

Mr. Harry May

Interviewed March 2, 1972.

St. Lukes- East of Fraser on Marine Drive - under the leadership of Dr. Holmes - Anglican Church located in East Richmond - story about this - East Richmond Community Hall originally Anglican Church Hall - East Richmond was No. 5 Road and No. 20 Road or Cambie - early days, people depended upon their own efforts for amusements - (describes house parties) - Jack Savage's place was on Cambie East of No. 6 Road - 240 acres - still owns this land - Harry's Uncle own property next to the Savages - born in 1902 - maybe on Mitchell Island maybe at Fraser and Marine at maternal Grandmother's home - lived on Mitchell Is., father rented Savage's farm on Lulu Is. - property on Mitchell Is. rented from a man called Trim - (see map) - father bought 100 acres then 60 acres around No. 7 and No. 8 Roads - as a boy helped father to clear willow and hard hack off land for plowing - Before World War I Uncle Fred rented entire Twigg Island from Mr. Twigg who was from Ireland - During World War I when Uncle Fred went overseas, Harry and father worked the Twigg land - bi barn where Liquid Air is now on Twigg Is. - May had all their own large pieces of equipment - threshing and haying equipment - self-propelled threshing machine (describes this) - \$2.00 ton for threshing grain - worked on machines after school - pumped water from ditch into tank wagon for steam engine - grain and hay was major enterprises in those days - short story about wheat growing - kept grains for farm use and sold to merchants in town - would grow 4000 - 6000 sacks year - did a lot of business with chinese gardeners who were along River Rd. (Van) from Ontario to about Victoria below Marine Drive - May and Savage farms supplied feed to all these Chinese farms for their horses - Savage had big contract with Shelly Bakery for hay and feed for their horses - Chinese would deliver vegetables in town and bring back horse manure for their gardens - there was a large piggery on Lulu Is. - Savage & May

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would meet at foot of Fraser Hill and double team the wagons, each in turn, up the hill to spare the horses - big feedstore Fraser & Kingsway - all roads were gravel in Vancouver then - in early days sold milk to Garvin in 10 gal. cans - Max McNair bought milk from May and processed it himself before delivering it in quarts and pints. Crawford family moved to South Vancouver to take over McNair's dairy and got milk from May - 5 boys, 2 girls in Crawford family - Mitchell - Twigg - Eburne Is. - separate islands Mitchell and Twigg joined by short bridge - May was formerly a member of Sea Scouts - Bob Tate owned 1/2 mile waterfront next to May property - boys swam in North Arm - used to drink Fraser Water - large rain tank on roof for water - when dry, people did get river water for cooking - sometimes milk man delivered milk can full of water from Vancouver - as a boy caught logs on river (story about this) - describes bunk houses and own house and the yearly needs for firewood - had a wharf at foot of No. 6 Rd. - stored hay and straw - went fishing occasionally - Dolly Varden Trout - all children had chores on farm (story about this) - went to Mitchell School by walking - feed cattle turnips and mangels - feed 50 cows (story about this) - got up at 5 a.m. to drive tractor until 7 a.m. then breakfast - then school - got bronchial asthma due to dampness and dust - at age of 41 - moved to South Vancouver - story about re-settling and difficulties of getting another job - creek near Fraser St. and Marine Drive was a source of fresh water for Island people - took cans of milk into Vancouver and brought out cans of water to supplement caught rain water -- some water from river not as drinking but for washing and cooking -- wooden water mains from Queensboro running along Westminster Highway - (describes Fraser St. bridges) - swing span was originally wood later iron - used rowboat when bridge was knocked out - St. Lukes Church

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was attended by May family - (story about row-boat ferry service for pedestrians) some speculation about early bridge and No. 5 Road - jitney service (car) from Woodward's Landing to Fraser & Marine goes off open bridge and drowns all but one in River - walked to Mitchell School 2 miles each way - father later had lots in Point Grey and South Vancouver - Went to McGee High School - 49th and mile west of Granville - 2 room school Fraser and Marine was first school - then went to Mitchell School - 2 yrs. at McGee High School (early school story) - saw 1st aeroplane at Minoru Park - races between Park and Pattulo Bridge and back - Sea Is. was once all farm - Hayward farm, Dougherty Farm, Laing farm, all on Sea Island - well kept farms - one of the MacDonald girls married Fred May - Mr. Miller may have been a farmer - Indian land at end of Ferguson Rd. was rented by farmers - Gilmore and Steves had good holstein cattle - registered purebreds - high producing - some of the best producing cattle in Canada - mangel beet and turnip was fodder for cattle - fed after milking so as not to taint the milk - T.B. among the cattle (story about this) - farmers make decision among themselves about ridding themselves of T.B. infected cattle - Doctor came twice a year to school to check children's health - Dr. Hepworth - German colony - 4th and Fraser came over to Lulu Is. to pick potatoes - 20-24 men on a threshing crew - farmers helped each other during harvest times - (story about various methods of harvesting) - uncertainty of reliable help made harvesting an anxious business later on - Elizabeth Marshall - only teacher then at Mitchell School - had 42 pupils - from Grade 1 - Grade 7 - double seats - school yard fenced down the middle with boys on one side girls on other - concerts held at Mitchell School (stories about this) - Xmas party story -

Small gifts collected from parents for children - Eunice Cross played piano - her brother looked after swing bridge - Fraser bridge - Cross house on Cambie - May day (Maypole story) at school - May 24th celebration held on May farm for East Richmond people - Vancouver Hunt Club set up for steeple-chases on the farm - also races then - polo played in Brighthouse - horses stabled in large May barn - (story about polo ponies) played in middle of Brighthouse race track -- city people played polo not Richmond people - (story about costs) - Hawke family did a lot of hauling then for farmers and race track - there was a blacksmith on Mitchell Is. - one also on Fraser and Marine named Teasdale - (blacksmith shop story) Birch was another on Marine drive - Chinese Gardeners also used the blacksmiths for their horses and wagons - Harry Alford name of blacksmith on Mitchell Is. - between Alford and Teasdale, East Richmond farmers had all blacksmith needs taken care of May had 10-12 workhorses (story about horses not needing shoes) - toolie shoes called bog shoes - (described) story about this - soil conditions discussed - discussion of clay and peat and farming soils - discussion of "clay loam" - anecdote about Real Estate man called Grey who hoodwinked prospective buyers - story about bog fires - digging ditch barriers didn't always work - early fire depts., Steveston, Brighthouse and Bridgeport - later fire station out near Queensboro - Charlie McCulloch early Fire Chief - Bridgeport fire Dept. was originally all Volunteers - Big barn on Savage place burned down - (story about this) - there were a number of tramps, hobos etc. then - one of them may have started that fire - could have started by sparks from steam engine - Charlie McCulloch used to farm on the land where Gilmores now are on No. 19 Road - they lost barn with cattle inside - due to tipped over lantern.