

George Fentiman

Interviewed February 23, 1972.

Born in Ottawa in 1898, early <sup>side</sup> streets were all grass covered... gravel added later...old opera house was at 2nd Ave. and Chatham St. - dances and gymnastics held there...shows as well..came to Steveston in 1910...left Ottawa to come here...1910-1911, the 4 mast schooners still in Steveston - telephones in at that time - Telephone office down at fisherman's Wharf - got electricity from B.C. Electric line (tram line) charged by number of poles to house on Garry St....40¢ hr. considered top pay during W.W.I...Ward system then used...better representation Fentiman feels...father was Councilman many years...40¢ per hr. shovelling rock from scows on to wagon, 2 loaded front - 2 loaded rear...stones brought in by scows from Gilley's quarry in New Westminster..rock used as road bed, big rocks on bottom...Brother Ed and Jimmy Faulkner both Engineers built most of the roads...put down # 2 rock first, then # 3 rock, then #4 rolled it...No. 4 Road put in later ...rode down No. 4 Road in buggy and willows leaned inwards to touch buggy...used to ride down No. 2 Road to Udy's place to get butter... road was like a dyke due to the large clumps of clay taken from ditches and piled on road bed...No. 3, No. 2, No. 1-Roads were almost impassible due to being uneven and rough...later graded by horses...6 horses on grader...Garry St. constructed due to engineering (surveying) error... reference pts. at Railroad and No. 1 Road were too high, thus Garry St. constructed too high...Old pensioner's place to-day was Geo. Nutt's place...Sam Gilmore lived on Blundell which was very muddy...rock in up to his ditch-bridge...milk wagon could get to his house...(another goof up with the construction of road-bed, this time on the west end of Blundell)...a lot of hunting along entire west end of Lulu Island... Many ducks due to potatoes and grain...McKenzie ranch in Steveston

raised wheat...helped Bridge who ran ranch by bringing team of horses to move produce...also helped at Trites farm that grew potatoes...taxes were very low then...not much money about but then there wasn't a great need for it...Fentiman's father was a school trustee, dyke commissioner, police commissioner and Councillor...those days it was felt that buildings couldn't be built upwards...Fentiman's old house built upon cedar planks in 1910...builders felt cement would sink, so it traditionally wasn't used for foundations...Norman Marshall first man to run tractor in Richmond...was also employed to clear stumps on Granville St.(Vancouver)...very large stumps (6-8 ft. dia.) winched out by modifying a Fordson tractor...just after W.W.I. the Fordson tractor first demonstrated in Richmond in front of Fentiman's house on Garry St...old Opera House in earlier days...New Year's eve dance big event...Mr. and Mrs. Murchison (stately lady) went...grand march...2-3 piece orchestra...also travelling shows came to opera house...dog shows pony shows, trick shooters...silent movie projector showed old movies accompanied by piano (Nancy Gilmore, Bell's sister)...Jim Armstrong built old Movie Theatre in Steveston, then was used as a fish-store...then an insurance business was in the theatre...once returning from Steveston School with Lucy London, Archie Blair, etc. in heavy snow, a death wagon had gone into a snowed over ditch (anecdote follows) ...a special wagon from Vancouver would carry corpses from Richmond to Vancouver grave site...<sup>many</sup>~~money~~ buried at Mountain View Cemetary...no cemetary on Lulu Is. except an Indian cemetary on Railway Ave., when Fentiman first came, there were many Indians...often kept awake at night by the revelry of their potlatches...often lasted a week at a time...big Indian encampment behind Phoenix Cannery...one at end of

Chatham St...because there were many (13?) canneries and all the work was done by hand...many employed...sometimes a murder a week, Saturday night during fishing season...7 hotels...Oak bar and sawdust on floor ...many bootleggers in those days...Alfie Johnston was deputy for Andy Waddell who was Chief. A. Johnston was a prisoner in Germany in W.W. I before coming to Steveston...his wife Mary Gordon still in Steveston...Fentiman knew her as a child...her brother Alec was killed in W.W.I...not many Japanese then as now...went to school with only 3 of them...has picture of schoolmates...knew Frank Nishi and his father...Japanese had some large chicken farms...early Japanese settlement around Scotch Canadian Cannery also around other canneries... considered to be very industrious and honest...Many chinese here too... worked in Canneries on a contract basis...very good at butchering fish... sockeye cooked on continuous chain in their cans...cans expanded and had to be punctured...then puncture hole was soldered closed by hand... could smell the oilery at times in Steveston from Kirkland Island... against law to sell liquor to Indians but some bootleggers did...winery on Lulu Island on No. 2 Road...loganberry grown here used in wine sold across Canada (?) ...farmers didn't make moonshine but did make some beer and wine... never heard of farmers having a still...early days no pumps but did have flood boxes to empty water from ditches into river ... (anecdote about landowner seeing Municipality \$17,000, because water ran off road allowance on to his land...court case in Vancouver Court records)...First winter Fentiman was here the Land was flooded due to heavy rain and no run-off into river...rain or snow water that couldn't get out would cause flooding...early days outdoor plumbing

only...when piped water brought in to Richmond, indoor plumbing was developed...Councillor Rock instigated the use of steel pipe for water system...small man from England ...stood on box in order to be seen at political meetings...early political meetings were exciting and well attended...audience would laugh at his accent and not heed his arguments...Austin Harris was prominent at this time...political meetings held in opera house, schools, also in little court house building in Steveston, where firehall is now...Veterinary from Vancouver Dr. Sleet(?) and later his son rode out to care for Richmond animals ...epidemic among horses was stopped by destroying horses suspected of disease (1/4 of Steeves horses destroyed) called glanders, a fatal communicable disease...(anecdote about the Steeves horses)...Fentiman discharges university students...worked on oil (fuel) barge anchored in Fraser and had bad luck with university students as part-time help (anecdote)...Art Parker worked with Fentiman on Union Oil Job... (anecdote: about Comp cheating on pension funds)...General comments about unions...every Saturday night married couples and older people would take interurban into Vancouver, meet friends on tram, have evening in town and return...Orpheum or Pantages Theatres very popular ..."peanut special" (12 a.m.-1 a.m. train back, so-called <sup>house</sup>chinese ate peanuts and dropped shells...young people enjoyed grass hockey, lacrosse, local dances...(anecdote about skating at Terra Nova walking both ways)...some comments about the physics of ditch digging...Charlie Norton was work foreman then on ditch clearing and was Fentiman's Uncle... No. 5 Road was all plank no rock base...Steveston Highway was also plank...cement surface was between No. 4 and 5 ...rest was blacktop...(anecdote about driving wagon over broken plank road)...

No. 9 Road was early name of Steveston Highway and was a "government road" the rest of the Lulu Is. roads were kept up by the Municipality ...not sure about who looked after No. 5 Road...First Engineer of C. N. train was Stinson...he lived in one of the houses Fentiman's father built...ran C.N. train once a day to keep franchise open... Boys use to catch on fire due to blueberry pickers...(anecdote about prohibition and whiskey smuggling via C.N. box cars parked in Steveston) ...C.N. track connected to C.P. track below the Steveston Wye ...Bill Grey looked after flood boxes...rode his bike and after worked at night ...flood boxes were dangerous...(list of names follows old Richmond residents who contributed to daily growth of Richmond)...Gilmore Park ...land was owned by Mr. Rose...Lord Byng was originally Steveston School...other schools were Bridgeport, Mitchell, English, another in Queensborough...never heard of Trites School in those days...3 families of MacDonalds (Sea Is.)...Ralph, Harry, Duñc., Florence - she married one of the Mays boys on No. 7 Road and River Road...Ezra <sup>CHALLONER</sup> ~~Shelner~~? was custodian of Bridgeport School...Post Offices also located at Terra Nova and at south end of No. 2 Road near London place...this Post Office run by Mr. Bodrick - related to Saul Branscombe...Japanese store now there...mail sent into Vancouver daily with motorman on tram... freight station at each tram stop where farmers loaded cans of milk and unloaded barrels of water...45 gal. barrel of water with farmer's name on it cost 50¢...Saul Branscombe one year drove around with tank wagon of water...one water line (wooden pipe) may have come from Queensboro along Westminster Highway...another water line came over Marpole swing bridge...(reiteration of the Rock story re; steel pipe)...oats and hay best paying crop per acre...oats sold in Vancouver \$25.00 per ton... Gilmore and Oldfield hauled oats to Vancouver...not many potatoes at first ...Joe Gilmore was one of the first to raise potatoes...good soil for

potatoes...Les Richards potato-sorter was on shaker principle...Richards shop had tremendous amount of odds and ends...a good blacksmith and fabricator...blacksmith shops that survived went in for welding... 3rd and Dundas blacksmith shop on Main St. (2 scotchmen) last one in Vancouver...Ed Ireland respected Steveston blacksmith...race track had own travelling blacksmiths...Fentiman learned how to shoe horses from Ireland...most farmers did not shoe horses...(Joe Steeves - high strung black horse needed shoeing story)...Fentiman worked around blacksmith shop and describes wheel-tire technique...(wagon wheel anecdotes)... describes rock-box wagon and unloading procedures...roads had to be regraded periodically by 6-horse-drawn grader...(list of men who had teams)...Fentiman dug drainage ditch across field where Lord Byng School is for \$1.00 per hr...old man Spencer helmed manually 40¢ per hour...(general comments about hauling rock and recent misnamed photo about old Richmond)...lulu Island wheat was not too good because it was too soft.

TAPE 5 - SIDE 1 and 2.