

Mrs. Vera (McMyn) O'Dell, 78

Interview March 30, 1972

1134 No. 5 Road

James McMyn, 17, Vera's father came with 2 brothers and 2 cousins came from Scotland to Canada - came to San Francisco first, because no railway. to Richmond 1880 - McMyn brothers bought east half of Smith estate in 1883 and sold it 1889 - father bought Hector McDonald's farm, slough district - Uncle William McMyn farmed Maple Ridge - John McMyn retired same time - a murder every night on Barbary Coast so left San Francisco - Mother told of many Indians - Dad brought kilt and scared Indians with bagpipes - Indians came in hundreds to nearby wharf, Woodward's Wharf - caught the transfer boat to go to Steveston and Westminster - 1st year Dad said River froze - on ice to take hay to Westminster and for groceries - house flooded once - house full of water and had to go upstairs - father married Emma Smith about 1892 - grandmother, Aunt, came to Canada with Mother - John Ferguson, bachelor, with Uncle - Smith's had beautiful land sold part farm for Oak St. bridge - Indians parked canoes, walk along road, Mother made family hide - Indians walked along No. 5 Road to pick blueberries - recalls trading old clothes for Indian baskets - fires burned in bog - one fire next door - Mr. Gay had cow, peat burned, Jersey cow's feet burned off and died.

-Transfer brought pigs for farmers - father had help clearing land - pig loose, became wild - incident Chinese workers alarmed - pig shot.

-Vera born March 29, 189 (4 or 6) at home - house formerly on Slough, moved down to higher spot (now) - sisters, brother all born original locale - father had 300 acres when died.

Sisters: Edith (California) widow, Vera, Jean (Mrs. Earl Duke), Vancouver Georgina, widow, Grace, (Mrs. Richard Lang) Maple Grove, brother Gordon Thomas, died at 48.

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Mrs. Vera O'Dell

- started school at 5 years English School, Steveston Highway and Shell Rd.
- scared, couldn't speak - teacher Miss Marsden - was sent to Yale, to All Hallows School for Girls 2½ years - farm life at home - Chinese cook
- Mother 1st price at Fair for bread made butter - raised 6 children - picked raspberries, blackberries on own farm - old Chinese came around sold blackberries - Dad sold milk - hauled water from Fraser for washing
- paid 10¢ tin for city water for drinking in empty milk containers.
- with grandmother rode in horse and buggy on Granville St. - scared of tall trees - at 5 years.
- father shot black bear on property when Vera was 10 years - Chinese ate it - bear was eating berries - Chinese were friends - stole chickens early days - story young policeman Alec Main went to catch Chinese, disappeared, found with log on top, murdered - 5 Chinese put in jail.
- grandmother told of being on farm one Saturday morning and bare naked Indian sitting on doorstep with knife at waist - granny ordered children upstairs - men out in the fields - no sound made - Indian waited 2 - 3 hr then left - Vera heard of man scalped.
- made necklace of rosebuds - loved early days - forbidden for kids to play in barn because of hired men - had oil lamps - cleaned them - had beautiful horses - one was taken to W.W. 1 - had race horses - had 25 cattle - father good to hired men - Jim Blue intoxicated - ran up street bare naked.
- 7-9 hotels in Steveston - rode horseback - Vera took 1st prize at Fair - went to dances, Opera House, beautiful - many aristocrats - Anglican Minister Rev. Donaldson - Mrs. Donaldson was Gladstone's neice, taught them Sunday School.

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1914 W.W. I came - worked for Red Cross - helped parties - has life badge from Canadian Red Cross.

-stopped school at 17 years - 2 sisters taught school, one at Bridgeport and the other at Mitchell - Vera stayed home and helped mother - taxes on farm \$300 before W.W. I - when more land nearer \$1,000 - when Dad came more money belts with shillings - grew hay, oats on farm - had own bailer and threshing machine, milking machine - had big barn - blew down night of Freda storm - electrical towers at Woodward's Landing blew down earlier - Huston Bros. had cannery at Rice Mill site - tide from Westminster washed it away - Jim Gibson had farm next door - Gibson Dairy in Vancouver - beautiful cattle.

-Vera married 1929 to Harry O'Dell, husband died 1944 - was B.C. Electric -went to Fair, Westminster - went on Transfer boat with sister stayed with Curtis, wonderful people, had drug store.

-celebrated May 24 - went to Steveston in horse and buggy - had Oakland car 1909 - 2nd or 3rd car on Lulu Island.

-rode trams - knew conductors, Boston, Jim St. Mars - cost 20¢ - sometimes got free ride if flirt with conductor.

-got first bike at 11 years - Dad bought her little red bike - turned into ditch, wet - Dad saved 2 children from being drowned in ditch.

-went to Boundary Bay summers - Bob Alexander's owned property - went camping - liked painting, drawing - teacher Mr. Woolcraft comment.

Gordon McConnell No. 3 and River good at drawing - given Centennial Medal, spoon, Red Cross life medal.

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