

Mr. Gordon McConnell, 75

Interviewed May 12, 1972.

1232 No. 3 Road

Born May 5, 1897, Vancouver

-at age of 2 came with father James McConnell and mother, a Blair, brothers and sister: James and Annie (now dead) to Lulu Island - original farmhouse behind present home - to English School at age of 6 - 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles walking through fields: teachers Mr. A.P. Wollcott first in one room - 1909 2 room built: Mr. Robinson, Clarence Messenger, Miss McNeeley -1910 to Bridgeport -walked to Branscombe Station, tram to Bridgeport -finished high school 2nd year 1914 - then to Sprott Shaw Business College, Vancouver, no plan to farm, father died 1915 - 1919 returned from W.W. 1, to farm - father's farm was 30 acres mixed farm - 15-16 cows hay, oats, rotation - chicken - given pair wild ducks raised 20-30 - little ducks ran after mayflies - tummies full.

-got wood for fuel, split it - pump water for stock - too musty color for people rain barrels at back -sent milk cans via Democrat to Branscombe Station interurban to Vancouver - empty cans returned with drinking water, free - water piped in from New Westminster - used coal oil lamps until electric line in - had to guarantee portion of power so few on road - even those who didn't instal power paid a portion - rode bicycle to high school - played field lacrosse - sister Annie sang Presbyterian Church Choir (now South Arm United) - played hockey -went across to Marpole - Incident: year Titanic sank - with Archie Blair - McConnell had watch given him by Blair family - fell and watch dropped between ties off Fraser - lost.

Canneries early days stamped out own cans from sheets tin - days of Chinese transients - Indians sun dried fish Indians picked blueberries in bog - old Indian Cranberry Jack picked dwarf cranberries.

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-picked salmonberries some - plentiful - had own fruit - 50 year old apple tree in yard - transparent, pears, plums, crabapples.

-enjoyed hunting - paradise for hunters early - hunted own farm - banks of Fraser - good bird dogs - Irish water spaniel, setters, Cocker Spaniel - best water dog was named "Gunner" cross between Humber and Water Spaniel - incident re dog - pheasant and ducks - got pheasants first 1/2 hour - black and tan collie hunted cows, brought in paper. -early rural mailman Mr. Williams.

McConnell hauled milk around 1922 - 1923 with brother for dairies in area - farmed at same time.

1942 - 1960 - grew strawberries major crop - contracted with Chinese for pickers - W.W.II McConnell picked up school children to pick - paid 4 - 6 cents a pound, and bonus if stayed whole season - 1/3 costs to picking - got 2 crops out of 3 years - nothing first year Used matted row style for greater production (not hill)

-sold as fresh fruit or for jam factories: Pacific Coast Packers, Empress Jam - rotation strawberry crop with potato crop. Raspberries grown - suffered corn borer. Progress in berries: Average crop 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ - 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tons per acre at first - thru Experimental Farms developed 6 - 7 tons per acre - Co-Op's held fruit for processing - now grading. Rents part farm to George Wright - grows potatoes - chipping potatoes for Nalley market - Kennebec - After Business course worked by C.P.R. -met Oceanliners at Victoria, from Australia - days of silk trains to Europe - recalls Kly's Hall upper level of granary for school concerts Xmas concerts very early - house parties - families stayed overnight. -also dances at Orange Hall - 24 May was Steveston's Day - wonderful -boad sailing - races - sports at Brighthouse - boxing matches Steveston

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1910 Airplane saw Hamilton flying Minora to Westminster.

-recalls early wharves - Blairs - London - Bowdige Landing ending off No. 2 Road - used to ship machinery from New Westminster - transfer took people upriver from public landings to Westminster Exhib.

Mother a Blair - July 1 had Blair family reunion once 120 there - Threshing a community deal - steam then gas driven - McConnell farm only 2 - 3 hours but week or 10 days helping others - Threshers demanded blackberry pie - domesticated blackberry - wild blackberry on mainland after a fire.

Early days had to clear land - most low bush but some pine trees with eagles nests - alder willow cleared - cut log by river, in river for wood - no pollution like now - due to population.

Married 1933 to Ellen (Nellie) Morgan - Born Vernon - came to Chilliwack

Children: - Geraldine Ann (Mrs. Gilcher) teaches at James Whiteside
Elizabeth Joan, drowned
Linda (Mrs. Hol) Beachgrove
Peggy (died at 3)

Swam early years in sloughs - Green Slough - clear water NOTE: daughters all started English School.

School division early days was No. 3 Rd. All ^{West} ~~South~~ No. 3 Rd. to Steveston school east No. 3 to English School.

Flooding: 1906 all under water - hand dykes broke - 1948 Major flood on Fraser - none on farm. Smelled bog fires every fall - liked peat smell - Bog keeps growing higher in centre of Island - tapers toward dykes.

Recalls curlews, Golden Plover used to fly over.

1920 - skated between the 3 bridges, ice strong. Climate changing here: winter to summer - no spring - cause: clearing timber.

TAPE 24 - SIDE 11.