



—Glenn Baglo Photo

MATT PALMER, 89 and ANNIE PORTER, 95 . . . Richmond Pioneers talking over old times

## A TROPHY OF EARLY ROOTS

It was their first year out from the old country when George and Annie Porter won the Vancouver Exhibition trophy for the Best Collection of Vegetables and Field Roots.

They took top honors three years running — in 1911, 1912 and 1913.

George is dead now, but Annie is still going strong at 95 and still takes as much pride in her vegetable garden as she did in those days.

Saturday, at a gathering of the Richmond Pioneers, Annie turned over the

time-worn trophy to the Richmond Museum.

She recalled some of her early experiences:

"We were pretty proud when we won that trophy, George and I," she said. "George was a professional gardener over there and we lived on a big estate in Horsham, North Sussex.

"We came out from England to set up in the greenhouse business in Richmond — tomatoes and cucumbers in summer, chrysanthemums and other flowers in winter.

"When we first started we put a pay-

ment down on the land — the very same land I live on to this day. And we did quite well until George passed away 20 years ago."

Annie said she still grows her own peas, beans and new potatoes.

"I have my own little special garden. I don't bother with flowers any more, I just grow things I can eat. This way I don't have to buy them."

Annie is one of 101 Richmond old timers who have been interviewed and taped for a local initiatives project. The tapes, which record an oral history of the area, are stored at the Richmond Art Centre.

Mrs. George Porter

Interviewed March 14, 1972.

951 Odlin Road

Earliest Comm. Greenhouse

- came from Little Hampton in 1910 with husband to Vancouver - put money on land in Richmond - was in estate service at Holbrook Park near Horsham, England
- bought acreage on Odlin nothing named 1911 - no water, light - just plank to walk on - built the first house on Odlin Road - husband had help building their house 60 years ago.
- planted holly first - had 7 large greenhouses - grew tomatoes, cucumbers, sold in Vancouver - in winter grew chrysanthemums, forced daffodil bulbs - had 6 cows, 2 horses - times difficult - to make some money husband worked some for Municipality on roads - \$2.50 a day and walked miles - no family - no neighbors near - first house built nearby by Kavanagh - caught tram every 2 hours at Cambie Station to Marpole - had Ford eventually - learned to drive but nervous.
- called Porter and Thomsett Greenhouses - partner Thomsett eventually married, left for Vancouver as florist, then died - Thomsett came out from England with them - was recve 1 year.
- \*milk picked up in cans by Fraser Valley Company, churned and sold a lot of butter.
- got groceries by taking tram to Marpole, walked over bridge to Grauer's store (Sea Island)
- store took Porter's tomatoes and cucumbers - she packed 20 crates tomatoes a day - overwork and heat in greenhouses killed husband at 75 - used car to get groceries to town.
- once a month went to movie in town - to Capital on tram met friends.

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Mrs. George Porter

-went to Marpole to Anglican Church on Hudson - meat reasonable prices - paid \$600 an acre for land and had to meet payments every 6 months - bank in Marpole, Royal Bank, corner Granville (where buses stopped) - went home to England in 1926 for 3 months - husband went 2 years after - mother's home bombed heavily in war.

~~bombed heavily in war~~ - has brother on Montcalm St. - added rooms on to the original house - wood-coal furnace heats house - wood stove in kitchen - had first large greenhouse in Richmond, Telegraph or Telephone Cucumbers (large) raised by them - at Vancouver Agricultural Fair won big cup for winning 3 years in succession; Vancouver, Westminster and Victoria, 1911, 1912, 1913 "for anything grown in Richmond" - got \$500. prize.

-walked up the tram track to Lansdowne Park for horseraces - first aeroplane went up on a Good Friday when they started to build their house - C.P.R. brought people out from City to see aeroplane - watched from verandah - no water for long time - got water from Marpole in 18 gallon wooden tub - when tide came in went down to ditch on Cambie Road, dipped water out in pail to wash hands, vegetables - no baths just had a wash.

\*no electricity when first came - put in poles, asked if wanted, if signed then could get electricity without paying - people walked miles to use their phone when it went in - neighbors called long distance using their phone - kent cattle til husband sick - sold last 2 cows and cried when man left check for them - had chickens - lost dog, 2 cats 3 years ago- good neighbors - belongs to Rebecca lodge, Marpole.

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