

AGRICULTURE

Archie Blair,
1313 No. 3 Rd.

Interviewed July 19, 1973 by Dellis Cleland
(Not taped)

1879: father Archie Blair, his brother John, came from Magheramore, County Antrim, North Ireland to Lulu Island.

Farmed 335 acres on South Arm of Fraser, south of Steveston Highway (then No. 9 Rd.)...property was 1 mile long, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide, plus an extra piece of land.

Grew oats...has dairy cattle...25-30 head Holstein...horses were brood mares...by 1916 had Clydesdale horses.

Kept small flocks of sheep...30-40...white sheep in early days...sold wool to Indian squaws at Canneries...later to Wool Growers...sheep kept in barn winters, out in fields during the day.

Archie recalls in childhood grain was shipped from family warehouse built on the South Arm...built own landing (Blair's) coastal boats loaded there on way to New Westminster...this was 1905...1911 grain shipped by rail...then by truck.

Early days; all farmers dug own earth dykes...had wooden drains...dug narrow trenches with cedar slabs across...these lasted many years.

1906-7: Dyking system was put in around the Island...no trouble till 1948 when dyke broke at the Rice Mill at 3 am...Blair's got plenty of warning, no water on their land.

Potatoes grown: Rose types in earlier days...then Netted Gems...difficulties in recent years...successful in rotation growing now...oats, Red Clover (for seed), hay and potatoes.

Since 1950: Archie farming jointly with son Gilbert when Gil returned following WW II service...Gilbert is a Richmond alderman...second son Barry employed at race track (Daughters... See Next Page.)

1973 - Blairs have 52 acres potatoes planted. Sells 200 tons Kenebec type to Nalley's for chipping.

1940-55 Archie actively breeding and racing thoroughbred horses...wife successful in winning at the track (Has a good picture)

Mother, Elizabeth Hall...1885...crossed from Ireland by boat with large group of relatives of future husband...travelled by train across USA to San Francisco...to settle in Richmond (family pic)

Recalls story of his Mother sitting, knitting on train steps while train travelling thru desert, fell off steps, train official stopped train to get her back.

Archie Blair

The four Blair daughters are: Geraldine (Mrs. Wray),
Pat (Mrs. Ovender), Evelyn (Mrs. Pitre) at California,
Roberta (Mrs. Dimond) at Langley.