

# Newsletter



*Grauer's store, 1973. Photo: City of Richmond Archives, 1996-13-5.*

## WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

### CELEBRATING FAMILIES

This year BC celebrates **Family Day** on February 21st. The day is in recognition of the countless contributions that families make to our lives and communities. This issue of the Sea Island Heritage Society Newsletter is dedicated Sea Island families.

### FAMILY LIFE

Read stories of Sea Island families of past and recent times. Were they your neighbours, classmates or people your parents knew? Hear the adventures of a few brave kids delivering papers on their bikes and one on his horse. If you have a "family life" story to share, we'd love to hear from you. Contact Marilyn at [seaisland20@gmail.com](mailto:seaisland20@gmail.com).

### SIHS REUNION 2022

We plan to hold our first Sea Island Reunion at the end of May if Provincial Public Health Orders regarding COVID-19 allow. We will require all attendees to be fully vaccinated and show their QR code and ID. Invitations will only be sent to those former and current Sea Islanders whose email addresses we have on our Contact List. Message Eunice at [eunice@genbug.ca](mailto:eunice@genbug.ca) if you are not on the list and want to be included.

## President's Message

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



Celebrating Sea Island families, friends and community this month is easy, especially with Valentine's Day and Family Day on the calendar! Remember the rush to the store to buy Valentine cards for your family, classmates, co-workers, and neighbours; and the hours spent cutting them out so carefully? The little red cinnamon heart candies and the art projects of making Valentine's Day decorations for your classrooms? I wonder how many pounds of red paper, white paper doilies, and paste went into these creations? I'm sure the teachers were relieved once the cards were completed and happily shared. What memories do you have of Valentine's Day?

Remember playing Kick the Can or Hide and Seek with the neighbourhood kids, catching tadpoles and frogs in the ditches, sharing the bounty from fruit trees and gardens, or gathering for a neighbourly feast on corn? Remember the freedom we had as kids because our families knew the neighbourhood was watching out for us? We'd love to hear about your experiences growing up on Sea Island.

In gathering the stories for this issue, we had a hard time choosing which ones to share with you. The McDonald family has a great legacy of having 6 generations living on Sea Island. And there is still a couple of landmarks to acknowledge their history - McDonald Road and McDonald Beach. For those of you who live or lived in Burkeville, were you aware of who owned the land before the subdivision was built? We still have the legacy of the Sea Island Community Hall, thanks to Ernest Cooney. We are grateful to Mrs. Janet Etches for taking the time to write her memories of Sea Island years ago and thank Duncan & Rob for their permission to share it with you. We are also happy to share the story of Don Shaw, who lived in Burkeville, in the same house from 1943 to 2021 - appreciate his daughter Brenda sharing his story with Burkeville neighbour, Karen Parker.

We had been gathering the information on the paper boys of Sea Island for quite some time. But if you were missed, we'd love to hear from you and add you to the file. And paper girls?? I'm sure there were some of you, too.

We held our first Sea Island Coffee Chat for 2022 last month, and although there weren't many of us, we had a great time sharing our memories. We look forward to seeing a few more of you at the February Chat on February 17th - we 'open' the doors at 9:30 am.

We'd love to have you share your memories and photos with us.

Let's stay connected - check out our website <https://seaislandhome.org> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/seaislandheritagesociety>. Keep safe and healthy.

*Eunice Robinson*



President

Sea Island Heritage Society

## UPCOMING EVENT

**COFFEE CHAT** - Our next Coffee Chat is February 17, 2022. Join Sea Island friends every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month up to and including June 2022 from 10 am to noon. Send a request for the Zoom link to [seaisland20@gmail.com](mailto:seaisland20@gmail.com).

**Sea Island Heritage Society Reunion** - Join us for our first reunion on May 28, 2022 at the Sea Island Elementary School gym to meet new and "old" friends and neighbours. Share stories, laugh a lot, and learn more about the heritage of Sea Island.

## SEA ISLAND FAMILY LIFE

### SEA ISLAND 1861-1885

Hugh McDonald and his brother Duncan purchased land on Sea Island in 1875. Though they didn't live on island at first, a community was already being established. Earlier, in 1861, Hugh McRoberts had purchased land and built a homestead on the northeast side of the island. Later, in 1871, he sold portions of his property to Christopher and Robert Wood. Hugh Boyd and Alexander Kilgour also purchased land, joining other farmers on the island. The pioneering spirit was strong among those living on the island and quickly moved towards establishing a local government.

Within a few years, the Township of Richmond was formed, the first meeting held at the home of Hugh Boyd and Alexander Kilgour on January 5, 1880 at which time Hugh Boyd became the Reeve. In 1882, a growing fishing industry resulted in the first of many canneries being built on the island. By the mid-1880s, Hugh McDonald was homesteading on Sea Island and about to be married. The following is the story of Hugh and Harriet McDonald (née Stephens) and their legacy of six generations living on Sea Island, three generations of which continue to live there today.

## THE MCDONALDS - A PIONEER SIX-GENERATION SEA ISLAND FAMILY

*Written by Sharon (McDonald) Bordeleau, 2022*

In 1874, Hugh McDonald and his brother Duncan McDonald left Glengarry, Ontario and travelled to the fledgling city of Vancouver. In 1885, Hugh married Harriet Rebecca Stephens in New Westminster, BC and they moved to the land that Hugh and Duncan had purchased on Sea Island. They had a family of 2 girls and 3 boys.



*Photo of Harriet and Hugh McDonald (Sharon Brodeleau Collection)*

Hugh Herbert Donald McDonald, the 3rd child of Hugh & Harriet McDonald, was born in 1888, in Eburne, Sea Island. In 1910, Hugh married Mary Jane (Babe) Draney, in Vancouver, BC. They also farmed on Sea Island. They had two sons: Hugh Lawrence and Milo Leroy 'Roy'.





*Babe & Hugh McDonald with their oldest son, H. Lawrence (Sharon McDonald Bordeleau Collection)*

Lawrence McDonald became a truck driver and lived on Lulu Island. In 1939, he married Jean May Studley Forsyth, in the South Arm United Church, Richmond, BC. In 1943, Lawrence was asked to help on his aunt & uncle's farm on Sea Island, so the family moved there with their small daughter Sharon. Later their son Reg joined the family.



*Lawrence & Jean McDonald on their wedding day.*

Sharon and her brother Reg were the 4th generation of McDonalds to live on Sea Island. They both attended Sea Island School from Grades 1 to 6. When Sharon married Charles 'Charlie' Bordeleau, they were living on Lulu Island, but then moved back onto Sea Island, where they raised their 3 sons: Allan, Wayne and Ron. Ron and his wife live on Sea Island, across the road from Sharon and Charlie. They have one daughter, Chanell, who is the 6th generation McDonald to live on Sea Island.

Visit <https://www.seaislandhome.org/> for more Sea Island pioneer stories.

## SEA ISLAND 1934-1946

Commercial air transportation service began on Sea Island in 1934 and quickly dominated the airport that had just opened in 1931. In 1936, the Federal Government created the Department of Transport and airport infrastructure expanded quickly. With an impending World War II and the only established airbase on the West Coast, the airport became a defence zone operational base of the RCAF. More and more, land was expropriated by the Federal Government. The Canneries were closing by the mid-1930s, yet many of the Japanese Canadian community of cannery workers stayed to work on the fishing boats and live on the dyke. However, by 1942 Nikkei fisherman and their families were being forcibly interned.

Sea Island was undergoing rapid change because of the war effort. With the establishment of the Boeing Aircraft Factory, the community of Burkeville was created to house 300 families so they could live near their place of work. This meant the land owned by Ernest Cooney, James Erskine and Robert Boyd was expropriated and used for Burkeville. Initially, the houses were rental units. However, in 1947 the houses became part of the Municipality of Richmond and were sold to renters and returning veterans. Because of the postwar housing shortage, Veterans Land Settlements subdivisions, such as Cora Brown on the northeast side of the island, were built for returning veterans. The first residents moved in December 1946. The following two stories are about families who moved to Sea Island during this time.

### THE ETCHES - A VETERAN FAMILY

*Written by Janet ETCHES, 2002; shortened for SIHS newsletter by Marylin Low, 2022.*

Etches, James (Jim) and Janet. Ch: Duncan and Robert. - r 128 McDonald Road, Cora Brown.

We lived 22 years on Sea Island and I think I was just as sad to leave there as I was leaving Scotland as a "War Bride" in December 1946. At that time, I was coming to meet my husband Jim Etches, a veteran, with our 3-month-old son, Duncan, whom he had not seen. He had come home earlier in March to purchase a bungalow on an acre of land on the Cora Brown subdivision under the Veterans Land Act. Some fifty veterans eventually lived there.

I came by sea on the Samasia to Halifax, and then by train to New Westminster where Jim's parents met us, on Boxing Day 1946. After two weeks, we moved into 128 McDonald Road. It all looked so



*Etches home on McDonald Road. Janet Etches Collection.*

bleak and bare and dreary to me—no trees, water everywhere and those open ditches on both sides of the road! Muskrats lived on the banks of the ditches; in the evenings you could hear them plop into the water at high tide. In spring, the frogs filled the slough across the road in Grauer's field. What a chorus of croaking every night! It was so different from the countryside I had left behind.

However, Spring came and Jim cut down all the long grass around the house, and Jake Klein came to plough up the half acre close to the house with his tractor. From an abandoned garden in

Burkeville, Jim transplanted some fruit trees at the edge of the slough, which ran through our acre. That winter the trees sat in water. In a year or two, we had to move the trees to the drier half acre closer to the house. There was a weeping willow, pear, apple, cherry plum, a yellow egg plum and two small quince. In time, all the fruit trees bore fruit, even the little quince. We could order groceries by phone and have them delivered by Grauer's van. A fisherman came sometimes, as well as a Chinese vegetable cart with lots of fresh vegetables. The Watkins man sold spices and ointments from door to door.

Jim got me a washing machine with a wringer, all automatic. I had a clothesline, and the clothes always smelled so fresh from the sea breeze that we always had on Sea Island. When we needed a new clothesline pole, Jim dug a huge hole one evening ready for when the new pole would arrive. I went to look in the daytime and was surprised to find the hole full of water. In the evening when Jim looked in, it was empty! It was then we knew the whole land was tidal, not just the ditches. At low tide, they were



*Jim and Janet Etches. Janet Etches Collection.*



empty but full of black mud and gasses. I learned this when Duncan fell in our ditch at the age of four; I had to burn all his clothes, as I could not get rid of the odour.

Hallowe'en was a memorable time. All the parents knew the children and they could travel far and wide "to trick or treat." Sometimes we would be the ones to have the bonfire and cocoa, and cookies to end the evening. Jim collected all the bits of lumber from his projects and all the tree pruning for the bonfire. Parents and children brought their firecrackers to finish off a great day.

Duncan and Robert attended the co-op kindergarten held at Burkeville Community Hall. All the mothers helped with snacks and clean-up, and many long-lasting friendships were made. Sea Island Elementary School was also in Burkeville, and we joined the PTA. At one meeting, an appeal was made for volunteers for a Fire Department to be established. Jim and Alan Douglas, our neighbour, became members of the new Volunteer Fire Brigade. They were called out at all hours of the night and would don their helmet, jacket, and rubber boots which hung by the door. If it was



*The Etches family - Jim, Janet, Duncan and Robert. Janet Etches Collection.*

a big fire, I would go over to Douglas' and I watched from their upstairs window. We had many picnics and social events at Christmas with the firemen and their wives.

Duncan joined the See-on-ee Cub pack when he was 8 years old. I knew Ernestine Baker, the cub leader, and on her retirement for health reasons, she persuaded me to become Akela. Later



Robert also joined our pack and Duncan went to Bob French's Scout Troop. Margaret Novak was Baloo and Marjory Heath, Bagheera. When we took the cubs up the mountain in winter, Jim and some other parents always helped to drive. In summer we took the bus to Stanley Park and mothers helped us. A second pack was formed and Isabel Kellett was Akela. The two of us went to Robert's Creek near Sechelt to spend a week on cub work to earn our Gilwell Beads. Duncan and Robert, along with many others, became Queen Scouts and all the parents involved went to Victoria to see them presented with their certificates.

My brother came to visit in 1948 - the year when the Fraser River flooded up the valley. The river rose very high around the Grauer Store at Eburne and Jim and my brother joined the Sea Island men in their sandbag efforts, and no great floods took place there, though it was threatening. After 15 years, I went back to Scotland for a visit to see my mother and brother. All the neighbours had a picnic for me at French's backyard. Such a surprise it was. They presented me with a big suitcase for my trip.

By 1969 we were expropriated and left Cora Brown subdivision with tears in our eyes. We look back on those marvelous sunsets in the west on summer evenings, the lifetime of friendships, and much hard work to turn that bleak, bare landscape I first saw into a garden with trees and flowers. The ditches and the river were all part of our family life with happy and sad memories shared.

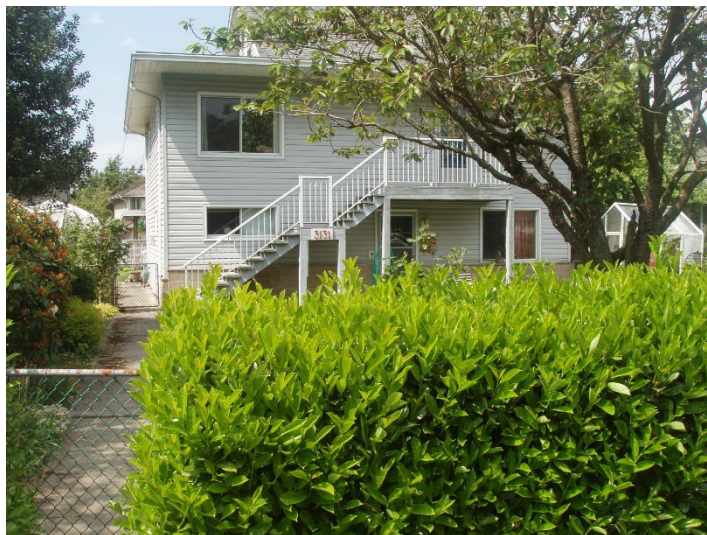
### **DONALD (DON) SHAW - A BURKEVILLE SON**

Shaw, Donald (Don) and Lorraine. Ch: Brenda and Ray. - r 313/3131 Douglas Crescent, Burkeville



*Don in chair - Shaw Family Collection.  
Courtesy of Sea Island Times, Jan/Feb  
2022.*

Don Shaw (1938-2021) lived in Burkeville from 1943-2021. His father, working at the Boeing factory, moved his family into rental housing in Burkeville, later purchasing the house they rented. Don stayed, married, raised a family, taught math, and grew to love growing dahlias and sharing them with neighbours. He is described



*House - Courtesy of  
Eunice Robinson, taken  
May 17, 2018. SIHS  
Collection.*

by those who knew him as kind, optimistic and determined. Recently, a Burkeville neighbour, Karen Parker, and Don's daughter, Brenda, reflected on Don's life as they walked through Burkeville past the Shaw house on Douglas Crescent. Read more in Karen's tribute to Don's life and dahlias in the Jan/Feb 2022 issue of Sea Island Times - a newsletter by the Sea Island Community Association (SICA) of Burkeville. Contact Karen for an e-copy at [kp@kpartist.com](mailto:kp@kpartist.com).

## NEWSPAPER CARRIERS

Many sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, and friends delivered newspapers on Sea Island. Communities were proud of their efforts and would watch out for the carriers through all types of weather and at all hours of the day. Here are stories some of the carriers shared.

### FRED COLBURN

I got up at 5:00 am rain or shine and rode my bike to Butler's Store on the corner of Grauer and McDonald to pick up papers. From there, I rode to McDonald and Miller to deliver one paper, then west on Grauer to deliver one or two more papers. From there, I rode along McDonald to Ferguson and down Ferguson to the very end to the Hoggard farm, delivering about 6 papers on the way. Then, back down Ferguson to McDonald and north on McDonald to the Tapp Road subdivision to deliver about 10 more papers. I was back home by about 7:00am to have breakfast with my dad before he left for work. In all I had about 20 customers from whom I collected a monthly subscription.

I remember the cold snowy and windblown mornings. And, the fog, it was so thick one morning, I couldn't see the white line on the road in front of me and rode my bike right into the ditch, soaking all my papers and injuring my ego. In the summer when it was just getting light out was one of the good times. I would sometimes grab a hold of the back of a farmer's truck who farmed west of the Hoggard farm. He drove very slowly. I would hitch a ride all the way down Ferguson Road. I also remember, "borrowing" apples and cherries from a few homes along the way, as one got fairly hungry pedalling for two hours 6 days a week.

### DAN HAMBLIN

In the mid '60s, I delivered papers in Burkeville for about 2 years, using a girl's bike with a big metal carrier up front as it was easier to stop and balance the bike. I liked to watch the water walkers in the ditch as I cycled back and forth from Cora Brown where I lived to Burkeville where I delivered papers. I won a contest because I signed up over 100 subscriptions (I was one of five carriers in Richmond to win). The photo and caption include Richmond Review newspaper carriers that all won an all-expenses paid trip to Seattle's Science Centre. As the first-place winner, I was presented with a watch. I remember the trip to Seattle where I watched Mutiny on the Bounty and



at a restaurant was served an order of soggy spinach. I bought a pair of Space Needle cufflinks for my father who never wore shirts that needed cuff links!



*Prize Winning Carriers. Mickey Carlton. Richmond Review. October 28, 1964, p.9. The City of Richmond Archives.*

## DOUG EASTMAN

I delivered the morning Province and the Monday Star Weekly to some parts of Burkeville and to the PMQs and the RCAF Women's Barracks on the station. The route must have included delivery to the airport as I recall going up the backstairs to the weather office. Mrs. Durham's paper shack was in her backyard opposite the community hall. This was where all carriers met to receive the papers, add any flyers and fold them so they'd fit in our cloth paper bags. Folding them tight prevented them from blowing in the wind and easy for chucking onto porches. Not many flyers in those days. We had to add the colour funnies section to the Saturday papers. They were always the heaviest loads.

**JIMI LOCKMAN**

My bike was just like those at the corner store! There were 3 Vancouver Province routes on my side of Sea Island: (Burkeville) Boeing-left, including the Air Base; Boeing-right, including up to Grauer



*Joe's Lunch Bar 1950s. Photo donated to SIHS by Arnold Wolfson.*

Store; and Airport-South. I did them all, but I liked the Airport-South route best. It was the most desirable. I also delivered to the Slater home in Eburne on Airport Road. I picked up my papers at 4 am, 6 days a week at the Bus Shelter on Airport Road and Hudson. I earned \$57 dollars a month. I believe I did that from 1963 to maybe 1968. Those earnings enabled me to go to a movie on Saturdays and buy my lunch every day at Steves' Fish 'n Chips! Most importantly though, it gave me a great deal of independence...which I needed because my parents were very strict!

**DON MARSHALL**

This is a front-page article in the Vancouver Province, January 25, 1954, about the 30" snowfall in the Vancouver area featuring a picture of me, Don Marshall of 161 Myron Drive, riding my horse, Tiny, to deliver Province newspapers. The Marpole-Richmond Review published the same picture a few days later. I knew I was more fortunate than carriers on bikes or walking in the deep snow.

I only delivered the Province in Cora Brown. I used to hang out at Cliff and Stella Kingston's place as they had horses. That was on a corner on the way to McDonald beach. They had two older daughters (Rose and Louise). If I recall right, Sharon McDonald lived west of Kingstons. In between Kingston's and McDonald's was a house that had horses. That might have been Pam Thmas and her brother Ian. When I delivered papers on my bike, their dog and I had a run in and one of us just about killed the other. Even after that, it still carried on (poor dog).



*A Horse with a Mission. Marpole-Richmond Review. January 27, 1954, page 5. Courtesy of the Vancouver Province.*



**DICK MCCLELLAN**

I delivered the Vancouver Province paper in the early '60s. We would meet at Butler's store, corner of Grauer and McDonald, to get papers that were delivered to a large wooden box. I had one of the two Province routes in the Cora Brown area. After picking up the papers, I rode to Miller Road and headed west to Shannon Road, then north along Shannon about halfway to Ferguson turned on another road headed west - one customer there - then back to Shannon to Ferguson. Next, I went east on Ferguson to McDonald. The route ended they're having delivered 12 papers early enough in the morning to be finished in time to go to school. The Province newspaper paid me an extra \$12.00 per month for the route, as the number of papers did not generate much revenue. Most days went fine unless I had a flat tire or other such trouble. Then, I would stop at one of the houses on the route, as most were up that early doing farm chores, and they would stop what they were doing to help me call my dad to come and get me. If something happened close to home, I would just push the bike the rest of the way.

**BOB MENEICE**

I was both a Vancouver Province and Sun paper carrier in Cora Brown. I took over the morning route from Fred Colburn and afternoon route from Richard Stark. I have fond memories of delivering papers and it is probably why I know every one that lived in Cora Brown. I also knew where every strawberry patch was and where all the best fruit trees were. I will tell you one story that I'm not proud of. It was a sunny day and there were chickens by Mrs. Jones' house. I picked up a rock and threw it. It hit one chicken in the head - dead dead dead - I panicked and rode off thinking no one saw me. At 5:00 pm there was a knock on my front door, and it was Mrs. Jones with the dead chicken. She said, "Bobby, if you are going to kill it, you will pluck and eat it." She was a very nice lady that Mrs. Jones. PS I still know where all those fruit trees are/used to be.

**JOE MITCHELL**

The new subdivision of Burkeville had just completed its first house at 300 Lancaster Crescent on



January 11, 1944. Joe Mitchell was the first newspaper carrier to sign up and deliver a Vancouver Province newspaper. This news made the front page of the Vancouver Province with a picture showing Joe signing up Mr. Morris Neville. Joe and his older brother, Jack, framed and donated the picture to the Sea Island Heritage Society in 2006. Jack delivered papers all over Sea Island in the late 30s and 40s.

*Joe & Jack Mitchell donated picture of Province paper delivered in Burkeville. Photo by Doug Eastman taken at Sea Island Community Hall, May 6, 2006. SIHS Collection.*

## RICHARD STARK

I delivered the Vancouver Sun for three or four years and always had to pedal out to drop off one paper at Grauer's farm, against the rain or wind whichever was worst. What a ride that was. Picked up the papers at Butler's store after school and always had a Pepsi, O'Henry and a comic book every day. Should have kept the comic books as they are worth a fortune now. I won three trips to the summer camp on Bowen Island for the paperboys with no complaints for the full year. Fantastic time. I believe they were all great people on Sea Island because I did have to stay after school a few times so the paper must have been late but still no complaints.

## SCREENSHOT

A screenshot of the January 2022 Coffee Chat participants. Mark your calendar for the next one set for February 17, 2022.

Contact Marylin at [seaisland20@gmail.com](mailto:seaisland20@gmail.com) for the link.



## 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](mailto:seaislandbc@gmail.com)

To pay your membership by e-Transfer: [seaisland20@gmail.com](mailto:seaisland20@gmail.com)

Website: <https://seaislandhome.org>

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/seaislandheritagesociety>