy. Your results are shown in groups of up to 10 at a time with a description of

each photograph and a thumbnail image.

The web site also features virtual exhibits, listings of oral histories, database access to descriptions of all our city and community records, and lots of information about the Archives services. You can e-mail the archives from the site to give us your comments. Community input will help make the site even stronger. You will find the City of Richmond Archives web site at www.city.richmond.bc.ca/archives.

by Ken Young

RICHMOND HERITAGE COMMISSION

The nine member Heritage Commission is appointed for the purpose of advising City Council on heritage conservation and promotion matters and providing support for activities which benefit and advance heritage in the City. In 2000 the Commission's activities will include updating Heritage Inventory, developing a recognition program and reviewing their financial operations.

For further information about the commission contact 276-4212.

