Newsletter

SEA ISLAND MATTERS

THIS ISSUE

This issue includes stories about pioneers, military families, house histories, and Cubs & Scouts. Eunice Robinson, the Sea Island Heritage Society President, shares a brief history of how the Society formed, leading us to the 1st SIHS reunion this May. We include 'News from Burkeville' and end with a 'Did you know…?' section.

PEOPLE, PLACES, SPACES

Thinking about people, places and spaces of Sea Island often bring a smile, triggering personal meaning about our experiences with island life. We remember neighbours and classmates; farms, houses, and local stores; and much more. Sea Island heritage is full of stories about people, places and spaces that matter. We want to hear your stories.

CONNECTING

At our *Coffee Chats,* we share memories that make us laugh or bring a tear, feeling proud of our Sea Island connections. Reunions connect us even more. At reunions, Sea Islanders gather to renew old friendships, tell stories, and view items SIHS has collected to preserve as part of our heritage. See the Upcoming Events on pages 3 & 4 for details about monthly Coffee Chats and the Reunion to be held May 28, 2022. We hope you can join us.

President's Message

"A life not documented is a life that within a generation or two will largely be lost to memory."

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HOW THE SEA ISLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY CAME TO BE

Sea Island has always had a very special place in my heart. This is where I grew up and it will always be 'home'.

After the Cora Brown, and Tapp Road subdivisions were expropriated in 1974, the friends and former neighbours of the north side of the Island got together for the first of many Cora Brown reunions which was held on June 2, 1978. What wonderful times to reconnect with all those people who were so important to our lives!

About 1994, one of my friends and I talked about writing a book about Cora Brown and Tapp Road. Seemed like a great idea at the time. However, through the grapevine, we heard that there was another person working on the history – who was this?

We met with Doug Eastman, a former Burkeville resident living in Nanaimo, and immediately decided to join forces and started to collect anything and everything Sea Island. We were lucky to have a few others join us and in 2001, we formally established the **Sea Island Heritage Society** (SIHS).

Over the years, we have gathered quite a collection of history, recollections, memories, and yes, even some historic items, such as one of the wooden swing seats from the Cora Brown Park. We have held Open Houses (usually at the Sea Island Community Hall), attended Burkeville Daze, set up displays at the Richmond Centre Mall, and at the subsequent Cora Brown reunions.

The last Cora Brown Reunion was held on June 2, 2018 – exactly 40 years from the first one.

But from that model, we planned our first **Sea Island Reunion**, which includes anyone who has lived on Sea Island, whether for 5 minutes or 50 plus years. Sadly, COVID hit and our 2020 event was postponed, as was the 2021 event. So, it is with great pleasure that we can say we are looking forward to holding our landmark event in May 2022.

Anyone on our mailing list will receive more information on the Reunion, however, if you know of a current or former Sea Islander who might not be on this list, please let us know.

Eunice Hamalock Robinson

President

Reunion unites Cora Brown expatriates

Residents gather to remember the good old days

On May 19, about 200 former residents of the Cora Brown subdivision will gather at the Richmond Inn for a reunion to talk about what's new, their families and the old days at Cora Brown.

By ROB GEREIN

Imagine a lazy little town sitting on the banks of a raging river where there's no crime, everyone calls each other by their first name and a kid can buy enormous jawbreakers for a nickle.

If it sounds like a community from days gone by, or like a rejected script for the Twilight Zone, you'd be right on the first count.

The rows of wood-structure houses that made up the Cora Brown subdivision have been gone for 16 years now, but for many of its former residents, the mental picture of the Sea Island village refuses to fade.

It's now just vacant brush-land wedged between Vancouver International Airport's southern perimeter and the Fraser River's North Arm, covered with tall weeds and grass, trees and the odd fence post. No remnants exist of the thriving town that was home to hundreds of World War II veterans and their families from 1946 to 1974.

For Eunice Robinson, who spent the first 24 years of her life at Cora Brown, and Dorothy Edinger, who raised a son and daughter there, walking through the deserted field is a bitter-sweet experience.

"It was like a whole little town had to just get up and go," says Robinson of the federal Ministry of Transportation's decision to expropriate the subdivision to make way for airport expansion.

"I don't come by here that much. The last time was a couple of years ago," says Robinson, who lives in Burnaby with her husband and two sons. "It kind of bothers me; it makes me sad."

It's bad enough when you go to the place you grew up to find it's been turned into a parking lot or a convenience store, but when the only inhabitants of the old neighborhood are field mice and seasonal mushroom pickers, it's that much harder to swallow.

"I think everyone that lived here had a very happy childhood — a very stress-free childhood," she says, as we survey the site. "My boys have lived in our house for 19 years, in the same neighborhood, but you just don't get the kind of kinship that we had here."

Cora Brown was blessed with all the natural ingredients that are required for clean, rural living, and yet it was just across the river from a major city. But the river on one side and the airport on the other gave the community an isolated atmosphere.

"We were really cut off here. It was wonderful." It had its own milkman, vast expanses of field for both children and animals alike, and its own store — "it was a kid's dream," says Robinson of Grauer General store, which closed its doors in 1976. "For a nickle, you could walk in there and get awesome jawbreakers."

And the kids didn't need the street smarts to survive like they do today. "When I used to walk home from school, one of the people from Cora Brown would pull up and offer me a ride and it was no problem. You weren't afraid to get in anybody's car because everyone knew each other."

Next week's reunion, the first in six years, will be similar to any gathering of a group of friends who grew up together but haven't seen each other for a while, only with a slight twist. "We were like families set adrift," says Robinson. "So your neighbors became like extended families."

"We don't really dwell on Cora Brown all that much. We talk about kids and family, like a town reunion."

An article from the Richmond Review 13 May 1990 – page 1 – Richmond Archives

UPCOMING EVENTS

COFFEE CHATS

Every 3rd Thursday of the month, up to and including June, from 10 a.m. to noon – on Zoom until we can meet in person at the Sea Island Community Centre.

Join us for the next one on Thursday, April 21.

1ST SEA ISLAND REUNION

Saturday, May 28, 2022 - 11:00 am to 5:00 pm

South Arm United Church. 3 Road and Steveston Highway, Richmond.

Photo - Richmond Archives

If you lived/live on Sea Island, the *Sea Island Heritage Society* invites you to our 1st Reunion. Admission is **$10.00**, to be collected at the door.

We will serve sandwiches and other 'finger-type foods', as well as coffee, tea, and other beverages.

Come join us, renew old acquaintances, share memories and learn more about Sea Island's history. And pass on this invitation to your family and friends who lived on Sea Island.

In order to give our caterer time to purchase and prepare the refreshments, please RSVP no later than May 15, 2022 to any one of the 3 contacts below.

Reunion Contacts & RSVP:

Eunice Hamalock Robinson	604-596-2811	eunice@genbug.ca
Carol King Gordon	604-813-1944	gcarol833@gmail.com
Carole Alexander Lefler	604-853-0867	cjlefler45@gmail.com

SEE YOU THERE!

Sea Island Heritage Society – visit our website at https://seaislandhome.org

BURKEVILLE NEWS

SICA AND YVR MEET

An important meeting between the Sea Island Community Association (SICA) and YVR leadership was held March 31, 2022. SICA requested the meeting with the aim of building a stronger relationship with YVR. Planning for the future was at the heart of the discussion, something important to both groups. SICA invited the Sea Island Heritage Society to join the meeting. In virtual attendance were:

➢ Tamara Vrooman, CEO and Manager of YVR and Mike McNaney, V.P. and Chief External Affairs Officer of YVR;

➢ Tamás Revoczi, President of SICA, and Annemete Jerning, Lori Cockrell, Liz Holstein-Sjerdal; and Norman Hopkins, members of the SICA Community Development Committee (CDC); and,

➢ Eunice Hamalock Robinson, President of Sea Island Heritage Society (SIHS), and Sharon Bordeleau, a Director of SIHS.

SICA provided background and updates about the Burkeville community and the Association. All appreciated learning various perspectives about what it means to work and/or live on Sea Island, both now and in the future. SIHS provided some history during the call. For example, Eunice mentioned that her history on Sea Island went back to 1947. Her parents left in 1974. Sharon took the lead in being on the island for 42 years. She mentioned that her family was six generations on Sea Island. Eunice added that Sharon's maiden name was McDonald, and that McDonald Road and McDonald Beach were named after her ancestors. This little fact was news to several people on the call. Eunice also mentioned that both SICA and SIHS produce newsletters. YVR leadership were interested in receiving them.

SIHS is grateful for SICA's invitation to participate in this important collaborative event and look forward to contributing to discussions that value learning from the past to plan for a strong and healthy future for all members of the Sea Island community.

BURKEVILLE DAZE

This year Burkeville Daze will be held June 26, 2022. Come join the fun. Lots of activities for everyone. SIHS looks forward to being a part of Burkeville Daze. We will have a display of our projects, including the House Histories, School Class Photos, and Pioneers.

PIONEERS

HUGH McARTHUR, A SEA ISLAND FARMER

Hugh McArthur - McArthur Family Collection

Hugh McArthur was born March 31, 1860 in Kincardin, Bruce County, Ontario. His father Donald was born in Scotland as was his mother, Ann McCallum. Hugh was one of eight children.

Hugh married Catherine "Katie" Rowan in 1883 in Kincardin. They had five children. Donald, born 1884 in Kincardin; Margaret "Maggie" born in 1885 in Kincardin; Annabella born in 1892 in Davenport, Washington; Archibald born in 1897 in Davenport, Washington and Rena who was born in 1900 in Eburne.

In the 1901 Canadian Census, Hugh was living on Sea Island as a farmer with his wife and five children. Hugh died in 1951 on Sea Island. His residence was located at 572 Miller Road where he planted a chestnut tree. He is buried in Mountain View Cemetery. Hugh's wife Katie died in 1924 on Sea Island. She is also buried in Mountain View Cemetery.

Katie McArthur - McArthur Family Collection

In 1907, Hugh's son, Donald, married Agnes McCleery in Eburne. In the 1921 Census, Donald was living on Sea Island with his wife, Agnes, and their children John, Mary, Dora and Margaret. He was a cannery foreman. Donald died in Prince Rupert in 1926 . He was managing a fish packing plant. His home was in Kerrisdale.

Also is 1907, Hugh's daughter, Margaret ("Maggie"), married George Lewis Ormsby in Eburne. George was a lumberman and they lived in Vancouver, Lumby, Yale, and Coldstream. Maggie died in 1973 in Coldstream.

In 1917, Hugh's daughter, Annabelle, married Douglas Lee Pogson in Vancouver. He was an accountant. He died in 1976 in Richmond. She died in California in 1983.
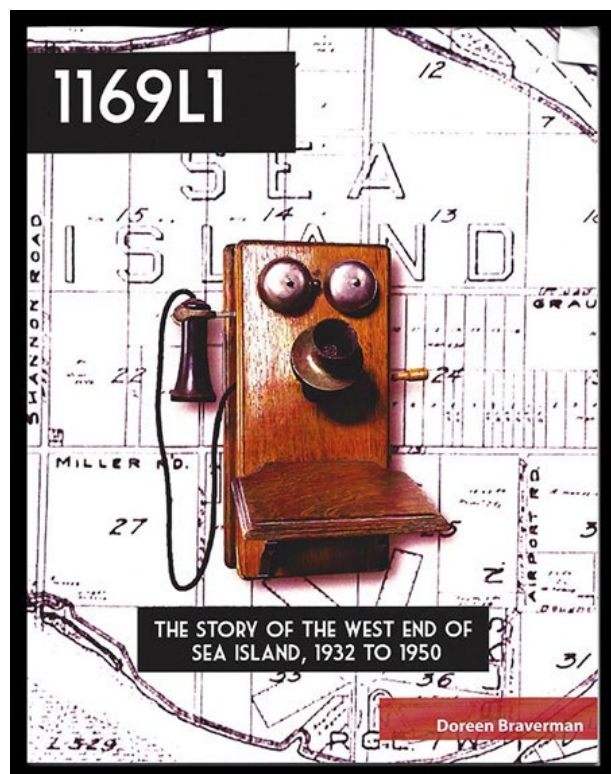
Also in 1917, Hugh's son, Archibald, married Myrtle Maria Hart in New Westminster. They moved to Seattle where he was an engineer on a dredger. He died in 1945 in Seattle.

Hugh's daughter, Rena, did not marry. She was a teacher and remained on Sea Island with her father. She died in Vancouver in 1982.

THE PARTY LINE

by Doreen Braverman

Doreen Braverman was born and raised on Sea Island to Richmond pioneer families: Tom and Ellen Goulding – mother's parents; and Samuel and Anna Montgomery (nee Gilmore) – father's parents. Doreen is the former owner of The Flag Shop and Atlas Textile Print Ltd.

1169L1

THE STORY OF THE WEST END OF SEA ISLAND, 1932 TO 1950

Doreen Braverman

My mother used to call Sea Island the "aristocracy of Richmond." She was referring to the small community at the west-end of the island where we lived until the 50s when the Department of Transport bought us all out to extend the east-west runway.

There were two canneries that pinpointed the area: Acme Cannery and Vancouver Cannery, both owned by B.C. Packers. We lived at Acme Cannery. In between the two canneries were my grandfather's cork mill, some boat houses, and the spotlessly clean shacks where the Japanese fishermen lived until they were moved out in 1942 so they could not transmit messages from Japanese subs supposedly lurking offshore.

You entered our world by taking Miller Road to Shannon Road or Cannery Road. You could also get there by the back-route, past Huggard's farm, by taking Grauer Road. Whatever way, you had to pass Ethel and Manse's house on the corner of Miller and Shannon. It really wasn't a house; it was a garage. When their house burned down in the late 30s, they moved into their garage, temporarily, until a new house could be built. But they never rebuilt. They stayed in the garage. With such a little house to look after, Ethel had lots of time to observe the light traffic going by and to talk…or listen…on the party-line. Between the phone and the corner lot, nothing got by Ethel.

Each party-line had six extensions. Our phone number was 1169L1. It shared the line with L2, L3, R1, R2, and R3. We answered on one ring. Jack, who was the only businessman on the line, was L2.

He answered on two rings. Mrs. Whipple was L3. On the R-side of the line was Ethel – R1; Anne's – R2 and I have forgotten who was R3.

You were not supposed to hear the other side of the line ring but the phone always tinkled a little when the R lines rang. If you weren't busy you could pick up and listen in. Ethel wasn't busy so she listened in a lot. You did not need a newspaper for our world; Ethel knew everything. I often heard my mother say, "there's someone on the line; please hang up," but she rarely did. You could hear a soft click on a hang-up.

None of the women worked out of the home in those days so there were lots of very long telephone conversations after the kids were off to school and the dishes and chores were done. The unwritten rule was, that if anybody picked up on you during a conversation, you signed off your call as quickly as possible. It didn't always work! Jack, the only businessman on the line, would get pretty frustrated trying to make an important business call. One time, when Anne was having a long late-afternoon conversation, and Jack had picked up to use the phone several times, he finally said, "Anne, get off the line, your potatoes are burning." More than potatoes were burning that day!

Mrs. Whipple, the L3 lady, was a horsewoman and dressed in her riding habit all day, every day. Often, she would fall asleep while listening in, putting the whole line out-of-order after the conversationalists hung up. You could hear her snoring on the line. We would yell into the phone, "Mrs. Whipple!" or blow a whistle. Occasionally it worked but often my brother, Tom, would have to ride the half-mile on his bike to wake up Mrs. Whipple. Fortunately, none of us locked our doors in those days so Tom could sneak in and out without waking the old gal.

Party-lines had their good points, too. The houses were acres apart but you were never alone. You could always raise someone by jiggling the receiver, except of course, on the day after Halloween, when the kids had cut the phone wires "just for fun," or after a big storm when a tree crashed over the lines. It was on these occasions that Ethel would have to come out of her little garage-house to hail down a passing car to find out if the break had been reported. All cars stopped for Ethel and she never failed to use the opportunity to exchange the local news.

The above excerpt was taken from Doreen's book, 1169L1, written for the Sea Island Heritage Society and reprinted here with permission. This excerpt also appears in Jackie lee-Son's 1994 publication of Richmond: Secrets & Surprises. Doreen has generously given multiple copies of her delightful book to SIHS. Copies will be available at the Reunion for a donation of $10 each.

MILITARY

SQUADRON LEADER ROY DARYL THOMAS

Have you seen our collection about the lives of military personnel from when they enter the military to when, as veterans, they chose to live on Sea Island? Below is a story about Roy Daryl Thomas, a Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) fighter pilot, who later chose to raise his family in Cora Brown. It is written by his daughter, Barbara Thomas Nielsen.

Daryl THOMAS joined the RCAF in Vancouver in 1940. Though named after an uncle (Roy), he was known by his middle name Daryl. He began his pilot training in Calgary in 1941, training on the Anson, the Crane, the Beaufighter, the Oxford, and the Link. After earning his wings in Calgary as a fighter pilot, Daryl trained other pilots.

In December 1942, he took leave, returning to Vancouver to marry Dorothy TOWNSLEY at St. Mary's Church in Kerrisdale. All of Daryl's brothers (except for Rainald who was a teenager at the time) were overseas, so his cousin, Charles DRANEY, was best man and a fellow airman, Graham FINLAY, was the usher. Dorothy's sister-in-law, Mary Kay THOMAS, and Dorothy's best friend, Margaret Cunningham,

Daryl Thomas' wedding picture

stood up for her. Daryl and Dorothy honeymooned at the Yellowpoint Lodge on Vancouver Island and then they moved to Calgary. Many years later when Daryl and Dorothy moved into assisted living in Salmon Arm, Dorothy spoke with a new person in the lounge that was visiting from Bellingham. Soon a connection was made. The lady was the wife of Graham FINLAY who had been in their wedding party. This story made the Lakeshore News in Salmon Arm.

In December 1943, Daryl trained on the RCAF de Havilland Mosquito, a British light bomber that served many roles. Shortly after, he was transferred out east while Dorothy, then pregnant, returned to Vancouver to live with her parents.

Daryl Thomas – 418 Squadron Mammy Yokum

Daryl was a part of the 418 Squadron out of Edmonton and went overseas in 1944. While not part of the American "Mammy Yokum" Squadron, it was said that the mechanics and ground workers in the RCAF drew these cartoon characters on the planes.

Daryl flew more than 50 sorties, many of them night intruder operations. In 1949, Lieutenant Governor Charles Arthur BANKS honoured Daryl's extraordinary aerial achievement during WWII, presenting him with the

Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) at RCAF Station Sea Island. The DFC is awarded to recipients for heroism while participating in an aerial flight.

Daryl was known as one of the famous "Fighting THOMASES," as five brothers of this family served. They include from oldest to youngest: Lieutenant Douglas Fraser THOMAS (1912-1988) Army; Major Ernest Webb THOMAS Jr. (1914-2004) Seaforth Highlanders; Major Angus Graham THOMAS (1917 – 1991) Army; Squadron Leader Roy Daryl THOMAS (1919-2007) RCAF; and Captain George Philip THOMAS (1920-1972) Army.

During the war, all five of them were overseas and used to get together when on leave. Phil and Angus had met two English girls who shared an apartment in London and this is where they would meet. Both girls (Mary with Phil) and (Nancy with Angus) came to Canada as war brides. While five of six brothers served overseas, their mother, Hilda Mary THOMAS (nee FRASER), worked for the St. Johns Ambulance Corp and was a member of the Seaforth Highlanders Women's Auxiliary.

When Daryl returned from the war, he, Dorothy and his young daughter, Barbara, stayed with Dorothy's parents. In late 1947, they moved into the Army Barracks on Sea Island while waiting for their home in Cora Brown to be built[1]. A year later they moved to 182 Myron Drive. Daryl's brother, Doug, bought one of the Army Barracks on Sea Island, moved it to Ferguson Road and built an addition to create a home for his wife, Mary Kay, and their growing family (over time there were five siblings: Pamela, Ian, Christopher, Maureen and Zoe-Ann). A third brother, Angus, and his war bride, Nancy, lived on Sea Island for a couple of years after the war.

Like many, Daryl transferred to the Reserves after the war. He commanded the 5003 Air Intelligence Unit of the 19 Wing, RCAF (Aux.) as Squadron Leader. In the Reserves, Daryl flew Harvards, Vampires, and Mustangs. In 1955, his logbook noted that he flew Beechcrafts and Lancasters. He retired in 1958 after serving a total of eighteen years in the Regular and Auxiliary arms of the RCAF.

Daryl Thomas – photo of logbook entry

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[1] After WWII, Wartime Housing Ltd. sold homes in the subdivisions of Burkeville and Cora Brown to returning servicemen and their young families. Burkeville homes became available when the Boeing Aircraft Canada Ltd. plant closed on Sea Island in 1945. Cora Brown homes became available in 1946. The veterans who chose to raise their families on Sea Island share a common experience. They all served in the Canadian military as members of either the RCAF, Canadian Army, or the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN).

The Vancouver Airport had a history of airport expansion on Sea Island and by the 60s they needed the land Cora Brown occupied for a new runway. Daryl, Dorothy and their family [Barbara (b 1944), Ron (1949 - 1997) and Daryl (b 1955)] were expropriated in 1961 and they moved to West Vancouver. Barbara stayed behind in the Cora Brown house for the summer, given her job as a Park Supervisor.

Daryl had a strong intergenerational connection to Sea Island. He is the grandson of Angus Carmichael FRASER who purchased a 300-acre farm on Sea Island in 1881 from the McCLEERY brothers. Angus served as a councillor in Richmond in 1882. He later sold the farm to the GRAUERS. The FRASER's ten daughters spent their childhood and elementary school years on Sea Island. One daughter, Hilda Mary, met and married Ernest Webb THOMAS. They had seven sons. The fourth son was Roy Daryl THOMAS. Three of the brothers, Daryl, Doug, and Angus, returned to Sea Island after the war with their families, reconnecting with a unique, inherited sense of family life on Sea Island.

If you have a story to share about your parent, sibling, or friend who served in WWII and later lived on Sea Island as a veteran, SIHS would love to hear from you. Contact Marylin at seaisland20@gmail.com

THE SCOUTING MOVEMENT

WERE YOU A MEMBER OF THE 6TH RICHMOND-GEORGIA SCOUT GROUP?

History of the 6th Richmond-Georgia Scout Group as prepared in March 1986, including a manuscript held by Bob Summers given to the Sea Island Heritage Society.

6th Richmond-Georgia Scout Group

The 6th Richmond Scout Group was formed after the 2nd World War when the community of Burkeville was interested in forming a Scout Group. The Sea Island Community Association had been formed and sponsored the group with a meeting place available at the Community Hall – formerly a barn on the Cooney farm property. Scoutmaster, Gordon Welsh of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), had 12 Scout-age boys to register. Cubmaster Roy Cunliffe, a young man formerly associated with the 40th Marpole Scout Group, had 24 young Cubs to register. On September 16, 1948, application for a Group Charter was requested. Group Charter #579 was issued on November 2nd, 1948, to the newly formed 6th Richmond Scout Group. The Group Committee consisted of Chairman D. J. Pearse, Secretary Mary Gibbs, members D. Norman Eastman and R. Barr, all from the Burkeville community.

By 1955, R.T. (Bob) Summers from Cora Brown was asked if he would help with a second cub pack. Norm Donaldson agreed to become Cubmaster (Akela) and Bob assistant (Baloo). A year or so later Norm could not continue, and Bob became the Cubmaster, continuing for a number of years.

By 1958, Bob French, also from Cora Brown, was Scoutmaster and registered 33 Scouts, the two Cub Packs, A and B, totaled 47 members. By 1960 Scouts registered 32 members and Cubmaster "A" Pack, Janet Etches, registered 29 Cubs, Cubmaster "B" Pack, Bob Summers, registered 23 Cubs, totaling 84 boy members, the highest number to date. In 1961, the older boys formed the 6th Richmond Rover Crew of 7 Rovers with Rover Leader Bob French and, in 1965, increased to 22 Rovers. The membership in these years continued, with dedicated Group Committees and Leaders. In 1965, the 6th Richmond Group admitted boys and leaders from the Armed Forces Base, Department of National Defense, on Sea Island. This community housed families from the armed forces and had been built on the Sherwood Farm acreage as part of the R.C.A.F. Station located there during the war.

6th Richmond-Georgia Scout Group

The 6th Richmond Group continued with Rovers, Scouts, two Cub Packs, with Group Committee members, Leaders and Boys from Burkeville, Cora Brown and Armed Forces Base as a strong Group, taking part in District, Region and National events. Fifteen-year-old Robert C. French, a 6th Richmond Group Queen Scout, worked hard to earn the money for his registration to attend the World Jamboree in Greece. Other Scouts attended the 6th National Jamboree Boy Scouts of America at Valley Forge, U.S.A. The Rovers were an active group of young men, once driving to Three Rivers, Quebec for a Rover Moot, driving continuously for three days and another trip to Expo in Montreal and the East coast. Many Scouts attended the winter camps at Manning Park, year-round camps at Lightning Lakes, Scout camps at Morris Valley on the Gurd property before it became a Richmond District Camp property. Scoutmaster Bob Summers, who later became District Commissioner, relates a story of his Scout group – while hiking from Indian Arm to Squamish on a logging road, they stopped to rest and watch a helicopter lifting log beams. They got up and walked on, a helicopter passed overhead and accidently dropped a large timber in the very spot where the Scouts had just vacated. The 6th Richmond Cubs attended Cuborees at the newly acquired Morris Valley Richmond District Camp – they were the envy of other District Cub Packs as the boys and leaders enjoyed hot water and other comforts, compliments of trained armed forces personnel on staff.

Bob Summers continued as scoutmaster until 1968 when he was approached by Richmond District and Vancouver Coast Region staff to become district commissioner for Richmond. By 1970 the Vancouver Coast region felt that Richmond was too large, actually the largest district in the region (Richmond had 22 active groups and over 1100 boys). Consequently, they split into two districts. Richmond Georgia and Richmond Bogside. He continued as District Commissioner for Richmond Georgia until 1971 when, because of imminent expropriation he resigned, eventually moving out of Richmond.

Contact us to share your stories of Cub, Scout, and/or Rover activities.

HOUSE HISTORIES

The Sea Island Heritage Society is hoping that former and current Sea Islanders will donate or share photos of their homes. For the subdivisions of Tapp Road, Cora Brown, and the PMQ homes on the RCAF base, we can no longer roam the streets taking photos, so we are very interested in receiving these photos. For Burkeville homes, we have been fortunate to be able to take photos for the past several years but would like photos of any houses prior to 2000.

Do you have a picture of the house you lived/live in on Sea Island? Please donate to SIHS or scan and share. Come to the Reunion and see if you can find your house's history.

137 MYRON DRIVE IN CORA BROWN IN 1949

137 Myron Drive was barged over to Gabriola Island in 1973.

121 CATALINA CRESCENT, BURKEVILLE

The right side of this duplex at 121 Catalina Crescent, has now been replaced by this new build – photo taken in May 2016.

DID YOU KNOW …?

➢ By 1861, Hugh & Mary McRoberts settled on the north side of Sea Island (across from 'Vancouver'), about 1 ½ miles from Eburne/Marpole.

➢ Other early settlers include: Henry & Elizabeth Mole; Hugh & Mary Ann Boyd; Joseph Brown; Alexander & Jane Kilgour; James Sanders; Howard & Emmaline DeBeck; John Brough; John & Lida Errington – not all lived on Sea Island but were part of the early history.

➢ By the 1870's some better known pioneer names include: Duncan & Kate McDonald; Hugh & Harriet McDonald; James Miller; Samuel Miller & John Ferguson.

➢ On April 3,1879 a petition was submitted requesting the area known as Richmond to be incorporated as Richmond Municipality. First Municipal Hall for Richmond was the Boyd home.

➢ Main roads on Sea Island were originally numbered 11 through 15. No. 12 became known as McDonald Road and No. 13 became known as Miller Road.

➢ More pioneers arrived – Angus & Annabelle Fraser – their family of 8 daughters married into so many of the early pioneering families – Draney, Arkell, Cook, McIntosh, Dichmont, Thomas, Paton, Gosse. Mr. Fraser's important contribution, along with his partner John Todd, was the establishment of the Richmond Cannery.

➢ The Sea Island Post Office, established in 1885, was not on Sea Island. It was located at the north end of No. 2 Road on Lulu Island and then in 1892 moved to Terra Nova.

➢ William (Harry) Eburne established another Post Office on Sea Island – at the site of the former Grauer's Store.

➢ Prior to 1888, there were no bridges to Sea Island, then the Eburne Bridge (Marpole Bridge) was completed in November 1889, knocked out by ice, rebuilt in 1890. Another bridge, the former Lulu Island Bridge, was built about 1925.

➢ The first school – just one room - was built on Sea Island in 1890 but closed in 1914 when the students were bussed to Bridgeport School on Lulu Island.

➢ More farmers came – William & Mary Nicol; Thomas & Elizabeth Mackie; Thomas & Marion Laing; Jake & Maria Grauer; Ernest & Edith Cooney; William & Charlotte Buckingham; William & Rhoda Buckingham; Hugh and Catherine (Kate) McArthur.

➢ In 1929, 462 acres on Sea Island were purchased to build an airport – some of the farmers whose land became part of the airport acquisition include Wright, Duncan, Hugh & Thomas McDonald, F.J. Hardwick, and later Billy Buckingham.

Look for the "Did you know…?" section of the next newsletter to learn more interesting tidbits of Sea Island.

SPECIAL NOTE

In April 2024, the Royal Canadian Air Force commemorates its centennial year. As part of the celebration, the **Comox Valley Air Force Museum Association** is raising funds to build a pavilion for the *Vampire Mark III*, one of the 442 (Aux) Squadron post-war aircraft that served at RCAF Sea Island. SIHS has donated to this project. Learn more at https://comoxairforcemuseum.ca/vampire-pavilion.

CONTACT US

If you have questions, comments, or want to share your memories and photos, we would love to hear from you.

The membership fee for 2022 is $10 per person.

To submit a letter, documents, photos, or a cheque for your membership via snail mail:

Sea Island Heritage Society
Box 94444
Richmond, BC V6X 8A8

To be added to our e-Newsletter, or send us an email: seaislandbc@gmail.com

To pay your membership by e-Transfer: seaisland20@gmail.com

Website: https://seaislandhome.org

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