

AGRICULTURE - Early Sea Island

Tape 30, S.2

Mrs. Mary Boston,  
Apt. 1001, 1025 Gilford St.  
Vancouver, B.C.

Interviewed: April 16, 1973.

Born August 3, 1889 on Sea Island (Mrs. Boston thinks she is the oldest living person born on Sea Island).

1886 - Father William Williamson and mother came to Sea Island, after the railroad came through . . . rented a farm called "Sandridge" from Martin and Shannon . . . father had a few cows, grew hay . . . farm was at the west end of Sea Island next to the Musqueam Indian Reservation . . . when Mary was 5 the family moved to a farm owned by William Nichol, in the old airport area.

. . . at age of 12 parents bought an 80-acre farm on Miller Road. Started school at age of 7 . . . walked to school to "little red school house" never missed a day, never late . . . the one room school extended to 2-room school and smaller grade moved to new room. Teachers - favorite was Mr. Barton . . . also Mr. Brown and Mr. McMaster . . . Frankie Sexsmith and her sister Myrtle married two Foster brothers . . . teacher Miss Reid's mother was the school trustee in Vancouver. Favorite subject was spelling . . . never played hockey . . . knew Bella Gordon (Mrs. Fred Hall) of Terra Nova.

People of Lulu Island and Sea Island saw each other at early Presbyterian Church, Sea Island on Sunday . . . Mary Williamson was first child christened in Sea Island . . . Reverend Buchanan was first minister recalled . . . 1908 Mary was married to George Boston, B.C. Electric Motorman by Rev. John Logan . . . met her husband travelling "to and fro" on interurban.

During school years Mary helped at home . . . collected eggs . . . carried milk from the barn . . . father had about 20 cows on the last farm . . . horse-drawn milk wagon picked up their milk cans

at roadway to go into Vancouver.

Came in by horse and buggy to Vancouver . . . never by stage-coach (operated by the Steves) . . . didn't go swimming.

Visited Vancouver Cannery on Sea Island for a potlatch, Indians cooked salmon . . . potlatch went on for days . . . Indians worked at canneries, fished . . . none at school.

At school recalls 4 Chinese boys . . . one was Mah Bing of Lulu Island.

Saw bluffs of crabapple bushes . . . on the Nicholl farm next to the water had an orchard . . . Indians swiped the apples . . . children were afraid to go in the orchard . . . father didn't try to stop the Indians.

Mary came into Vancouver every morning to learn dressmaking from Madame McGregor, 60 Cordova Street, for six months . . . brother drove her over old Marpole Bridge to catch the interurban at Marpole . . . reminisces "stories the old bridge could tell" . . . remembers Grauer corner store . . . Mrs. Grauer ran the butcher shop . . . Mr. Grauer did the buying . . . Mary went to school with the boys and girls . . . all but Albert (called Dell) . . . grocery store was run by Churchill and McKay.

Married at 18 - husband George Boston worked as a motorman for 40 years for B.C. Electric . . . son Bill now works on freight line B.C. Hydro . . . another son Evan teaches art, another son George lives in apartment house, daughter Dorothy Cruickshank on Westminster Highway. Mary and George Boston lived in Kitsilano district after they were married, and George worked interurban route Vancouver to Steveston.

Everyone very friendly on Sea Island . . . recalls big threshing machines . . . everyone loved to come to her home because of mother's good meals . . . mother baked lots of bread, apple pies, Mary didn't pick blackberries . . . had Roy Ketcheson's machine rented for threshing, supplied own horses - Clydesdales.

Brothers shot ducks, pheasants nearby . . . laws re seasons enforced by game wardens.

Went into Steveston . . . met her husband there . . . caught C.P.R. ferry to Sydney to visit sister . . . Walker's Emporium was store in Steveston . . . shopped in Vancouver . . . on Marpole side of family got groceries from Griges Brothers . . . saw deer in Marpole woods then.

D. Cleland