

History of Agriculture on Salt Spring Island

Farms, Farmers and Farming

1859 - 1885

by
Morton B. Stratton

August 15, 1991

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Settlement and the struggle for Survival 1859-1885

The heyday of the small family farm from 1885 to 1914

The Farmer and Society (organisations, and the life of the farmer)

World War I - labour shortage, bad weather, soil depletion - end of an era

Between the Wars

- 1918 to mid 1920's Difficult Years
- mid to late 1920's The Prosperous Years
- 1930's The Great Depression

Postscript - Post-War decline of farming as the mainstay of the island economy

Final Word:

“Despite the exodus from the farm and the change in the island’s population, if one takes the time in the 1990’s to visit the farmers markets in Ganges on a Saturday morning, or watch the coming and going of patrons at the farm stores and nurseries, it would appear that creative use is still being made of the soil. The old C.P.R. boats are gone, cattle, hogs and sheep are seldom seen on the ferries going off island to market, but there is still an amazing variety of small-scale agricultural production as is evidenced also in the marvellous exhibits on display at the rejuvenated Fall Fair”

HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE ON SALT SPRING ISLAND-

by Morton Stratton

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I. HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE ON SALT SPRING ISLAND--

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Edward Mallandaine in his British Columbia Directory, 1887 says of Salt Spring Island: "It will be always remembered as absolutely the first agricultural settlement in the then Colony of Vancouver [Island]." (1) The pioneer farmers of the Saanich Peninsula and the Cowichan Valley might have quibbled with this assertion but in any case from the day the first party (including Mallandaine) set foot on shore at Vesuvius (2) until after World War II Salt Spring remained almost exclusively a farming community. There was some fine sandstone exported from the northwest coast of the island between Vesuvius and Southey Point. (3) And several farmers dreamed of striking it rich from gold, silver, coal and even salt. (4) But it was not to be. Nor in fact were any real fortunes made from farming. Eighty per cent of Salt Spring is rugged, rocky mountainside and the twenty per cent of the land suitable for agriculture was mostly scattered in little pockets in low-lying areas under one hundred metres where soil had accumulated since the retreat of the glaciers. (5) Farming on a large scale was simply not possible. Given the limitations set by the environment, pioneering especially was not easy. Reverend Wilson was quite right in commenting in 1895: "For a long time life on the island was of a very rough character, and they had much to contend with." (6)

In a perceptive essay on "Early Days on Saltspring Island" A.F. Flucke perhaps best sets the tone for a discussion of agriculture and the farming life on our rugged, wooded island.

"Saltspring Island is simply the story of pioneer agricultural settlement, from the first somewhat unenthusiastic pre-emptions of unsurveyed land by would-be settlers whose limited resources would supply them with nothing better through long years of struggle with a rugged terrain that yielded only grudgingly to the axe and plough, and an insecurity of life and livelihood that gave rise to many tensions and frictions to an island community, self-respecting and in many ways self-sufficient. It is the story of determined farmers, in a period when contact with the outside world meant a struggle of a day or more over trackless hills to the nearest boat-landing and governmental authority was distant and not too interested in a polyglot of squabbling settlers and their problems, who seized their little parcels of land, endured solitude, sometimes privation, and not infrequently danger from animal and human enemies, and who finally established themselves in a firm agricultural security....Taken as a whole, the natural resources of the island symbolize solid mediocrity. There was a little of this and a little of that--a few minerals, a few fertile areas, a little building-stone, a little marketable timber--but no outstanding blessings that could bring rewards disproportionate to the labour involved. The story of Saltspring, like that of many another pioneer settlement, is the story of sheer hard work, redeemed only by the equable climate and the natural beauty of the island." (7)

And for the first two or three decades there was very little time even for the enjoyment of the climate and scenery. But by the 1880's a few farmers who were either more tenacious or who had hit upon the more favoured locations were well established. Markets were opening up for their produce, neighbours were moving in and a sense of community was building. If ever there were "good old days" on Salt Spring it was in the years from about 1885 to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Immigrants, many well heeled, moved in, agricultural output expanded rapidly (for a time Salt Spring was the third most important fruit producing area in the province), the amenities of life developed--roads, schools, churches, agricultural societies, a resident doctor, frequent steamer service to the outside world. Log houses gave way to more comfortable and stylish frame dwellings; big barns were erected, some farm machinery was imported and the Ganges Creamery laid the basis for a profitable dairy industry. The Jersey herds scattered through the island must have been a pretty sight indeed. But it was not to last.

The departure of the younger men to serve their country in World War I disrupted the relatively prosperous rural economy. Normal routines were broken. The two agricultural societies almost suspended their activities and felt obliged after the war to join forces in order to survive. The dislocations caused by war, the advent of mechanization (tractors, the automobile), the introduction of improvements like electricity, the opening of easier contacts with the outside world and, of course, the trauma of the Great Depression of the 1930's and World War II combined to profoundly alter the character of life on the island. The pioneer days were perhaps gone by 1920; (8) what was left of the "good old days" disappeared forever during the Depression and World War II. What emerged was vibrant and exciting but very different--it was no longer the semi-isolated rural farm community of the years preceding.

II. SETTLEMENT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL - 1859-1885

1. Areas of Settlement - The Farmers Move In

The basic pattern of settlement on Salt Spring was quite apparent by the 1880's. Almost simultaneously clusters of farms developed in the North End and the South End, quite isolated from each other. Farmers, seeking the richer bottom lands, almost entirely avoided the plateau area between the top of Lee's Hill and Ganges Hill. But even within the North End and the South End discrete communities developed, separated by hills or mountains covered with dense and almost trackless forest. In this early period communication between these isolated areas of settlement was usually easier with the outside world (Victoria, Sidney, Cowichan, Nanaimo or the mainland) than with each other.

It was the collapse of the Fraser River gold boom which brought the first settlers almost in desperation to the isolated and rugged Gulf Islands, including Salt Spring. Many were in semi-

indigent circumstances and with no farming experience or equipment. Having failed to make it in the gold fields, perhaps they could at least survive by farming. The years after 1858 were traumatic ones for Victoria and its hinterland. A sleepy little town of three hundred people had been unundated in 1858 by nearly twenty-five thousand men of many nationalities--British, Australian, Canadian, German, etc. From their makeshift tent city they poured over to the mainland avid to make their fortune in gold. But the bonanza was short-lived and there was an exodus in 1859 back to Victoria and down to the United States. A few, however, chose to remain and attempt a go at farming in the Saanich peninsula, the Cowichan and Chemainus valleys, and the Gulf Islands. Those who could afford the official price of 1 pound per acre for land settled nearer Victoria; those who couldn't put pressure on the government to establish a makeshift pre-emption system which permitted them to settle without even an initial payment on unsurveyed land at Chemainus and Salt Spring. It was understood that when the land was properly surveyed they would be expected to pay the going rate (as it turned out land on Salt Spring in the 19th century cost just \$1.00 per acre.) (9)

The first of this rag-tag band included some negroes who, unlike the others, were not on the rebound from the gold rush but rather were seeking escape from discrimination and segregation in California in the freer air of the Colony of Vancouver Island. Possibly because the North End was more readily accessible, through Vesuvius Bay, via the established steamer service between Victoria and the coal mining and agricultural centre of Nanaimo the very first of these settlers arrived in the northwest of the island rather than in the South End. Most pre-empted land in the deep-soiled and fertile Vesuvius-Central Settlement-Ganges Harbour upland corridor. Louis and Sylvia Stark (1860), ex-slaves, settled for a decade on the higher land north of Vesuvius Harbour. John Patton Booth, a young bachelor from the Orkneys, in time Salt Spring's leading citizen, chose land along either side of Booth Canal (1859). Many of the negro families were scattered around St. Mary's Lake from near Broadwell mountain on the west (Abraham Copeland 1860), to south of the lake (W.L. Harrison (1860), and east of the lake (Armstead Buckner 1859). John Norton (1860), one of four Portuguese who came to Salt Spring, developed a fine farm on the gentle slope leading down toward Ganges Harbour. On the harbour itself the only early settler was Henry Lineker and his wife (the first white woman on the island) 1859. John C. Jones (1860), never much of a farmer, but much respected as the first school teacher, took land just south of John Norton. Parting from the others a few of the first group of settlers struck out over the mountain ridge north of St. Mary's Lake and established the detached but for many years rather flourishing Begg's Settlement on the gentle northeast facing slope above Trincomali Channel. The leader was Jonathon Begg (1859), accompanied by Henry Sampson (1859), an ex-Hudson Bay Co. employee at Fort Rupert, Edward Walker and others. Between this area, later called Fernwood, and Long Harbour on the ridge dividing them Hiram Whims (1860), one of the negro group, established an upland farm in an area later settled also by Willis Stark and his mother, Sylvia. In the late 1860s the initial settlement on the North End was pretty well established after Estalon Bittancourt (born in the Azores) developed a farm, stone quarry and store on Vesuvius Bay, Louis Stark and family moved to the northeast shore of Ganges Harbour opposite Goat Island (1869) and the Kanaka (Hawaiian), Daniel Fredison, pre-empted on Mansell Road at the head of Long Harbour. (10) For several decades access to the outside world for all of these settlers, difficult though it was for the Fernwood farmers, was by way of Vesuvius.

The success of these early arrivals in ferreting out the best potential farm land in this heavily forested island, crossed only by deer tracks and Indian trails, seems in retrospect almost uncanny. But those who moved onto the South End from the early 1860s to the mid-80s seemed equally as fortunate as those to the north. Of course all of the island was covered with old-growth forest and on the deep alluvium of the Burgoyne Valley stretching from Burgoyne Bay to Fulford Harbour, where giant trees 6'-7' in diameter were not unusual, (11) the aspect must in fact have been rather open, not unlike Cathedral Grove on Vancouver Island today.

The first settler in the Burgoyne Valley, John Maxwell (1860), unlike most of the other first generation pioneers, both made and saved money on the gold fields. It was to the almost flat west end of the valley at the foot of Mt. Maxwell that he and his partner, John Lunney, brought their herd of Texas Longhorns and established the first and only cattle ranch on Salt Spring Island. Coming from Victoria a couple of years later the young bachelor market gardener, Joseph Akerman (1862), chose his pre-emption on either side of Fulford Creek about midway up the valley. Just down from him in 1864 a fellow countryman of John Maxwell, the young Irishman, Michael Gyves, pre-empted among the giant cedars. In that same year Fred Foord was attracted to the pretty basin surrounding the lake bearing his name up on the plateau at the head of Fulford Creek. Influenced perhaps by the mild southerly exposure of the south shore of the island, Theodore Trage (1860), future orchardist and graduate in horticulture of the University of Heidelberg, Germany, established his pre-emption between Reginald Hill and Fulford Harbour. About a decade later Henry Ruckle (1872) appropriated the Beaver Point area for himself and established what has become the oldest family farm in British Columbia. Equally isolated was the farm established in the same year to the west of Isabella Point by Paul Kahana (later Tahouney), the first of the Kanakas who moved up from San Juan Island. And a world unto itself, connected only by sea to the Cowichan Valley, was the sheep ranch established by the Pimbury brothers (1874) on the rocky western flanks of Mt. Bruce and Mt. Tuam. (12)

In conclusion, mention should be made of some important pioneer families who moved onto Salt Spring late in the early formative period--the Alexander McLennan family (1882) down towards Beaver Point, Charles Horel on Lee's Hill overlooking the Maxwell property, and in the North End, William and Henry Caldwell (1884) in the Walker Hook area and on Mansell Road, Joel Broadwell (1882), west of St. Mary's Lake, Henry Steens (1884) north of Central and Samuel Beddis (1884), quite isolated from everyone, well down the south shore of Ganges Harbour near the outlet of Cusheon Creek. (13) By 1885 much of the best land with a potential for agriculture had been pre-empted. Which is not to say, however, that it had been developed. In fact, as of a decade later, only about 6% of the area claimed had been cleared. Which led the Minister of Agriculture to complain 1892: "there is too great a disposition on the part of farmers and others to acquire large tracts of land and keep them locked up." (14) And again in 1897, "There is very little government land available for pre-emption." (15) But that is another story; for the time being it was first come, first served as Salt Spring pioneer families laid claim to areas which they then, through endless labour, slowly fashioned into farms.

2. Clearing the Land and Getting Established

“It meant slow hard work to clear a homestead from the forest,” says Margaret Shaw Walter, daughter of a Galiano pioneer, “felling trees, burning them, digging among the stumps to plant potatoes, with vegetables and different grains; getting some fowls and later on, cattle by degrees.” (16) Having picked a site for the cabin, often at the bottom of a hill near a spring or stream on the edge of a future field, work began. As described by the Caldwells some years later: “The first step was to cut a circular clearing out of the forest. This clearing was near a water supply and was three hundred feet in diameter so the cabin could be erected out of danger of falling trees. In some cases the tree trunks were seven feet in diameter, making the use of a saw impractical. In a case like that the settlers drilled two wide holes in the log [tree] with an auger, these holes enabled them to set fires inside the trees and burn them into sections that were then piled around the stumps and burned leaving a deposit of ash.” (17) This same technique was in general use. On Mayne Island for example, the early pioneers reported, “Without expensive saws, the easiest method to clear land was to bore holes with an auger into the centers of the large fir and cedar trees, then fill the holes with hot coals.” (18) Of course, saws were used too. Young John Beddis in his Diary makes repeated references to both methods. “Sawed down trees,” “Sawed trees,” “Sawed and bored trees,” “Bored logs.” And of course, almost everything that came down had to be burned. Only a little was saved for houses, barns and snake fences. A heavy pall of smoke must have drifted over Salt Spring Island for generations as this same slashing and burning to clear the forest is described by Philips in a pamphlet published in 1902 by the Farmers’ Institute. “The felling of timber...is done in winter and the trees being left to dry through the summer, a fire is run over them in the fall; the logs that remain being cut up, piled and burnt, the land is then seeded down to grass or broken up for a first crop of potatoes.” (19) Only in the mid-20s at a time when young Charles Horel helped Jim Akerman “slash and burn” a field on the island, was this method made illegal. (20)

Having cleared an area of trees, farming among the stumps could at last begin. The first crop grown was usually potatoes or peas. An early pioneer on North Pender recalled: “The first ploughing was awful ferny; there was an awful lot of bracken in the fields. So the first ploughing we’d sow peas and we’d feed them to the pigs in the pods.” (21) Or potatoes could be planted, even if the farmer had too many stumps in the field for it to be ploughed or he could not yet afford the cost of oxen and a plough. We are told that Louis Stark on his pre-emption above Vesuvius “grafted and planted fruit trees among the stumps” and “soon had enough land cleared to raise grain for their own use.” (22) Grain was grown for the cattle, chickens and turkeys needed for survival in the early years.

Clearing the land was an endless task and one shared by the wives who were soon brought into the wilderness. Joseph Akerman worked for a year on his pre-emption and then went to Victoria and found his bride newly arrived on a “bride ship”. Henry Ruckle had thirty acres cleared within two years but waited another three before marrying. Trage, Maxwell and Gyves all soon married Indian girls. In modern parlance this was an equal opportunity society. We are told by Bea Hamilton that Michael Gyves and his Indian wife worked together to clear the land, with oxen and stone boat hauling off tons of rock and pulling stumps. A modern

historian, discussing the exploitation of immigrant women in Canada has this to say: “Even worse was the life of the immigrant women homesteading in the West. Often she worked side by side with her husband, clearing the land, removing stumps, building fences, seeding, threshing or milking. While she alone was responsible for the children and the household chores.” (23)

The clearing of stumps, so often referred to, was a task that spread over many years; even, as early photos show, after more modern frame homes stood among the stumps. In the earliest days (until the 1880’s) there were no horses on the island, but every farmer, when he could afford it, had a yoke of oxen. Valued incidentally for their milk, but also because they were better suited to the job as Margaret Walter explains: “Then when stumps of trees were fewer, a yoke of oxen to plough between them, a task quite unsuited to horses, which when brought up suddenly by buried roots might make even a panicky effort to carry on, which, likely as not, would mean an overturned or broken plough, whereas the patient oxen would halt till matters were adjusted.” (24)

Although statistics are not available, clearing the land and establishment of relatively self-sufficient farms must have proceeded fairly rapidly. The Victoria British Colonist reported in 1860 that seventy resident landholders were hard at work clearing, ploughing and fencing. Many had a considerable acreage planted with barley, oats and potatoes, and were engaged in raising cattle, pigs and other smaller stock which would be likely to find a ready sale in the Victoria market. (25) In 1864 the Colonist “guessed” the number of cattle on the island would exceed five hundred. (26) And a decade later Ashdown Green, who had just completed a preliminary survey of the South End for the government, noted in his Diary that in the course of his work he had seen 225 cattle and 148 pigs. The largest cattle herd was Maxwell’s (100 head), but the Sparrow brothers had 66, Henry Ruckle 17, Theodore Trage 13, and Meinersdorf 12. The Pimbury brothers on the west side had 350 sheep--the only sheep he noted. (27)

3. Problems and Obstacles

The reference above to the Victoria market is important--for almost from the beginning the homesteaders were obliged to look beyond their lonely claims to the outside world. None were entirely self-sufficient. Staples such as flour, sugar, tea and salt had to be bought, as did some hardware and hand tools. So too initially with seed potatoes and peas and the almost indispensable oxen. Items as different as nails, coal oil, oatmeal, flower seeds, shoes and blankets had to be purchased from the store. (All these items are mentioned in young John Beddis’ Diary). Bea Hamilton rightly remarks: “The virgin land had to pay for the labor put into her, and it had to make returns almost immediately to enable the farmer to carry on.” (Emphasis mine). (28) Fortunately for Salt Spring farmers, almost unlimited markets existed in Victoria and Nanaimo for all the surplus they could produce. Apparently the cities grew faster than the agricultural infrastructure around them.

For most farmers, sale to the markets was a small-scale business--some small fruits, vegetables or

potatoes, perhaps some chickens and pigs. At the South End, we are told, some tobacco as well, and beef. John Maxwell, the only real capitalist at the time, was shipping about twenty head of cattle a month. In the early 60s he had imported 100 Longhorns, bringing them up from Oregon to Victoria, then over the newly cut 5' wide Goldstream Trail (1861) to Cowichan and by boat and a swim to his beach on the bay. (29) But Maxwell was an exception. More typical was Theodore Trage who rowed his strawberries and other small fruits over to Victoria. (30) Michael Gyves has the distinction of being the first exporter of an industrial commodity from the South End--cedar shakes made from the huge 7' diameter trees that had attracted him to his pre-emption in Burgoyne Valley.

Missing from the list of early exports are the tree fruits which by the 1880s and 1890s became the mainstay of the island economy. But fruit trees to produce fruit for home consumption certainly were planted from the earliest days. Recall the reference to Louis Stark planting fruit trees among the stumps. Perhaps he was one of the first customers of Jonathan Begg. The year after settling in the Fernwood area in 1859 Begg not only opened a store and post office but also advertized that he had "commenced a Nursery of Fruit and Ornamental Trees," an operation carried on soon by "Brinn and Griffiths" (in some sources "Brian and Griffin"). (31) Demand must have been good on the island. The Colonist in 1864 reported: "The nursery for fruit trees, now in the hands of Brian and Griffin, may safely be set down as the largest in the whole colony of Vancouver Island." (32)

The same notice in the Colonist also reported that "everything was progressing very favorably on the Island." Perhaps so, but it might be well to qualify this by considering some of the pests and problems with which the farmers had to contend. Some of the pests of the 1860s and 70s were not unlike those of the 1890s or even the 1990s. One of many complaints registered about deer was that to the Department of Agriculture by George Dukes when he reported: "Deer are troublesome, destroying everything, even digging potatoes." (33) In the days before wire fences they could be much more damaging than at present. Samuel Beddis, for example, reported five hundred young fruit trees destroyed by deer in five years. (34) Farmers were still complaining about deer at the turn of the century, as we are today.

The same with the loveable but pesky birds. Speaking of robins and jays, Rev. Wilson commented later: "They consume the cherries, pick apples off the trees and the potatoes out of the ground and do all the damage they can to the grain crops." (35) The pheasants were even more damaging to the grain.

The predations of cougars (panthers), wolves and bears were both more unbearable and more short-lived than the problems with birds. Unbearable, because they not only kept Martha Akerman awake at night but also because they threatened the farmers' livestock. Summarizing and perhaps exaggerating the problem later, Wilson wrote in 1895: "Panthers and wolves in those days swarmed on the island and prevented any attempt at keeping cattle or sheep ... There were also a few bears at that time on the island, and they would come around the ranchers' log huts and kill their pigs at

their very doors ...” (36) Perhaps the Starks had told him how the bears preyed on their young pigs at the Vesuvius farm. But the problem was relatively short lived simply because it was so serious. Again in Wilson’s words: “... a determined war was waged against them by owners of livestock, and by shooting and trapping and the use of poison they were after awhile exterminated ...” (37) And if a panther swam over, farmers took up a collection and the government paid \$7.50 and the hunters soon dispatched it. In his *Parish & Home* magazine for September 1897 Wilson says that the last wolves disappeared in the late 70’s and that the last bear, a big fellow that had killed 6 fat hogs, was shot by J.P. Booth about 1883. (38)

But the matter of pests was the least of the farmers’ problems. Marauding and mischievous Indians were especially troublesome in the 1860’s; inadequate facilities for transportation of produce to market was a perennial source of complaint for decades, and there was, of course, the weather. To read the promotional literature and other testimonials from the nineteenth century one could hardly imagine weather to have been a problem. As early as 1865 Matthew Macfie, five years a resident on the coast and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, wrote in his book *Vancouver Island and British Columbia* that the climate was “genial, productive, and solubrious Showers are rare during the summer, and when they do fall they are accommodating enough to come at night when noone is inconvenienced by their descent In Vancouver Island spring is later [than in England], summer drier, autumn longer, and winter milder.” (39) Macfie’s opinion on the climate was echoed by farmers a generation later on Salt Spring. But for the newcomers to the island, living in poorly heated, drafty, leaking log cabins, and, we are told, in a generally low state of health with no medical services, a succession of two very severe winters in 1861 and 1864 was a time of severe testing. The winter of 1861-62 killed off nearly one hundred head of cattle and many settlers were dangerously low on provisions. After the second severe winter in 1864-65 the *Columnist* reported that over half the island livestock had been lost through a combination of bad weather, wolves, cougars, bears and Indians. And we are told the severe weather reduced the number of residents by one-third. (40)

Actually more people probably left the island in the 1860’s because of the Indian problem than because of the occasional bad winter. Though few, if any, Indians lived on the island year round, it was a part of the hunting, fishing and clamming grounds of both the Saanich bands to the south and the Cowichans to the west. And it was on the annual migration routes of the Haidas and other northern tribes. Understandably, they regarded the newcomers as intruders, their hostility only aggravated by resentment against the itinerant whiskey traders on the coast. (41) The negroes suffered most from their resentment because as Flucke observes, the Indians insisted on regarding the negroes as inferior to themselves, with no claim to the respect normally shown to the whites. (42) Was this because the whites were associated with the gunboats and rather summary and arbitrary justice of the government down in Victoria? In any case, the whole of Salt Spring was shocked by the murder, eight months apart, of two negroes, William Robinson and Giles Curtis - both shot in the back and Curtis with his throat cut. (43) It was the fear created by these murders on his property which caused Louis Stark to transfer his pre-emption over to Ganges Harbour in 1869 and it helps to explain also why of the fifteen negro families on Salt Spring in 1861 only a few remained a decade or so later. (44)

The Indians also created a sense of uneasiness everywhere on the island because of a certain amount of pilfering and petty thievery. This was no doubt based in part on a different concept of property rights. (45) Annually complaints arose over thievery as the Indians on the way north from a winter around Victoria stopped to raid the farmers' gardens. The story is told of how young Decie Beddis kicked the shins of Indians found in the family vegetable garden, sending them away laughing. Or how in 1861 Jonathan Begg, clad only in his nightshirt and sleeping cap, found a number of Haidas helping themselves to blankets and groceries in his store. (46) But more serious for the settlers was the slaughter of their livestock. This became especially serious for John Maxwell down at Burgoyne until he and a posse of neighbours caught a party of Bella Bellas in the act led by a white man, McCawley. Retreating hastily, the Indians murdered McCawley, thinking he had led them into a trap. This turned out to be the end of Maxwell's problems. (47) And in fact the threat from the Indians was pretty well gone by the time the government in 1871, after British Columbia joined Confederation, appointed Henry Sampson as the first resident constable on the island.

In considering the problems and the obstacles that challenged the first generation of settlers on Salt Spring surely one of the most persistent was that of developing adequate communications between the separated communities on the island and between the farmers wherever they were located and their markets and sources of supply in Victoria and Nanaimo. In the period to 1885 only a beginning was made in meeting these needs. Unfortunately the documentation apparently doesn't exist to properly discuss the development of roads on the island. It has been mentioned earlier that from the very first the farmers needed access to Victoria or Nanaimo both to sell their excess produce and to buy essential supplies. At the North End the only wharf was at Vesuvius, which was regularly served after 1864 by the steamer *Fideliter* on her run from Victoria to Nanaimo. A rough road from the St. Mary's Lake area to Vesuvius was probably the first on the island. But the farmers at Begg's Settlement were still isolated. In 1865 Edward Mallandaine and Jonathan Begg requested, unsuccessfully as it turned out, that the *Fideliter* call at Fernwood too. They pointed out in their petition to Governor Douglas that land communication across the mountain from Fernwood to Vesuvius was extremely difficult, hauling produce being a well nigh impossible task. (48) When Louis Stark moved to the east side of Ganges Harbour he too felt the need for a road to Vesuvius. The government was sympathetic to his need but his neighbours, John Norton and Armstead Buckner, perhaps due to some local personal feuding, blocked Stark's efforts. Rather pathetically, he wrote the Chief Commissioner of Land and Works, "A sentral road is all that we ask for and let us make little roads and pigtrails to come to it by our own labour." (49)

Actually, the legislation providing for road construction had been in place since 1860 but almost nothing had been done. Under the provisions of the Road Act of that year three commissioners for roads for Salt Spring were appointed, but only Jonathan Begg was resident on the island. By law every male above 18 years of age with a landed interest in a road district was bound to perform six days' labour on the highways each year. But on Salt Spring many of the early pre-emptors were in fact non-resident and those who weren't, the Ruckles, Akermans, Nortons and others were at this time, as Begg pointed out to Governor Douglas, too poor to be able to devote their time at road making. So little was done until after British Columbia joined Canada in 1871 when John Patton Booth was elected as Salt Spring's first representative to the provincial parliament. One of his first

actions was to

request from the Provincial Secretary \$1,000 “to make a road connecting the different settlements together; some portions of the inhabitants being entirely debarred from all use of the steamer as a means of conveying freight for want of a road.” (50) Just how this money was spent is not on record.

At the South End the first public wharf was at John Maxwell’s property on Burgoyne Bay about 1869. Until then, says Bea Hamilton, sloops, schooners and Indian canoes carried farmers and their produce to the markets in Victoria. When Maxwell’s cattle business demanded a better wharf he offered three acres of land to the government provided it entrust the land and the wharf to a group of trustees for the mutual benefit of the settlers. Thomas Williams, Frederick Foord and Maxwell himself were appointed. (51) But there still was no steamer calling at the South End. A road linking the farms the length of Burgoyne valley must have existed already. But the farmers on the south coast, Ruckle, Trage, Kahana, and in time McLennan, King, Pappenburger and others were still probably not served into the 1880’s by either adequate roads or a steamer service. It was not until 1895 that Henry Ruckle built a wharf on his property and steamboats began regularly to serve the Beaver Point area. (52)

4. Community Building - The Transition to a New Era

But in spite of inadequate communications and the almost never ending toil on their land, there were indications that by the mid-80’s island farmers were beginning to feel less isolated and that there was beginning to develop some sense of community. A premature and ill-fated experiment at political integration, the creation of “The Corporation of the Township of Salt Spring Island” from 1873 to 1883 only aroused and exacerbated some of the divisions among island residents. It would appear that in this case the divisions were less a matter of sectional rivalry and more one of personal resentment and mistrust leading to charges of abuse of power, the latter stemming especially from differences of opinion on how much should be spent on public improvements such as roads. (53) Although the attempt to create a unified local system of government failed, it did at least arouse an awareness of the island as a unity and brought varying groups of neighbours together briefly in a common effort to oppose this or that abuse of power as they saw it. The Corporation left a bitter memory but at least left the islanders much more aware of one another! There were, however, less political developments that also worked in the direction of community building. Some, such as the creation of schools and the missionary outreach from Nanaimo and Cowichan, though not specifically linked to the history of agriculture and hence outside the scope of this essay, should be mentioned here. The farmers of the North End had erected a log school house by 1864 on a 100 acre parcel of government land at Central Settlement set aside for public use. Teaching at the school was a much respected negro, John C. Jones, a graduate of Oberlin College in northern Ohio. Jones also travelled regularly to Begg’s Settlement (Fernwood) to instruct the few children in that community. (54)

Itinerant missionaries likewise moved among the families on Salt Spring, bringing them together

after the mid 60's in monthly meetings held in private homes or, later, in schoolhouses. Both the Anglicans and the Wesleyan Methodists were active in this work travelling first from Nanaimo and later from Cowichan and Maple Bay. (55)

It was in fact as a result of the community building work of the Anglican missionary, the Rev. Wm. Reece of Cowichan, whose circuit in 1865 included both the Chemainus area and Salt Spring Island, that there came into being the first significant organization open to Salt Spring farmers as farmers. This was a society dedicated both to sociability and to the improvement of agriculture. It is true that in 1860 the Colonist had announced that a meeting of interested parties had been held and that the farmers of Salt Spring Island had formed "The Salt Spring Island Agricultural Association." Officers included J. Begg, J. Lineker and J. Booth and three others, all from the North End. (56) But no more is heard of the group. So it was really the work of the Rev. Reece that led to the first permanent agricultural organization in the area--the "Cowichan, Salt Spring and Chemainus Agricultural Society." It was organized in 1868 and was continuing to hold its agricultural exhibitions after World War II. (57)

This cooperative venture, which included Salt Spring farmers, originated with a social get-together at Reece's home. He had called his parishioners together for a first Harvest Festival in 1866. At the time of the third festival in 1868, also held at the parsonage, "Mr. Reece suggested that the farmers bring their best animals, as well as samples of their produce, to the church. The cows and calves and oxen, pigs and sheep were tethered or penned in the field adjoining the parsonage barn, the sheaves of grain, the potatoes and turnips were laid out on trestle tables." The pattern of the agricultural fall fair was obviously well established by the mid-19th century. It was on the prompting of Mr. Reece at this third festive social event that the agricultural society was formed. A poster advertising the twelfth annual exhibition of this organization in 1887 indicates that ladies work had also become an important part of this community event. (58) The records do not reveal how many Salt Spring farmers participated but it was open to all and at least some remained active in the society until the last decade of the century. (59)

In so far as there was developing a sense of community and common interests on Salt Spring it was certainly facilitated by a certain social homogeneity and lack of social prejudice. There is much evidence indicating that there was in fact little racial animosity. This was both encouraged by and reflected in the frequency of intermarriages between whites, negroes, and, in the earliest days, Indians. James Pilton, in his interesting M.A. thesis, *Negro Settlement in British Columbia*, suggests that at the time of the Indian troubles "any neighbour, regardless of his colour, was a decided asset." Furthermore, he adds, "most of the settlers were far too busy working their lands to be concerned about complexional differences. As time went on the differences in race became less marked, for whites married negroes, negroes married Indians, and several whites kept Indian common law wives. In time their offspring intermarried, and the Island became such a melting pot that discrimination because of colour could hardly flourish." (60)

By 1885 this society of sturdy farmers of many races and social backgrounds was coming to a certain maturity. The years ahead were to see many changes. There was an influx of new and often wealthier immigrants. Farming for many became more of a capitalist enterprise geared to the large-scale export of products to the nearby city markets and beyond. Notably, there was a dramatic growth in the production of fruit on the island. And in time, with the opening of a creamery, dairying would become a major farming activity. Machinery too would revolutionize routines and take some of the back breaking labour out of the farmer's life. By the mid-80s the most difficult years were coming to a close.

III. AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION AND MATURITY 1885 - 1914

1. Population growth and changes in the social climate of rural Salt Spring.

The development of a mature and relatively prosperous farm society on Salt Spring was in part a product of the rapid population growth in the decades before World War I and the accompanying changes in the social climate on the island. And these were only the local manifestation of broader developments affecting the whole of Canada and especially the Canadian West. For the whole of the West the period from 1885 to 1914 was one of rapid growth and almost incredible optimism.

Scanning the pages of *Man to Man*, British

Columbia's most popular monthly magazine, at that period, one is struck by a society on the move. The articles describe the rapid development and vast potential of the land and the advertisements are crowded with offers of land for sale.

The rapid population expansion in British Columbia, which Salt Spring Island shared in part, reflected the natural physical advantages of the province (temperate climate, vast resources of land, timber, etc.) but was more particularly due to two aspects of Federal Government policy. One was the pushing to completion of the transcontinental railway. With the coming of the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver in 1885 settlers poured into

British Columbia from Ontario and the Maritimes. This influx from eastern Canada was swelled by new arrivals from the British Isles enticed into settling in Canada by an active program of advertising designed to attract into the West the agricultural settlers needed to produce the raw materials and foodstuffs required in Ontario and Quebec. Posters were everywhere in the Old Country enticing young couples to come to Canada.(1)

This spirit of boosterism and turning out of propaganda literature designed to attract settlers and promote development operated at the local as well as the national level. The Reverend E.F. Wilson had only just settled into his duties as Rector of the Anglican community on Salt Spring when he turned his mind in November 1894 to writing a pamphlet on the island.(2) "The people generally seemed to approve," he wrote, "thinking it would help to bring settlers to the island." The local government gave \$100 toward it and it was sold throughout the islands and elsewhere for 25 cents a copy. An extraordinary amount of useful information on the island, its physical character, farm life and social institutions was highlighted by very optimistic assessments of its potential as a home for new settlers. "There appears to be an air of comfort and contentment about the place,"

he wrote. "Whatever is put into the ground is sure to grow." With an eye to the competition from the Prairie Provinces he added, "Ten or fifteen acres with an orchard and poultry yard and a cow or two, in British Columbia, has probably greater sustaining power than a hundred acres of land in the prairie region." Reverend Wilson buttressed his arguments with testimonials from some of the island's leading farmers. Joseph Akerman: "Any one with a family coming from the Old Country, could not strike an easier place to live in. Crops are always sure." Theodore Trage: "Every man on this island who was able and willing to work has got along well." Fred Foord: "For fruit growing I consider there is no place in British Columbia to equal it. Winter weather only lasts a short while." Henry Ruckle: "A man who understands farming and has a little capital will do as well or better here than any place in North America. Dairying and poultry I consider pay the best, and fruit growing is also very profitable."

Perhaps to gain broader support for his message on the island Wilson ran a regular ad in his parish magazine for his pamphlet for intending settlers. And as an agency for dealing with inquiries which came from as far afield as the Prairies and eastern Canada he organized in the fall of 1896 a sort of proto-Chamber of Commerce. A news item in the Salt Spring Island Parish and Home for September 1896 announced: "A club has been set on foot having for its object the progress and improvement of Salt Spring Island." (3) Well known local farmers such as Henry Bullock, Joel Broadwell, John Collins, W.E. Scott and others joined "The Salt Spring Island Club." Members met monthly in one another's homes for dinner and a social evening. For several years the Parish and Home featured an ad directing intending settlers desiring information on the island to contact the Secretary of the Club, Edward Walter, The Maples, Ganges. (4)

The two principal organizations, before the end of the century, were also active in promoting Salt Spring to potential farmers. Another example was the pamphlet written in 1902 by F.M. Philips, local writer and artist and a member of the Salt Spring Island Club, who wrote another pamphlet under the auspices of the Farmers' Institute which outdid even Wilson's effort of 1895 in describing the allurements of life on the island. (5) In an Introduction, Edward Walter, Secretary of the Institute explained that the pamphlet was published "in the belief that there are many, having but a moderate income coupled with a love of country life, who would be glad, untrammelled by conventions, to make a home for themselves by work, bring up their children to a healthy independent life, and gratify those tastes for shooting and fishing which their means will not permit in the Old Country." Like Wilson's pamphlet, Philips' little booklet provides a wealth of information on Salt Spring with perhaps more attention to the opportunities for the sportsman - "Lovers of the Rod and Gun." The movement on the island to press for more settlers carried right on through into World War I. As late as 1915 the Island's Agricultural and Fruit Growers' Association in its catalogue for the 1915 Fall Exhibition ran a full-page message: "Salt Spring Island offers special facilities for the rancher and poultryman. Genial climate the whole year round. Choice fruit lands, fishing and boating. Bring the family, spend a delightful holiday and look around."

Salt Spring's farm community certainly didn't suffer from the fact that one of its most successful orchardists, Mr. W.E. Scott, became Deputy Minister of Agriculture for British Columbia from 1910

to 1916. Scott was an enthusiastic booster for agriculture. “We can grow in our glorious province,” he wrote in 1910, “the finest fruit in the world . . . We have room for many thousands of settlers, where everything is conducive to success . . . The province is on the eve of a great expansion. . . A spirit of optimism prevails everywhere” and will make of British Columbia “the banner province of our glorious Dominion of Canada.”(6)

In explaining the steady and rapid growth of population on Salt Spring Island one must set alongside of all this deliberate propaganda and boosterism a lot of quiet word-of-mouth advertising, particularly among the more affluent “better classes” of English and Irish society. In increasing numbers the island was attracting, especially from the 1890s on, settlers of some means - those known earlier as “gentleman emigrants” but by the 1890s usually as “remittance men”.(7) They added a needed boost of capital for development but also a new social class in society. Writes Jean Barman in her new history of British Columbia: “A desire for companionable surroundings encouraged residence in Victoria or some other area amenable to a genteel lifestyle. Favorite places evoking the English countryside were the Cowichan Valley, the Gulf Islands, the Okanagan Valley and the Kootenays. Often buttressed by a pension or other small income, the newcomers genteely farmed or grew fruit.”(8) This new social element had not been entirely lacking earlier, the Pimburys in the 70s and the Musgraves and Mahons in the 80s, but became much more numerous in the 90s. Families such as the Croftons, Tolsons, Hamiltons and best known of all, the bachelor, Henry Bullock, came to play an important part in island life. Farm society became more complex. Social distinctions, conspicuously lacking in the early pioneering days, began to appear. Bea Hamilton speaks amusingly of the differences between ranchers and farmers. The “ranchers” had “homesteads” or “ranches” owned by gentlemen sons of the “good families” who owned a dress suit and could afford servants. [Many were English or Irish and Church of England]. The “farmers” owned “farms” and wore good sturdy denim overalls and bought ready-mades [Many were Scots and frequently Methodist]. But, she adds, “They were good neighbors . . . They respected each other and poked fun at each other.”(9) These feelings are reflected in Lyn Bittancourt’s memories of growing up in Ganges at the turn of the century. Part of the community was very English, he said. They had their shindigs and felt better than anyone else. And there definitely were class distinctions. Many were sent out with their remittances because “they were no good back there.” But, he concluded, there were more of the “ordinary people” in Ganges than “the English.”(10) These “ordinary people” were among the most creative contributors to island life - either as farmers or in commerce - families such as the Ruckles, Mouats, Caldwelles and Pattersons come to mind.

It appears there never was complete agreement on what type of settler Salt Spring should seek to attract. The correspondent on the island for the Sidney and Islands Review commented in 1913 that some ads say the island is especially adapted to gentlemen types with capital who could enjoy the scenery, sport, etc. and “supplement their capital if they desired by gentle efforts at fruit and poultry raising.” But, says the correspondent, evidently one of the “farmers”, if the idea is to develop island resources then it needs “men who must carve their way first to a living and then to whatever wealth they are capable of attaining.”(11)

The facts of population growth on Salt Spring are difficult to document with figures that can be compared over the period 1885 - 1914, and many figures are simply guesses, but the trend is clear.(12) The one accurate count is in the Census of Canada for 1891 which enumerated a total of 393 persons on the island. Of adult males, listed as to profession, 88 were farmers, 5 farm labourers or coolies. In other words about 2/3 of the residents were farmers and their families. These figures are not too different from those of the Minister of Agriculture who estimated in 1892 “that nearly 100 farmers live on the island.” And incidentally the preponderance of well-established settlers from the British Isles is well documented by the Census figures, too. Of a sample of 28 well-known farmers, mostly active in community affairs, twelve had come from England, five from Ireland, and four from Scotland. (There were two from Portugal, two from eastern Canada, and one each from the U.S., Germany and Norway).

The Rev. Wilson appears to have done a careful canvas on the ground in 1894/95 and estimated the current population at 450. In 1902 Philips stated “There are 100 occupied farms with a settled population of 430.” Four years later the Agricultural Association put Salt Spring’s population at “over 500”, in 1912 W.E. Scott suggested 900, and in 1913 an article in Saturday Sunset reprinted in the Sidney and Islands Review stated the island then had about 1000 people. Other evidence corroborates the fact that Salt Spring was growing. Reverend Wilson’s monthly parish journal over a twelve year period from 1895-1906 announces the steady arrival of new families. This is reflected in the expansion of the Voters List, for example, which grew from 128 in 1894 to 213 in 1911. And, not to be ignored is internal population growth. This was an era of large families as is documented in the 1891 Census. Of the 28 farm families earlier referred to, 25 couples had a total of 122 children or nearly 5 per family. In conclusion this comment from Wilson on steamboat days in 1905: “It is no unusual thing now to see as many as twenty or more farmers’ wagons, buggies and other equipment assembled under the trees at Ganges Wharf when the steamboat comes. in. Rather different to ten years ago when there might be seen tethered to the same trees half a dozen or so saddled ponies and perhaps two or three ox teams.”(13)

The population growth during the three decades preceding World War I and the economic expansion that accompanied it (to be discussed later) resulted in the steady enlargement of the cultivated acreage of older farms, sometimes by the original owners or their heirs, sometimes by new owners who brought in an injection of capital and energy. In some cases parts of the undeveloped acreage of older holdings were split off, sold and developed into farms by new arrivals. Or the newcomers took over old preemptions that had been neglected and improved them.(14)

As a result of all this activity the easily accessible and farmable land from one end of the island to the other had been pretty well taken up by 1914 (Not that it had all been improved, that took many long years, for the sound of blasting powder blowing stumps from the fields was heard everywhere right through into the 1920s). Farms were no longer all isolated in clearings in the forest. Surveying his first eleven years on Salt Spring Rev. Wilson noted in his Diary: “The road from my house to Ganges Harbor was in those early days almost all

thickly wooded. Mr. Norton's large house was newly built, Mr. Purvis and Mr. Cundell were building. Now the road is clear and has fields nearly all the way."(15) In some areas farms stood in fairly close association with one another - along Trincomali Channel, around St. Mary Lake, around the head of Ganges Harbour; more scattered down Beddis Road and over the Divide and then close together again up the Cranberry and on either side of the road down Burgoyne Valley to Fulford. More isolated were farms along or off the road to Beaver Point. The southwest flank of Mount Tuam was a world unto itself - oriented toward Cowichan.

One of the last areas on the island open to preemption was the Cranberry Marsh which by 1894, when Rev. Wilson visited this "wild district in the centre of the island," had already attracted four or five families and was "now being gradually settled up." In 1903 a road was put through and extended right up to Maxwell Lake. After the Ward farm was subdivided to form the nucleus of the Ganges townsite, Rainbow Road was extended in 1913 to connect with Col. Layard's road above Booth Canal. This also threw open a large tract of hitherto inaccessible bush land. But the very last preemptions before the war were on the hills to the west of Fulford Harbour. In 1914/15 seventeen families sought to homestead up the slopes of Mt. Tuam, still inaccessible except over a difficult trail terminating on the summit at the Hill-Brantford ranch.(16)

An example or two from each district will serve to illustrate the rapid changes that were transforming Salt Spring Island into a relatively close-knit agricultural community by 1914. On the North End the fine property facing Trincomali Channel once owned by Jonathan Begg and developed into a nursery by Brinn and Griffiths passed through various hands, including those of Joel Broadwell, before becoming the James seed farm in 1917. About 1905 James "Dun" Halley bought and developed the Hampton farm on North Beach Road. Between Fernwood and Ganges the Caldwell brothers, earlier referred to, opened up property in the 1880s from Walker's Hook to Mansell Road. The latter took its name from Thomas Mansell who sold his ranch in Ganges to Frank Scott in 1896 and bought the undeveloped acreage owned by the Kanaka family of Daniel Fredison. On the ridge between Fernwood and St. Mary Lake Mr. LePage from Victoria bought property in 1905. On the lake itself three major blocks of land held by black families were developed into prosperous farms. In 1885 Thomas W. Mouat bought the Abraham Copeland property on Tripp Road, built a new house and operated a dairy and poultry farm until his premature death in 1898. His widow, Jane, rented out the farm when she moved to Ganges in 1907. On the east side of St. Mary Lake the old Levi Davis preemption was purchased in 1895 by John Collins, recently arrived with his family from England. He became a dairyman, being very active in the Farmers' Institute. Just a year previously the Reverend Wilson had bought the Armstead Buckner property where the golf course now stands and with the help of his sons operated a small mixed farm. Other properties changed hands at the turn of the century in the area of Central Settlement. John Paton Booth sold to Arthur Walter of Bristol and moved to his wife's property at Fernwood. Joel Broadwell, who owned a sheep ranch on Broadwell mountain west of the lake as well as the property surrounding his house, Post Office and store at Central, retired and moved to Vancouver in 1901, leaving his property to his son who soon moved off island. The property was sold the year after the deaths of both Joel Broadwell and his son in 1909.

Down in the Ganges area property was changing hands rapidly by the 1890s and “ranches” developed, so-called because the newcomers in this area were from better off English and Irish families. One of these newcomers was the young bachelor, Henry Bullock, who came to Salt Spring in 1892 and developed a 300 acre estate. He became noted for his elegant and sometimes eccentric lifestyle but was in fact an innovative and very successful farm operator. The four Scott brothers had also arrived from England in the same year as Mr. Bullock. The oldest brother, W.E., bought the former Louis Starkpreemption on the east side of the harbour and developed one of the largest and most successful orchards on the island. His brother, Frank, who sold off the acreage on which Mahon Hall stands, shared frontage at the end of the harbour with Jack Scovell from Ireland (who in 1903 sold off 100 acres to Fred Crofton) and Charles Tolson (who sold to brother Leonard in 1897 who sold to A. Ward in 1903). These new farmsteads were bordered on the west by the well-developed property of one of the early settlers, John Norton. The latter retired in 1903, selling his farm to A.J. Smith and partners. Smith soon developed one of the finest Jersey dairy herds on the island, serving the Ganges area with fresh milk for years.

South of Ganges development occurred in three directions. Down Beddis Road, a mere track when Samuel Beddis homesteaded on the harbour in 1884, his brother-in-law, Raffles Purdy, bought property, gave up his teaching at Central (1885-1897), and developed an orchard of 900 trees. On down Beddis Road Mr. Cartwright bought up the Monteith property. Just above Blackburn Lake where the Ganges-Fulford Road crossed the Divide a Vermont Yankee, Socrates Tobias Conery, purchased an undeveloped property around Blackburn Lake (named for the Blackburns from Scotland who purchased the farm in 1907) and converted it into one of the model dairy farms on the island.⁽¹⁷⁾ In the same period settlers began pushing further up the valley into the Cranberry Marsh District. What had been a wild and uninhabited area was settled before the war by the Gardners and Rogers families (both had been neighbours on the same street in Stratford-On-Avon), the Nobbs families, the Toynbees and Browns and several others. Perhaps the best known of these settlers was John Rogers who had preempted 800 acres in 1902 or 1903 and operated a successful sheep and dairy farm until the mid-1950s.⁽¹⁸⁾ The limit of settlement up the Cranberry was reached when the Demaine family homesteaded on property bordering Maxwell Lake.

Down in the Valley, where settlement had occurred earlier in the century, changes were fewer. Edward Lee about 1887 had moved onto a belt of property spanning the valley from Musgrave mountain to below the Horel property. Just to the west the Furness family was still busy “slashing” in the winter of 1899. At Burgoyne Bay early pioneer, John Maxwell, died in 1897 and his fine farm passed to his oldest son, James (and when James was lost in World War I to James’ brother, Dick). In the Fulford area two professional men turned farmers of sorts became well-known residents of Salt Spring. One, Wm. J.L. Hamilton, son of the Archdeacon of Londonderry, bought from Ted Akerman in 1897 66 acres located on the waterfront half way down the west side of Fulford Harbour. Having invented earlier in life one of the first incandescent light bulbs, he turned

horticulturist on Salt Spring and developed a new variety of apple from the Wealthy and King which he appropriately named Millionaire.(19) The other former professional was John Shaw, an engineer-architect who had worked in the shipyards in Glasgow and Nagasaki. On having his employment terminated, he fell in love with Fulford Harbour which` reminded him of the Scottish lochs, bought the Alexander Wilson farm across from Fulford Hall and on January 1, 1909 began farming, “an occupation about which he knew absolutely nothing.”(20) Another newcomer to the Fulford area about the same time (c.1911) was John Hepburn who with the help of two Indians cleared a farm on the hill above Fulford where the square silo was built which stands today as a familiar landmark. There were also changes along the south coast of the island where two other pioneers died early in the century. Theodore Trage’s fine orchard and sheep farm passed on his death in 1902 to his son, Adolf, who sold it to Weaver Bridgman. A portion on the waterfront became the summer home of Mr. Longstaff, but the farm continued in operation by the Bridgman family until after World War I.(21) And at Beaver Point itself, after Henry Ruckle’s death in 1913, what became in time the oldest family farm in British Columbia continued to develop its productive capacity under the abovemanagement of his sons, Alfred and Daniel Henry.(22)

From these selected but somewhat random examples it should be apparent that Salt Spring was indeed on the move from 1885 to 1914. New families were moving in and new areas were opened up for farming. And, significantly, farming for many families was moving beyond mere subsistence agriculture to often large scale commercial production. From a community of subsistence farms there was a major shift to production for profit, which put the island farmers at the mercy of often uncertain off-island markets reached by steamer services that were usually inadequate at best.

2. The Mature One Family Subsistence Farm

Although a growing specialization and production for profit came to characterize many of the most successful farmers on Salt Spring before World War I it would be well to emphasize first the fact that probably for a majority of the farmers in this period operations were still geared to basic survival. What excess was produced for sale was mostly incidental to raising the foodstuffs needed to support their usually large families. Due to the constraints of nature (the limited areas of arable land) and population pressure farming was for most a small-scale enterprise. Though the exceptional family, such as the Ruckles, might accumulate up to a thousand acres, or in the case of the wealthy Irish family, the Musgraves, several thousand, these were the unusual cases. And in any case these larger holdings were mostly in bush or sheep runs. The cultivated acreage of most small family farms was probably in the range of 20 to 30 acres. Wilson reported that in 1900 only about 1700 acres were under cultivation.(23) Philips in 1902 states there were about 100 settled farms - this works out to 17 acres under cultivation per farm. This may be on the low side. But even in the case of a selected group of the largest farms discussed in Wilson’s 1895 pamphlet the average acreage under cultivation, including several large orchards, was only 40 to 60 acres. Apparently this is about the size that a farm family could manage working with oxen or horses and employing occasional casual labour. But if the family farm on the island was small as compared for example to the ranches of the Okanagan

or the Cariboo it was extraordinarily versatile. Every farm had an orchard and garden, usually one or more milk cows, pigs and chickens to drink the skim milk leftover from making butter, perhaps turkeys, ducks and geese, and sheep to forage on the hills. Basic field crops included hay, grain, and roots by the ton to feed the stock. Very little cash traded hands amongst these mainly subsistence farmers.(24) But, as mentioned earlier, there was always an attempt to raise some surplus to generate the money needed to buy staples for the household like flour and sugar, and clothes for the family. For the farm operations, too, there was an increasing need for cash. Nursery stock, livestock, seed grain, fertilizer, and basic equipment such as plows, mowers, rakes and harrows still required cash. Up to about 1900 island farmers imported hay from the mainland as well as for winter feed.(25) To pay for these necessities farmers sold as available their excess fruit, vegetables and eggs. Potatoes were marketed in large quantities, some farmers shipped lambs and wool, and farmers' wives marketed small quantities of homemade butter. Most farmers had to be content with breaking even at the end of the year. Even the more prosperous farmers of this period accumulated very little, passing on to their heirs real estate that was increasing in value but very little cash.(26)

Examples of the small family subsistence farm are legion but one of the few for which some records are available was that of the Rev. E.F. Wilson.(27) In the sixteen years he lived at "Barnesbury" he converted a tract of bush and forest with only a small shack and one or two other broken down buildings into a well-equipped family farm producing enough after a few years to actually turn a profit.(28) Like many others he bought up an old preemption that had been lived on but not really developed. He paid \$900 cash for the 100 acre property of the late Armstead Buckner - one of the original black settlers of 1859. Most of it was still virgin bush and unfenced. With the help of his three sons and a steady stream of casual labourers (young boys from England, itinerant men like the Swede, Eric Ericson, and an occasional Japanese or Chinese) the land was cleared, barn, poultry and sheep houses built, and farming operations commenced. Wilson had a large family to feed; his clerical stipend was only \$500/600 a year so he hoped to supplement this "by some profit of the farm, but it was some years before any profit showed itself." Fortunately, and in this he is not atypical of Salt Spring, the family received a small legacy from England in 1895 which covered the cost of the land and stocking the farm. Ever the meticulous record keeper, Wilson noted in his diary each New Year's Day the number of livestock on the farm. Typical of the early years is 1896 when he recorded one horse, three cows, one calf, one hundred and ten chickens, three pigs and one duck. Numbers fluctuated over the years but a decade later the farm supported three horses, six cows, 3 calves, 250 chickens and 2 pigs. On three occasions rabbits are recorded and there was one apparently ill-starred venture raising pigeons. With his son, Llewellyn (usually off to the Klondike gold fields), he built a silo for green clover in 1901 but it didn't work out. "Our silo not satisfactory, so turned the upper part into a pigeon house," he wrote in February 1902. Rev. Wilson was more successful as an orchardist and even invented an apple picking machine which he put on display at the farm.

There were some small changes to the acreage over the years. Wilson had sold 14 acres to Mr. Lundy in 1899 and had given his sons small blocks of about 10 acres each. He rented Hudson's orchard and hay field at the North Rd. in 1899 and, in 1910 Norman's wife, Ethel, bought 30 acres

of Purvis land to the south of them with a splendid crop of hay on it. By the time Wilson deeded the farm to son Norman in 1909 and retired to California the farm was actually making small profit. The figures reported by Norman to his father in 1910 after his first year of operating the farm alone are instructive, particularly since there are no other statistics of this sort available.

Norman Wilson Farm Accounts November 1909-November 1910

Receipts Payments Net Profit

Poultry & eggs \$523.61 \$320.10 \$203.51

Dairy 925.79 183.81 741.98

Fruit 451.20 62.55 388.65

Pigs 180.70 51.21 129.49

Garden & field 49.10 Team 44.87

Hay, seed 223.05

Wages, board 273.90

(It should be noted that by 1909 Norman had a herd of ten cows and in 1910 reported he expected to ship 300 boxes of apples. Hence the profit for the year of nearly \$1,000 is understandable. What his net profit for the year was, after paying for his living expenses, is not known).

3. Small Farm Specialization - Potatoes

However, not all farm operations on Salt Spring remained at or near the subsistence level. There was a growing specialization and production for the market, first of all in the development of orchards, then, after the opening of the Ganges creamery in 1904, in the dairy industry, but also in some other complimentary specialized activities such as the poultry industry and the raising of small fruits and potatoes. Although in aggregate an outstanding volume of produce was shipped to market, the development must be kept in perspective for farming was always small business on Salt Spring compared to the more favoured parts of Canada or the adjoining regions of the United States and even those lines that did best (such as fruit and butter) had their problems and did not survive past the Depression of the 1930s and World War II.

In the years while their fruit trees were coming into full production and right up to 1914 farmers were generating considerable cash income from the sale of potatoes and other root crops. Of course from the earliest days settlers had planted potatoes for home use and it was soon recognized that all root crops did well on the island. By 1894 Henry Ruckle was harvesting a crop of six tons and in 1899 Mr. S. Conery took 19 tons off of two and three-quarter acres.(29) An invoice of December 9, 1913 indicates that Alfred and Henry Ruckle were to ship 20 tons of potatoes to the wholesale grocer, Simon Leiser & Co., in Victoria at \$20 per ton.(30) The price of \$20 per ton held good all through the two decades before the war, perhaps for the reason suggested by the Salt Spring

correspondent of the Cowichan Leader in 1910: “The excellence of the island-grown potatoes is steadily making itself known, and in most instances dealers are only too glad to pay a few dollars per ton more to secure them.”(31) Even after their orchards came into full production and dairy herds were developed, farmers like the Ruckles continued to export major quantities of potatoes. They were a dependable relatively disease-free crop with a large yeild per acre and stored well.

4. Small Farm Specialization - Tree Fruits (Orchards)

The major agricultural development in British Columbia in the 1890s was the development of commercial orchards. The province soon began to acquire the reputation of being a major fruit growing region in North America which it retains today. In the Okanagan commercial development of orchards on a large scale began rather suddenly after 1892 when the C.P.R. extended its railway line from Kamloops to Okanagan Landing near Vernon. The following year it launched a new, modern ferry, the “Aberdeen”, on Okanagan lake with a regular schedule of runs down to Penticton. The Okanagan valley was soon transformed from ranching to intensive settlement utilizing irrigation for growing fruit.(32) On Salt Spring the development began at least a decade earlier and here orcharding remained generally only a part, in some few cases a specialized part, of the family farm. Until shortly before World War I the fruit growing areas of British Columbia (the Okanagan, Saanich Peninsula, and Salt Spring Island) were not in serious competition with each other. Rather, together they made British Columbia a major exporter to the East. The volume was sufficient by 1903 to warrant a daily fruit train from Victoria to Winnipeg. And when construction of the Panama Canal began in 1904 it was optimistically predicted that this would open up the European market to fresh fruit from British Columbia.(33)

Most of the big orchards on Salt Spring were planted out in the 1880s or early 1890s and were in full production by the late ‘90s. Henry Ruckle and Theodore Trage in the Beaver Point area and Samuel Beddis and Raffles Purdy on Beddis Road had their orchards established by 1890. In 1892 the Scott brothers came out from England and developed on the earlier Louis Stark preemption on Ganges Harbour the largest and most successful orchard on the North End. In the same year Henry Bullock bought his estate north of Ganges and developed a fine orchard of apple and cherry trees. John Pappenburger, Ed Lee and others planted large orchards on the south End at the same time, followed a decade later by J.H. Monk, remnants of whose fine orchard still stand down Stevens Road. And there were many others. Probably the largest orchard on the island was that of Trage with 1600 trees. W.E. Scott with 1200 was not far behind; Raffles Purdy had 900/1000 and Henry Ruckle 600. Fruit growing by the end of the century was big business(34)

Statistics on the production of island orchards are fragmentary but the few which are available are suggestive.(35) Henry Bullock is said to have shipped 2-3,000 boxes (40 lbs. each) in a good year and Ed Lee up to 2,000 boxes. Trage was shipping from 1800 to 2400 boxes of apples per year between 1898 and 1902. Rev. Wilson reports in his Church Monthly that the Scott brothers were harvesting big crops of prunes from their “Fruitvale” orchards - in 1902 up to 20 tons were to be put

through the evaporator. Not every year was a good year, however. In 1905, due to wet weather the Scott's harvest, instead of 3,000 crates as anticipated, was "almost nil". Three years earlier, due to drought, Trage's harvest of apples was reduced from an anticipated 3,000 boxes to about 1800. But the total tonnage of fruit shipped from the island was probably much greater than that represented by the output of the few major orchardists. And there is no way to put a really accurate dollar value on the harvest though we do know that apples, pears, and plums were all bringing about 2 1/2 cents a pound in the 1890s. There is reason to believe also that apples were worth about the same in 1913 when an article in the Sidney and Islands Review reported: "A conservative estimate places 20,000 boxes of apples as the annual shipment of that fruit alone from the island."(36) Assuming 40 lb. boxes of apples worth 2 cents a pound the annual harvest would have been worth \$16,000 in 1913. The problems associated with agriculture on Salt Spring will be discussed later. Let it just be mentioned here that two of the principal problems for orchardists were finding sufficient seasonal labour and getting their crops moved to the off-island markets. The first need was usually met by the employment of Japanese or Chinese migrant workers. Getting the harvest to market relied heavily at first upon the somewhat undependable and changing steamboat service. In the 1890s Salt Spring's major ports (Burgoyne and Vesuvius on the west side; Fernwood, Ganges, and Beaver Point on the east) were generally served at least once a week by ships plying from Victoria to Nanaimo. After 1900 service was generally twice a week to Nanaimo and four times weekly to Victoria, sometimes more, and at times there was a direct service to Vancouver. To meet the growing needs of island farmers the government replaced older wharves with new ones at Ganges in 1902 and at Beaver Point in 1910. At Fulford a totally new 1000 foot long wharf built in 1914 gave this harbour a deep water landing at all tides.(37)

But the steamers in service before 1900 were not sufficient to meet the needs of the island's burgeoning economy. A growing crisis was averted when the Malcolm and Purvis Store was built in 1904 in Ganges. It gave the island farming industry a boost by opening up an exporting business, using its 30' Nomad, soon replaced by the 60' Ganges. Gilbert Mouat worked on the Nomad hauling produce to market at night to Ladysmith and soon after, in 1907, he dropped out of Columbia College and with his mother bought out Percy Purvis (Joe Malcolm had died). The Mouat Bros. Store took over Purvis' export business.(38) But competition developed in the export business when W.E. Scott and Henry Bullock, who both had large volumes of fruit to move, joined with T.F. Speed in opening the Gulf Islands Trading Co. in 1912. Much fruit also went to market direct from the farm. Will Scott had his private wharf at Fruitvale where his apples, pears and plums could be taken by scow to market. And the Ruckles were shipping from their private wharf at Beaver Point after about 1889 (1895?). Fruit from the Burgoyne valley went out by the public wharf at Burgoyne Bay.

5. Small Farm Specialization - Dairying and the Ganges Creamery

Dairy cattle were raised on virtually every Salt Spring Island farm from 1860 on and a few beef cattle were kept for oxen or for home consumption. Shorthorns and Herefords were the preferred beef breeds. (Only the Maxwell family on Burgoyne Bay are known to have specialized in raising

beef cattle commercially - first John Maxwell, then after his death in 1897, his son, James, right down to World War I.(39) Dairy products were a necessity for survival. Louis Stark is credited with importing the first animals in 1860. By the 1880s and 1890s farm families were earning some spare cash by selling butter from time to time. But it was not until the Ganges Creamery was opened in 1904 that dairying became a major commercial component of the small family farm. Herds were small, however. There never was the same degree of specialization such as marked the tree fruit industry.

Reports from island farmers to the Ministry of Agriculture as late as the mid-1890s concurred that “dairying was not prosecuted to any extent.”(40) It had been recognized from the beginning that cattle would thrive on the island. Winters were mild; shelter was needed for only a short period; and grain, hay and root crops for winter feed all did well. But until the opening of the creamery in 1904 provided a satisfactory market for their butter. Cows were kept primarily for milk for the family, the chickens and pigs. Some butter was marketed directly by individual families in the 1890s. Farm wives churned butter for sale at times when cows were fresh and there was more milk than could be consumed. But as Mr. Trage reported in 1892:”There are only a few settlers who make the manufacture of butter a special business, prices ranging from 25 cents to 40 cents per pound. Cheese is not made at all.”(41) One of the very few who did was Mr. Conery, who grew up in a mining camp in Butte, Montana and came to Salt Spring in the early 90s. He bought the Blackburn Lake valley below W. Dukes, and, even before the opening of the creamery, developed a model dairy farm. It was certainly he who was reported by Rev. Wilson in 1895 to be “marketing as much as 1,000 lbs. of butter in a year.” Perhaps it was processed in the creamery plant Mr. Cundell was reported to have bought from Malcolm and Purvis in May 1896. Conery’s herd of a dozen cows in 1895 had increased to “21 good milkers” in 1901 and was up to 31 cows by 1904 when the creamery opened.(42) While Mr. Conery was the exception there were enough farmers with Jersey cows producing their rich milk to prompt Mr. John T. Collins, recently arrived with his family from England and living on the farm of his friend, Henry Bullock, to try opening a creamery. An old bar on Bullock’s property was converted in 1896 into a small butter factory, the “Salt Spring Island English Creamery Co.” However, it was not successful. Rev. Wilson notes in his diary May 15, 1897: “Mr. Collins, this Spring, has opened a creamery on Mr. Bullock’s land. It did not answer very well, and people complained of his keeping a pig yard close to it. We began sending cream to him May 25th, but quit Oct. 6th.”(43)

The Colonist reported in 1898: “The Salt Spring Island Creamery has quit making butter for a short time on account of an accident to some of the machinery.” Apparently it never re-opened.

But the need remained for a facility to process island cream and Mr. Bullock was again active in establishing within a few years a most successful and long lasting agricultural enterprise, the “Salt Spring Island Creamery Association.” For over fifty years (it closed its doors in 1957) it was a mainstay of the island economy. It was organized in July 1903 as a cooperative, one of several in the province, under the Dairy and Livestock Association Act. As early as 1893 the government was sending out expert lecturers “to enlighten the farmers upon the necessity of making a uniform quality of butter if they wished to compete with the importations from the East and elsewhere.”(44) In 1895 a creamery company was formed in Duncan with government support and this was in the

minds of Bullock and others as they moved to make butter making on Salt Spring Island a viable enterprise. In the March 1903 issue of his Church Monthly Mr. Wilson advised his readers: "Dairy farmers and their wives are asked to attend a meeting at Central Hall (notice will be given of a date) to discuss the matter of establishing a permanent creamery on Salt Spring Island on the same lines as the Cowichan and Victoria creameries. Mr. A.H. Gardam is the prime mover in the matter, and he hopes that all interested in butter making will attend."

By June, 1903 the Salt Spring Island Creamery Association had been organized with a capital of \$5,000 divided into 500 shares worth \$10.00 each which were offered for sale to island dairymen.(45) Henry Bullock was elected President and Edward Walter, Secretary. Directors included such well-known farmers as S.T. Conery, W.E. Scott, Ed Lee and James Horel. In July the Association let out a contract to A.R. Bittancourt (who was just completing construction of Mahon Hall) and Robert Mason to construct of local stone the creamery building which still stands today as the west side of a bakery building at the foot of Ganges Hill. On August 1 the cornerstone was laid by Mrs. W.E. Scott. And in October Wilson could report in his Church Monthly: "The new stone creamery looks very picturesque at the foot of the long mountain road, and will soon be in operation." Actually, due to delay in the arrival of machinery, it did not open its doors until early 1904 but by February it was in full production with Mr. Knight as its first butter maker.

During the early months of operation butter production was at an abnormally high level. The Victoria creamery was installing new equipment early in 1904 and was sending its cream by ferry to the Ganges Creamery. Butter production from the milk of Ganges area farmers, the only local farmers to supply the creamery at first, averaged about 750 lbs. per week during the first year. Output peaked at about 1400 lbs. per week in the spring and dropped to about 550 lbs. in the winter months. (Apparently producers became more sophisticated over the years as the Cowichan Leader reported in 1911: "The majority of farmers in these parts arrange to have their cows in full milk during the autumn and winter months when cream is high in price and when they are able to give more time and care to their dairy stock").(46) The value of butter sold in the year beginning in May 1904 was \$8,244.77. The small scale, even almost incidental, production of milk for the creamery is revealed in this remark by Rev. Wilson in May 1904: "The patronage keeps increasing; and farmers who at present have but two or three cows talk of increasing their stock to five or six."

Although no figures are available, the Ganges Creamery apparently continued to prosper. Mr. Geoff Scott soon replaced Bullock as President of the Association and is reported to have continued in that position until after World War II. Buttermakers came and went until Arthur Drake took over in 1912, holding that responsibility until 1949. Even before Mr. Drake, who is so closely associated with the creamery in island memory, the reputation of Salt Spring butter for quality was growing under reputation of Salt Spring butter for quality was growing under buttermakers Cundell and Derby to the point where the creamery had great difficulty supplying the many demands for its

product. In only one thing did the Creamery Association fail. It had built a feed shed along the side of the creamery building. But the feed store apparently failed to meet the competition from the Malcolm & Purvis Store and in 1906 Rev. Wilso refurbished it and held Anglican services there for his Ganges parishioners!(47)

Over the years dairy herds came and went. Mr. Conery died in December 1904; his herd was dispersed and his farm sold three years later to Mr. Blackburn who let it grow into a wilderness. Meanwhile new herds were created - most notably that of A.J. Smith who imported some fine purebred Jerseys from Oregon for the farm purchased in 1903 from John Norton.(48) For thirty years he was a main supplier of fresh milk for the Ganges area. Both Mr. Smith and Norman Wilson were commended by the Cowichan Leader in 1910 for their well managed dairy operations. Although the Jersey cow prized for its richer milk was always the most numerous breed on the island, by 1914 farmers were also raising Guernseys, Holsteins and Ayreshires.

The biggest boost to creamery production before World War I came when arrangements were made for farmers from the South End to have their cream picked up and delivered to Ganges. On June 1, 1911 an island tradition was born when John Pappenburger, orchardist, mail carrier and a neighbour on the south coast to the Ruckles, began operation of the creamery wagon. We are told he rose three times weekly at about 2:00 a.m., made his first pick up at the Ruckle farm and then proceeded over to Fulford and up the valley to Ganges, returning in the late afternoon dropping off empty cream cans along his route.(49) Again we quote the Cowichan Leader (May 25, 1911):

“The placing of a creamery wagon on island roads is a step in the right direction. The dairying business is one of the stable lines of farming that knows few failures and it will be a great encouragement to those who are keeping dairy cattle to be provided with a satisfactory means of transportation.”(50) By 1913 the Sidney and Islands Review reported that with a herd of about 500 dairy cows, all inspected by a Government veterinarian and found free of tuberculosis, dairying had probably become the most important industry on the island.(51)

Maintenance of livestock (cattle, but also horses, sheep, chickens, etc.) pretty well dictated many of the activities on the family farm. For nine or ten months a year the farmer was busy raising food for his livestock. Fields of peas, timothy, clover and other forage crops were grown and stored in large barns in the summer months. Root crops were grown in prodigious quantities on very small acreages, partly for cattle feed and partly for export. The sweet mangel (mangold) was a basic winter feed for cattle. Every farm had its root cellar. Carrots were grown to feed the sheep. But pressed as always for cash large quantities of roots were also grown for sale to Victoria or elsewhere. For the Beaver Point area in 1896 Mr. Trage reported to the Minister of Agriculture the production of 80 tons of turnips (Swedes) (almost entirely for export), 60 tons of mangels and 60 tons of carrots - the carrots selling for \$10.00 a ton, mangels and turnips for \$6.00. The following year Mr. Trage and Mr. Purdy reported a total of 250 tons of root crops growing in their reporting district. The Ruckle farm alone grew 60 tons of turnips in 1895, in 1896 Mr. Scott had a heavy crop

of turnips and also harvested 5 tons of carrots and in 1899 Mr. Conery, as mentioned earlier, raised 19 tons of carrots. (They surely were not all fed to his cows).(52) By 1911 it was reported by the Cowichan Leader that kale was also becoming popular as winter feed for cattle.(53)

Raising grain was another time consuming enterprise, particularly if the farmer kept a large flock of chickens as many did. Although wheat and oats were harvested in large quantities and some barley was grown the island never became self-sufficient in feed grain. When the Iroquois sank in 1911 and was not immediately replaced there was near panic as feed stores on the island saw their supplies depleted.(54) In 1914 Mr. Blandy, proprietor of the Burgoyne Store, was urging local farmers to join a Winnipge/Calgary based grain co-op which brought grain at reduced prices to the island twice a month on a special grain boat.(55) It was the labour and tedium involved in grain growing which brought some of the first modern labour-saving agricultural machinery to the island before the turn of the century - the binder and the thrashing machine. The major role of grain and forage production in a farmer's life is perhaps reflected in the statistics for 1894 when the Ministry of Agriculture reported that of the 1,027 acres cultivated on Salt Spring (and not devoted to fruit raising - 13,739 trees), the largest acreage, 532 acres, was in hay, 164 in oats, 111 in peas, and 109 in wheat. Root crops accounted for most of the rest.(56)

5. Small Farm Specialization - Poultry Raising (Chickens, Ducks, Geese and Turkeys)

Reports from the same period of the mid-90s indicate that poultry were raised in considerable quantity, but not systematically followed, though they paid well. As in the case of cattle, islanders had never really been without poultry and even in the 1880s the sale of surplus eggs was bringing in grocery money for island housewives. By the turn of the century farm blocks of 200-300 hens were not uncommon, and in the decade before World War I production of eggs, breeding stock and live birds for sale developed as a specialty on some farms. True poultry ranches, however, did not appear on the island until after World War I when farmers such as Ted Parsons and the Chantelus went into egg production as a full-time business.

The importance of the sale of a few eggs for grocery money is well illustrated by John Beddis' Diary for the first half of 1890. Even at the age of fifteen he was a careful record keeper like his father and each week he or one of his brothers took from five to ten dozen eggs by launch down to Ganges and up to Mrs. Stevens' Church-Hill Farm boarding house or to Broadwell's Store. Price is not mentioned but it was probably in the neighbourhood of

25-30 cents a dozen. The money was generally used to buy staples at the store. Sylvia Stark paid for her groceries by selling eggs to the Broadwell's Store(57) and Thomas We. Mouat was quoted by Rev. Wilson in 1895 as saying: "My poultry alone pay for their own cost and find us in flour and groceries, which is pretty well for a family of ten."

Five years later the sale of eggs and live birds was becoming an even more important part of the small farm income. Because flocks were increasing in size farmers now began to acquire brooders and hatch their own baby chicks.(58) An interesting article by Rev. Wilson in the March 1900 issue of Parish and Home reported that Henry Ruckle was said to have sold 2,000 dozen eggs last season, W. Akerman was doing the biggest business in ducks and geese, W.G. Scott had the largest number of turkeys on the island (14 turkey hens!) and Mr. Purvis had marketed about 600 chickens. Live fowls and live broilers at the time were bringing about \$6.00 and \$4.00 per dozen respectively.

Probably the first poultry specialist on the island at this time was Mr. H.O. Allen, a well-known Victoria breeder of Orpington chickens and Pekin ducks, who bought a farm bordering on Roberts Lake in 1902 in the Cranberry.(59) By 1906 the Burgoyne Postmaster, Mr. R.P. Edwards, was also breeding poultry.(60)

Reverend Wilson reported that his place was assuming a quite picturesque appearance with chicken runs, a duck pond, duck houses and a water wheel. In 1911 the Cowichan Leader mentioned that among his many varieties of choice birds were flocks of Minorcas, Rhode Island Reds, Buff Rocks, Andalusians and Grey Dorkings. Edwards was a member of the American Buff Plymouth Rock Club and at the Vancouver Poultry Show in February 1911 won several prizes for his Buff Rocks and his Silver Grey Dorkings. Breeding stock of the latter variety he had imported from the Ottawa Experimental Farm. In his display ad for hatching eggs and breeding stock in the Cowichan Leader in the spring of 1911 Edwards also listed for sale Speckled Hamburgs, Black Minorcas and Blue Andalusians. He was obviously a true poultry fancier. Most island poultrymen, however, tended to stay with the tried and true varieties such as Rocks, Reds, Orpingtons or Wyandottes for dual-purpose fowl and Leghorns for egg layers.

By 1910 or soon after poultry raising was becoming such an increasingly important part of the small farm economy that some farmers such as John Shaw were turning to it from dairying. "In this country," reported the Cowichan Leader in 1911, "the difficulty of procuring labour at a reasonable rate has

been largely the reason for people flying to the hen for a solution of their difficulties.”(61) The Sidney and Islands Review in 1913 reported: “Dairying is, perhaps, the most important industry, although the poultry industry in recent years has attained to large proportions.”(62) It added that 21,000 cases of eggs had been shipped in the last year from Ganges Wharf alone and live poultry to a value of \$7,000.

With the growth of the poultry industry and the arrival on the island of farmers interested primarily in poultry such as General Green-Wilkinson, who started his poultry farm on McGill Road in 1907, a move was set afoot in 1913 to organize the Salt Spring Island Poultry Association.(63) The Rev. G.W. Dean was elected President and H. Fletcher, Vice-President. Directors included T.H. McMurdo, Henry Caldwell and Norman Wilson.

Poultry had from the beginning been exhibited at the annual exhibitions of the Islands’ Agricultural and Fruit Growers’ Association and in 1912 new poultry sheds had been erected on the grounds near Mahon Hall. Poultry was shown as usual in September 1913 but the new Poultry Association decided to stage its own separate annual show as well. A “neat little catalogue which contains a lot of useful information appertaining to the island” was prepared and there were about 200 entries at their first show held in December 1913 in the poultry building in Ganges. White Leghorns and Buff Orpingtons topped the list but much interest was shown in the White Wyandottes. Utility birds were much more in favour than show varieties according to the Cowichan Leader.(64) The second annual show, held in December 1914 after the outbreak of war in Europe, was an equal success. But by 1915 the War had taken its toll in members and enthusiasm. No poultry at all were shown at the regular Fall Fair and the third annual poultry show held as usual in December of that year “was not nearly so good as in previous years.” And it rained all day!

6. Sheep Raising

Although nearly every island farmer kept a few sheep for their meat and wool, sheep raising never developed as a specialized branch of agriculture except in a few isolated cases. Generally sheep were relegated to the hillier and less productive edges of the farm. In his Report for 1891 the Minister of Agriculture noted that a large portion of the island, being hilly and wooded, was devoted to sheep runs. “The absence of wild animals, and the excellent runs the hills afford, make sheep raising more profitable here than in most places, and a large number are reared all over the island.”(65) But not everywhere. In 1892 Raffles Purdy commented that parts of the North End were not suitable for sheep because they were too heavily timbered. There were, however, two or three large flocks kept west of Central - for example by J.P. Booth on the

flanks of Mt. Erskine and by Joel Broadwell on the mountain west of St. Mary Lake. At the South End sheep were raised in considerable numbers by John Maxwell, whose property stretched from Mt. Maxwell on the north to Musgrave Mountain (Mt. Bruce) to the south, and by Theodore Trage most of whose 839 acres were sheep run in 1895. The Ruckle's concentration on sheep raising came after World War I though even before the war Henry Ruckle was shipping off some fat lambs to market. Farmers who, like the Ruckles, were raising lambs for home use or the market preferred the Southdown breed, those producing for wool the Merino or a Merino cross.

The one really major sheep ranching area on Salt Spring, and it was an exceptional case, was the western slope of Mt. Tuam and Mt. Bruce (known after 1890 as Musgrave Mountain). Here three wealthy landowners in succession, in relative isolation from the rest of the island, ran sheep in large numbers. Sheep raising on the sparsely wooded mountain started up in the mid 1870s after the Pimbury brothers from England, built a wharf at the seashore and a house just above.(66) But the peak of activity occurred in the years from 1885 to 1892 when Edward Musgrave, fourth son of Sir Richard Musgrave, 3rd Baronet, of Waterford, Ireland lived here with his family on a 7000 acre sheep ranch.(67) His house was near the little inlet now called Musgrave Landing where the Pimburies had settled. This property stretching from Isabella Point and Cape Keppel in the south up to the "sugar loaf" at the top of the mountain and north to John Maxwell's farm on Burgoyne Bay was almost all one vast sheep run. In the vicinity of the house, however, were cottages for the hired hands, cow and hay barns, an orchard, fenced fields for hay, oats and root crops and three or four fenced paddocks. Precious details are preserved on the operations of this ranch in the personal Diary of Mr. Musgrave's young Scottish shepherd, Alexander Aitken, who worked on the ranch from April 14, 1891 until May 25, 1892. From it we learn that over 1100 sheep ran wild over the mountain. They were rounded up two or three times a year with help from Indians from the Cowichan area and one or two Kanakas from Fulford Harbour. After they were shorn in June of 1891 nearly 4,000 pounds of wool was packed in sacks and shipped to Victoria via the steamer Isabel which stopped on call at Musgrave Landing on Tuesdays and Thursdays on its run from Victoria to Nanaimo. About 100 "fat sheep" were also shipped off to market that summer and the Diary records that the family slaughtered a sheep every week for food. But primarily the sheep were raised for their wool; no mention is made of the sale of lambs. To what extent Mr. Musgrave's operation was continued in the years after Capt. Trench purchased the property is uncertain. Rev. Wilson mentions him as a non-resident owner. At a later date two sons of Capt. Trench lived in houses near the Landing. In any case, for a few brief years the ranch flourished--long enough to give the mountain its popular name. It should be noted that for the island as a whole, sheep raising is probably on the decline in the years before 1914. In

the words of the Cowichan Leader: “The wilderness of our mountain lands will always make sheep raising one of the island’s industries though the best of the farm lands are given over to the Jersey and her relatives.”

7. Small Fruit Culture, Beekeeping and Other Abortive Enterprises

In concluding this discussion of agricultural expansion, note should be taken of a few things that were tried briefly but proved unsuccessful. One of the first was the nursery business. Fruit trees, ornamentals and shrubs were in demand throughout the whole period. Jonathan Begg sensed this need and, as mentioned, opened a nursery in connection with his store at Fernwood in 1860. Begg soon left the island and his nursery was taken over by Brinn and Griffiths. Whether this business lasted beyond the 1870s is not known. In the 1880s and early 1890s when orchards were being planted all over the island, nursery stock was probably bought in Victoria. Reverend Wilson’s Parish and Home and Church Monthly ran regularly for eleven years a display ad by the Layritz Nursery located on Carey Road in Victoria. The Ruckles are known to have bought fruit trees and nut trees and grapevines from Layritz in 1911.(68)

For a very brief period, from 1896 to 1901, a professional nurseryman, Ambrose A. Berrow, operated a nursery on land to the southeast of Central Settlement. His attractive ad in the Salt Spring Island Parish and Home for April 1896 reads: “Ambrose A. Berrow. Nurseryman, Florist and Landscape Gardener. Salt Spring Island. Is prepared to take contracts for the laying out of Gardens, Public Parks and Cemeteries, also the Excavation of Ornamental Lakes, Clearing Land, Planting Gardens, Orchards, Etc. All kinds of Nursery Stock supplied. Plans furnished at reasonable terms.” One wonders why he sold out to Mr. Bullock in 1901 and, to his wife’s disgust, moved off island to Chemainus. Were his ambitions too grand for Salt Spring Island? Had the demand for nursery stock (especially fruit trees) peaked at this time? Or was it because he apparently failed in another of his initiatives - the wholesale production of strawberries? Wilson records that in 1897 Berrow shipped out nearly a ton of strawberries.(69) But no more is heard of his berry production. This is probably for the reason that Wilson mentions in 1903 - the difficulties of shipping and marketing perishable fruit and the fact strawberries were being extensively grown in Victoria where they were not subject to uncertain transportation to get to the market in good condition. This may explain the abortive attempt of Joel Broadwell at raising black currants. In both 1896 and 1897 he marketed a ton of currants! Then no more is heard of them.(70) Broadwell too moved off island in 1901.

Another notable failure was in beekeeping. The early orchardists, being accustomed to honey bees as pollenizers of their fruit trees, apparently tried raising bees. Their reports in the mid-90s to the Department of Agriculture were unanimous in saying bees had been a failure - "no pasture for gathering honey" said Purdy in 1891.(71) Trage concurred: "Apiculture is a failure from want of pasture." Only Mr. Bullock may have bucked the trend. He is said to have had 100 beehives.(72) Mr. Bullock also gained a reputation for his vegetable gardens. Bea Hamilton comments: "The vegetables and fruits grown on the estate were outstanding in size and quantity. Bing cherries were so large that each cherry had to be individually wrapped for marketing. Corn grew to seventeen feet in height; asparagus beds covered a good two acres.(73) The asparagus went by C.P.R. ferries to Victoria and Vancouver. But despite Bullock's reputation, market gardening, pursued with such success by the Japanese on Mayne Island, never became important on Salt Spring.

IV. THE FARMER AND SOCIETY

1. Farmers' Organizations and Government Assistance to Agriculture

An important dimension to the development of agriculture on Salt Spring Island was the emergence in the late 1890s of three farmers' organizations, the Central Hall Association, the Islands' Agricultural and Fruit Growers' Association and the Farmers' Institute. The last two especially, with government support, played a major role in the improvement of agricultural methods along scientific lines. Realizing that a healthy agricultural base was essential to a strong provincial economy the government of British Columbia took many initiatives to promote scientific advances in the production of marketing of agricultural products and hence the prosperity of farmers.(74) Government encouragement and advice in organizing cooperative creameries has already been mentioned. Even before the government in 1873 passed the "Agricultural Societies Incorporation Act" to promote the holding of Fall Fairs, Salt Spring farmers in 1868 had, as discussed earlier, joined their nearest neighbours to the west in forming the "Cowichan, Salt Spring and Chemainus Agricultural Society." But this organization by 1890 was no longer serving their needs. When the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway was completed in 1886 and Duncan Crossing (later the City of Duncan) became a station on the railway it quickly developed into the commercial centre of the Cowichan Valley. A movement was soon set on foot to move the fall agricultural show from Maple Bay to Duncan. Although some disapproved this move on the ground that it would prevent Salt Spring farmers from taking any interest in the show, an independent Cowichan Hall Society went ahead and built a hall in Duncan anyway and the fair moved.(75) As feared the inland location was inconvenient for our island farmers who ceased to participate, and in 1896 a formal move was made to get the \$200 government subsidy for Salt Spring farmers

transferred to a new society being formed on the island.(76)

To meet local needs two initiatives were taken almost simultaneously in December 1895. One led to the creation of the Central Hall Society which built what was originally intended as an agricultural exhibition hall but which, after 1901, became simply a public community hall for meetings and social events.(77) By late 1895 there was talk on the island of erecting a public hall at either Ganges Harbour or at the fork of the roads at Central. On December 14, 1895 a public meeting was called with local farmer, J.P. Booth M.P.P., as chairman. It adopted a scheme presented by Joel Broadwell for creating a limited liability company, value of shares \$5 each, to erect a public hall “to be utilized for holding an annual agricultural show,” besides other purposes. A committee was appointed composed of Broadwell, Arthur Walter, A. Berrow, Henry Bullock and W. Robertson, all local farmers of the Central area. Central Hall Association was created and subscriptions taken; in April tenders were invited for construction of the hall and a building committee was struck. The building was completed in time to house Salt Spring’s first agricultural exposition on October 14, 1896 - but an exposition organized not by the Central Hall Association, which came to confine itself to operation of community hall, but rather by another group, organized at the same period, but with a wider geographical representation, which from 1896 to this day took over the staging of the fall show.

During its first year of existence this second organization was called the “Horticultural and Fruit Growers Association - Salt Spring Island.”(78) In February 1897 it changed its name to the “Islands’ Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association.” This farmers organization was initially an offshoot of the provincial Fruit Growers Association. On December 17, 1895 just three days after the meeting held to discuss erection of a public hall, meeting of island fruit growers was called to hear a lecture at the Stevens’ Church-Hill Farm by the Provincial Inspector of fruit pests. J.P. Booth was again in the chair. At the conclusion of the lecture and after considerable discussion “Messrs. Ruckle, Scott and Berrow were appointed a committee to organize a local association in connection with the Fruit Growers’ Association of British Columbia . . .” At a follow-up meeting December 30, W.G. Scott, Theodore Trage and A.A. Berrow were given the responsibility of canvassing the island for subscribers. By March, when 50 had already subscribed, it was decided “the adjoining islands will be canvassed.” Thus broadening its membership. Its objectives were enlarged as well. In February its purpose had been limited to improving fruit culture and marketing. But in March it was decided: “The Association will interest itself in agriculture and horticulture as well as in fruit growing,” and, significantly, “a fruit, vegetable and agricultural show is to be held on the Island about the end of September.”

In April entries were invited from all the neighbouring Gulf Islands and the group was on its way to becoming the major organization of island farmers in the years to come. The first Fall Fair, held October 14, 1896 in the newly built Central Hall under the aegis of the Horticultural and Fruit Growers Association was opened by a short speech by Reverend Wilson. The chief judge of livestock was S.F. Tolmie (much later Premier of British Columbia).(79)

At its first annual meeting, February 3, 1897, the Horticultural Association formally changed its name to the "Islands' Agricultural and Fruit Growers' Association" to better express its broader membership and the purpose expressed in the newly adopted constitution: "The purpose of this Society shall be to encourage and stimulate the general development of all the agricultural and horticultural resources of Salt Spring and adjacent Islands." The Constitution further provided: "The Society shall hold an annual exhibition and competition of Live Stock, Fruits, Field and Garden Produce, Household Arts, and anything that may be useful and profitable to the settlers of the Islands."(80)

Having successfully embarked upon its mission of promoting the betterment of island agriculture by the promotion of a fall fair, the society almost immediately sensed the need for having its own exhibition grounds with an adequate hall, sheds for livestock, poultry, etc. and space for the athletic and social events that came to be an integral part of the annual celebration. It was also realized that Ganges Harbour would be a better location for a fair designed to attract exhibitors from the other islands and visitors from Victoria and elsewhere. The matter was taken under consideration in 1898 and two years later the decision was taken "to build a hall of its own on Ganges Harbour."(81) Land was purchased from Frank Scott and by the fall of 1901 work was well underway. On November 6, 1901 the society decided to enlarge the hall and buy an additional 4 acres for an exhibition ground. To meet the extra expense they agreed to borrow \$1,000 from a well-known local landowner, Ross Mahon. The hall was completed in 1902. In 1904 it acquired its name. Ross Mahon had died in June 1903. His brothers and sisters returned the mortgage in return for the association placing in the hall a brass plate bearing the words "Mahon Memorial Hall."

Almost without exception the shows held in the years from 1896 to 1914 were an unqualified success, each being reported as "the best ever". The association was widely supported in the community by farmers and business people alike. Membership fluctuated from a low of 59 in 1905 to a high of 177 in 1912. Prize money was freely donated by both island and Victoria merchants and other individuals. (The amount of government subsidy depended on the amount of prize money donated, as well as on the number of members.)

The fair became a social event of the first order with as many as 1,000 or more in attendance. The C.P.R. ran a special ferry bringing visitors from Victoria and the other islands for the day. Athletic contests were held pitting teams from the North and South Ends against each other, and on occasion the brass band from the Indian Residential School on Kuper Island entertained the guests.(82) But behind all the festivities of this premier island social event was the serious intent expressed in this advice from the Directors to the exhibitors of 1915 who might have taken second place: “Ask for the Judge who awarded the honors and talk it over with him, not your neighbour, and after you have listened to his arguments, let it sink into your mind and do better next year. These shows are given to stimulate further activity amongst the ranchers both commercially and scientifically and if you go home without learning something the day has been lost.”(83)

The third farmers’ organization founded in the closing years of the nineteenth century, 1898, was the Farmers’ Institute.(84) Like the Horticultural Society it was formed in response to a government initiative. Its work, though it attracted less public attention than the Fall Fairs, probably did more to directly improve the skills of island farmers. Its membership, which fluctuated in the pre-war period between a high of 81 in 1908 and a low of 12 in 1912, never equalled that of the more publicized group staging the fairs. Members of the Farmers’ Institute, among the most progressive farmers of the island, were generally also active in the Islands’ Agricultural and Fruit Growers’ Association. The two bodies always maintained a good working relationship, the Institute being allowed for instance, to hold its meetings rent free in Mahon Hall.

It was in 1897 that the provincial government decided to transplant into British Columbia an educational program for farmers that was proving highly successful in Ontario. It hired an agricultural student from Ontario who went about organizing farmers into groups under the terms of an “Act providing for the establishment of Farmers’ Institutes.” There was a “fair attendance” when this young man met with local farmers January 17, 1898 at the Burgoyne schoolhouse. Later in the year a local Farmers’ Institute was formed on the island. Its object, as stated in the Act of 1897, was “the encouragement and improvement of agriculture, horticulture, arboriculture, manufactures, and other useful arts.” Membership fee was 50 cents and for each member enrolled it received a 50 cent subsidy from the government. Members were to receive free a copy of all publications of the Department of Agriculture. The local Institute was entitled to two regular meetings during the year to which expert speakers were sent at Government expense and in addition were required to hold two supplementary meetings, partly at their own expense. They also participated in many other government supported programs through the years. For several years John Collins, a prominent dairy farmer near St. Mary Lake, was President, Rev. Wilson, Vice-President, and Edward Walter of Ganges Harbour, Secretary. Farmers from the South End such as James Horel and Ed Lee served on the

Board of Directors.

Over the years the Farmers' Institute sponsored a great variety of activities. Mention has been made earlier of its sponsorship of a pamphlet by F. Philips designed to attract more and better off settlers to the island. And from the first it offered various prizes at the annual Fall Fair. From the beginning, too, it distributed pamphlets on stock, crops, etc. and by 1904 had established a lending library of up-to-date books on agricultural subjects - Henderson's Gardening for Profit, Stewart on Sheep, Harris on Swine, Mayhem's Horse Doctor, Farming by Rennie, Low-Priced Poultry House, etc. etc.(85)

Always a major part of the Insitute's educational efforts were the winter and spring lectures by experts provided by the government. Usually two lecturers came together, one speaking one night at the Burgoyne school for example, and the other a night or two later at Ganges. In 1908 the record indicates that five meetings in all were held on the island, two at the Divide School, and the others at Central Hall, Mahon Hall, and Fulford Harbour. Since the Insitutute was open to farmers from the other islands meetings were also held three times on Mayne and twice on Pender in 1908. They were actually much better attended than those on Salt Spring!(86) The public lectures of the Farmers' Institute covered a broad range of topics of concern to the farmer such as clearing land with stumping powder, poultry raising, tuberculosis and dairying, animal husbandry, management of creameries, care of orchards and fruit packing. Speakers included successful local farmers such as John Collins (on Dairying for Profit), government experts from the Department of Agriculture, including the Board of Horticulture, and even visiting professors from American agricultural colleges.

Equally important in the work of the Farmers' Institute were the field demonstrations and competitions. In 1899 Mr. Stevens' orchard was selected as an experimental spraying station. Mr. Middleton of the Board of Horticulture gave a demonstration on pruning in Mr. Ward's orchard at Ganges, "unfortunately in a blinding snowstorm." Just before the war, when the marketing of poultry was becoming important, a demonstration was requested on the killing and dressing of poultry for market. And the government considered establishing an experimental orchard on the island and an experimental plot on Norman Wilson's farm devoted to potatoes, kale, mangels and corn. Field competitions were also being organized in the years just before the war. Crop competitions in potato and kale culture, for example, ploughing matches and even annual prizes for the best home vegetable and flower gardens. In the latter case, judges from off-island were to visit the gardens in June and September. Competitors were obliged to make the best possible plot during the season and to leave it in the

best condition for winter.

And, finally, one of the most practical programs of all, the Institute members shared in the cooperative purchase of blasting powder for clearing stumps from their fields. This program, begun by the government late in 1901, remained important right into the 1920s. Starting rather small (1539 cases in 1905) it grew rapidly (17,000 cases in 1912) and in 1914 permission was granted by the government to build a small powder magazine to store stumping powder on a small island adjacent to Goat Island.(87) Other cooperative ventures were in mind by 1914 - for example, the purchase of a milk fever machine and of a fruit tree sprayer.

The Farmers' Institute appeared to be performing an essential service for island farmers in the years before 1914 although in 1912 its membership had fallen temporarily to only 12. Former local farm leader, W.E. Scott, then Deputy Minister of Agriculture, suggested in a speech to the Islands' Agricultural Association that "if the people wished they might amalgamate their Institute with their Agricultural Association."(88) His words were prophetic. After the losses in World War I depleted the ranks of both organizations, they and the members of the Poultry Association voted on February 11, 1918 to amalgamate and form one society.(89)

2. The Problems of Farmers on Salt Spring

The annoyances associated with pests, both furred and feathered, were probably somewhat less than in earlier years. While deer still destroyed young apple trees and ate carrots, peas, turnips and potatoes farmers gained some relief when the Game Law of 1895 permitted them to kill deer "when depasturing within their fields." "A great many farmers on Salt Spring", Rev. Wilson reported, "would be glad if the above clause in the Act [of 1895] could be made to apply also to pheasants."(90) The occasional cougar still killed sheep and racoons still stole the farmer's chickens but the wolves and bears were gone. A quite spectacular but isolated plague of caterpillars struck the island in 1900. In the Salt Spring Parish and Home Wilson reported that the "army" started at Ganges Harbour about mid-July and by August was all over the island. "Potatoes, carrots, onions, beets, celery, rhubarb, turnips, lettuces, cabbages, strawberry plants, clover, all are going, and there seems to be no remedy." In the flower gardens they had a special liking for primroses. But, an organic gardener before his time, Wilson advised against poisoning the caterpillars with Paris Green as advised by the Department of Agriculture; "a better plan is to turn on chickens, ducks and turkeys."(91)

Fluctuations in the weather with some seasons excessively wet and others dry or with rain coming at the wrong time of year have always been a problem for farmers and Salt Spring was no exception. Mr. Conery got up his 19 tons of potatoes in the fall of 1899 but then it was “Rain, rain, rain - all through November” (Wilson) and many farmers found their roots under water. The winter of 1900 was equally wet. The early months of 1906 were very open, scarcely a flake of snow, followed by a wonderfully mild spring. “Then,” Mr. Wilson again, “came a strong cold wind, the glass dropped several degrees below the freezing point, and all the growing plants fell flat.”

But fluctuations in the weather could be taken in stride. A more persistent problem plagued the orchards on almost every farm. The damp, wet coastal climate favoured diseases and insect pests. Reports by island farmers to the Department of Agriculture in the mid-1890s recite a litany of diseases (scab, blight, scale) and insects (green fly, borer, bark louse, green and black aphids) attacking their apples, plums and cherries. Purdy noted that “green fly and borers retard the growth of apple trees,” Broadwell that something was stinging the plum and green fly was injuring apple trees, and J.P. Booth that blight “almost destroyed the crop.”(92) Incidentally, these realistic reports of 1892 and 1893 are in sharp contrast to the optimistic evaluations printed in Wilson’s pamphlet of 1895 for intending settlers! To combat the problem of disease orchardists experimented with numerous varieties of fruit trees to find those suited for the coast climate. Based on very incomplete data, the names of twenty-eight apple varieties grown in the 1890s are known.(93) There is reason to believe the actual number may have been much greater. This search for better, more disease resistant varieties (and probably just variety) persisted. At the 1915 Fall Fair prizes were offered for twenty-four different kinds of apples. Diseases and pests were increasingly brought under control, using spray formulas and programs developed by the Department of Agriculture.

Beyond the problems and annoyances due to pests and weather, which, with proper management, could be minimized, the Salt Spring farmer was to some extent at the mercy of developments outside the island over which he had very little control. Some stemmed from the island’s geographic situation. Being an island, it was somewhat isolated from its markets. And being a small and mountainous island, its population and hence production was too small to warrant its own transportation services. It remained heavily dependent on steamer schedules set up primarily to serve the heavier volume of trade between Victoria, Nanaimo and Vancouver. After the sinking of the Iroquois in 1911, there was an acute sense of vulnerability and meetings were held at Fulford and Ganges “to ascertain the feeling of the island inhabitants on the question of building a steamboat for the service of the gulf Islands.” Farmers at the South End led by Henry Ruckle favoured such a plan; but North End

interests, led by the Mouats and others who were already in negotiation with the C.P.R. for better service, defeated the idea and Salt Spring had to wait another generation for its own steamer - promoted by the Mouats!(94) Geographically, also, Salt Spring being an island of very small farms, found itself at a disadvantage in relation to areas more favoured for large-scale commercial production such as the Okanagan and, south of the border, the state of Washington.

Salt Spring farmers never really solved the problem of effectively marketing their produce. In the earlier years individual farmers took what surplus they had, when they had it and sent it or carried it themselves to whatever market was available -wholesalers in Victoria, Ladysmith, Nanaimo, Vancouver, New Westminster all received small intermittent shipments from individual island farmers. Under the circumstances, it is little wonder that they complained of getting the short end of the stick of low prices received, of produce being rejected, of very slow payment. Wilson was complaining in 1897 that wholesale grocers were setting their own prices and if the market was overstocked just dumped the fruit, etc. and paid nothing. And, even if they paid, the farmer waited a very long time for his money.(95)

The situation improved somewhat when the producer was able to trade with a local agent such as Malcolm and Purvis or later, Mouat Bros., who dealt in greater volume with the off island wholesalers and could bargain for better prices.(96) Better yet, when there was competition between Mouats and the Trading Company. But more was needed, and in the decade before 1814 there was an increasing realization that the answer lay in cooperative marketing on a wide scale. Wilson had suggested as early as 1897 that Salt Spring needed a fruit market to collect, pack and ship island fruit. A better and more uniform product would result. "Boxes marked 'Salt Spring Island Fruit Mart' would soon get a name and command the best price."(97) In 1908 W.E. Scott was actively working to organize a Fruit Growers Exchange that would utilize Mahon Hall as the centre for packing and marketing island fruit.(98)

But the problems remained, as pointed out in the Cowichan Leader in 1910: "it is quite plain that as long as individuals market their fruit in a haphazard way there will remain some disappointment in the fruit industry." A visitor to the island in 1911 predicted a fiasco if steps were not taken to procure cheap labour, establish proper transportation facilities, and organize a cooperative sales bureau for the products of the farm. These points were underlined in testimony presented to a Royal Commission on Agriculture in British Columbia which held hearings in Ganges April 18, 1913. Mr. Hayward, in particular, stressed the need for cooperative marketing.(99) Highlighted in

the submissions to the Royal Commission were two other basic problems faced by Salt Spring farmers - outside competition and the cost of labour. Competition was particularly critical for island fruit growers and it came from two directions, the Okanagan and Washington. The Okanagan had developed dramatically as a fruit growing region in the first decade of the twentieth century. The number of apple trees increased five-fold between 1901 and 1914; property selling for \$1.00 an acre in 1898 fetched \$1,000 an acre a decade later.(100) Although Gulf Islands fruit had a good reputation, Okanagan fruit was better. Neptune Grimmer, a Mayne Island pioneer, recalled in an interview with Derek Reimer: "Years ago fruit farming was quite a profitable thing, but when they started getting fruit from the Okanagan they'd compare our fruit with the Okanagan fruit and it just lost favour, that's all there was to it."(101)

American competition too was causing Washington fruit to replace local fruit in the markets of Victoria and Vancouver. But not because it tasted better. The Cowichan Leader regretted in 1911 that the threatened removal of the present small duty on U.S. fruit would make it even harder to compete. "It is at present quite hard to find purchasers for Island apples, even when they are of much better quality than the foreign product." For, it added, "British Columbia's apples are in a class by themselves for flavour and quality.(102) The competitive advantage of American fruit was not flavour but rather that it was better packed and of better colour and could be produced more cheaply. Little wonder the farmers addressing the Royal Commission in Ganges pressed for higher tariffs on imported produce. And the problem was not just with tree fruits. The Cowichan Leader reported in 1911 that the strawberry industry in British Columbia was being threatened by lower prices due to competition from fruit growers on Vashon Island (near Seattle) and the Spokane district.(103)

The pressure on British Columbia farmers from foreign competition was in part due to another persistent problem that developed after the turn of the century - the high cost of seasonal farm labour on which they had become dependent, particularly at harvest time. This had not been so much of a problem in earlier decades. Hired labour had been used by Henry Ruckle and other early pioneers and it continued in demand for clearing land. In the early period itinerant whites and half-breed Indians had met the demand. Wages as reported in the early 1890s were \$1.00 to \$2.00 a day.(104) Some time about 1890 Oriental labour came onto the island. In 1890 Musgrave had a Chinese field foreman and a Chinese cook on his ranch below Sansum Narrows. Raffles Purdy employed a Japanese to help clear the land for his orchards at the same period. In 1894 Wilson engaged a Japanese labourer to dig drains on his newly acquired property. Bullock relied on the Japanese as his primary field hands. By the mid-90s both Chinese and Japanese labour became common.(105) W.E. Scott employed as many as 10 Chinese at harvest time. The Chinese

were desperate for work at this period, having been dismissed from the work crews of the C.P.R. and left high and dry after completion of the line to Vancouver in 1885.(106) The Japanese came into the province in the late '80s and early '90s to work in the canneries at Steveston and then fanned out to the Gulf Islands as charcoal burners, fishermen and itinerant labourers. Apparently many Japanese were brought in as temporary workers from Victoria, working for 50 cents a day.(107)

For reasons not entirely clear itinerant labour became scarcer and more expensive after the turn of the century, yet with the increase in commercial fruit growing farmers on the island were becoming more and more dependent on it. As early as 1903 lack of seasonal labour was said to be making it hard to get the crop in. Reference was made earlier in discussing the dairy and poultry industries that the difficulty of procuring labour at a reasonable rate was driving people from dairying to the hen. Speaking to the Royal Commission in 1913 W.J. Hamilton declared that day labour at \$2.50 to \$3.00 per day was prohibitive and John Collins agreed saying that "labour was too dear and that more white labour was needed, but not of the class supplied by the Salvation Army."(108) A gloomy picture of prospects for the Salt spring farmer was painted by a visitor in 1911: "When most of the settlers came to the island there was an abundance of cheap labour. Any number of young men could be hired for \$15 to \$20 a month and their board. Now there are very few young men available; the few are inexperienced, and the only labour offering is Japanese or Chinese at rates ranging from \$40 to \$60 a month with board."(109) So farmers are suffering losses, he continued, and "farms go uncultivated, orchards unpruned and in many instances fruit ungathered."

There is some evidence that the presence of Orientals and dependence on their labour was generating racial sentiment. Partly this was no doubt due to their different lifestyle. Rev. Wilson noted in 1905 "A Chinese servant on this island has been fined \$15 for putting a cat in the oven. He was prosecuted by the S.P.C.A." Partly perhaps because they were becoming a visible minority. The Cowichan Leader, reporting that "12 Chinamen" were now at Ganges, was of the opinion "it is doubtful if these are desirable acquisitions."(110)

Without a satisfactory resolution of their persistent problems, economic times became particularly hard in the two years before the war when there was a general economic downturn in the province. Prices fell to record lows. , The apple industry on Salt Spring was alleged to be in precarious condition due to overproduction. Cabbages, worth but 3 cents to 5 cents a pound in Victoria, were being fed to the cattle. This was a time when the real estate boom in the province collapsed, British, European and American venture

capital was withdrawn, labour unrest was turning to violence in the Nanaimo coal fields, and charges of corruption against Premier McBride were increasing.(111) The rumours of war in Europe compounded the sense of uneasiness that settled on Salt Spring and the province in the summer of 1914.

3. The Farmer's Way of Life

Though there were a few farmers on Salt Spring Island, principally around Ganges Harbour, who could afford to do “a little, but not much, serious ranching” (Bohemian, 1911), most must have led a life of almost constant, heavy work. Revealing glimpses into the drudgery and tedium of life on the farm are offered by two diaries from the year 1890. John Beddis' entries are studded with references to long days spent slashing, making fires, stumping, sawing down trees, making fences and working in the garden of his father's orchard and farm on Ganges Harbour. In the same winter Alexander Aitken was working as a shepherd and farm hand on the Musgrave ranch. The seasonal roundup of sheep on the mountain must have been a welcome relief from long periods of cutting ferns or slowly following the oxen behind the plow. He started plowing in late November and was at it nearly every day for over three months. And for him, as for nearly every other farmer on the island, it was the routine of planting, harvesting and storing the crops. For the dairy farmers it was the discipline of milking the cows seven days a week, “in sickness or health”, year round; and for the poultry farmer feeding the chickens and gathering the eggs.

In the period before World War I there was very little machinery to lighten the labour and well into the twentieth century what little there was was horse-powered. The first work horses were said to have been brought onto the island by Henry Stevens in the early 1880s.(112) By 1914 horses had nearly supplanted oxen as draught animals. Though they did not lighten the farmer's work, horses speeded it up. Horse drawn mowers, hay rakes and grain binders were in common use in the nineteenth century.

The importation of the first horse-powered threshing machine virtually revolutionized the growing of grain, though a few oldtimers like Willis Stark continued to thresh their grain with a flail.(113) Joe Nightingale is credited with bringing the first threshing machine to the island about 1890. Mr. Rosman, of the North End Road, bought a ten-horse drawn thresher in 1902 and did custom threshing over the whole island from his own farm clear down to Henry Ruckle's at Beaver Point. Twenty farmers in all used his machine the first year, about two-thirds of them in the South End. Average yield per farm was about 200 bushels, ranging from 577 bushels for Henry Ruckle and just

20 for Mr. Bullock. The threshing machine was such a labour-saving device that others as they were able bought their own machine or joined together to buy one as John Mollett, Ed Lee and James Maxwell did in 1904. The improved horse-powered stump puller, such as the more powerful and safer “Canada Stump Puller” introduced in 1912, was also a great boon to farmers for the labour and the expense of clearing land was widely regarded as one of the greatest drawbacks to getting started in farming.(114) The use of a heavy steam tractor to pull stumps on the Maxwell farm in the 1889s was unusual. Stumps were normally removed by horse-powered stump pullers or blasting powder. Although the Ruckles continued using horses for general farm work into the 1940s Henry Ruckle had actually been one of the first to try the new forms of mechanical power. In 1904 he bought a threshing machine for his own use powered by a 6 h.p. engine. And in 1911 his son Alfred purchased a Bell Ensilage Cutter from E.G. Prior & Co., of Victoria.(115)

But life was not all work on the farm and the farmer did enjoy a sense of independence. Elizabeth Samson, who grew up in the Fernwood area in this period, made an interesting comment as well saying that what she recalled “about those early days is a sense of not having much, yet never feeling poor.” Many others have echoed this sentiment. Accounts of this period and especially the old family albums reveal that weekends, holidays and special occasions were celebrated by numerous picnics, games and social outings. A visitor on the island, “Bohemian”, noted shortly before the war that “the good people of Salt Spring Island have solved the problem of taking life sensibly. They may have to milk the cows...but they never neglect the more joyful ‘convenances’ of life. Cricket, football, tennis, croquet, hockey and dancing are assiduously cultivated... My view of life is that this is just the best possible way of living.”(116) No doubt farm life did look rosier when one did not have to do the work. But certainly the quality of life was improving and the island was beginning to present an attractive appearance to outsiders. A quite romantic description of the island scene was offered by a visitor to the South End in 1912 who described in glowing terms the Burgoyne valley with its gurgling stream, large cleared level fields and neat homesteads. “The quaint wooden church with its tidy neat fenced graveyard gives an aspect of quiet and peacefulness reminding one strongly of an English village.”(117)

But even life in this idyllic setting in what were known later as “the good old days,” could have its perils. One is struck by the number of accidents on the farm long before the days of the tractor and the chainsaw. Reverend Wilson’s unfolding chronicle of Salt Spring life in the years from 1895 to 1906 is studded with references to mishaps on the farm. Alexander McLennan was badly gored by his bull. Henry Stevens had a serious fall from the top of a load of hay, landing on stones. Dick Maxwell and Llewellyn Wilson were

injured falling out of a hay loft “one striking his face badly against a buggy wheel and the other receiving a scalp wound from the falling pitch fork.” Frank Scott was thrown back violently to the ground when his fork snapped while unloading hay. Norman Wilson as a boy got badly kicked by a horse and was laid up for two weeks and Wilson Harris was kicked in the face by his mare, seemed to be almost recovered, and then “was seized with paralysis and died within twelve hours.” And there were accidents on the road. John Norton and his passenger had a serious accident at the foot of (Baker Road) Cemetery Hill when his horse was frightened and “the buggy overturned on a rocky spot bristling with small sharp stumps.” More unfortunate still was a Japanese killed while driving a load of hay down from the Divide. He fell from the seat and a wagon wheel passed over his head. And accidents happened to horses too. In 1905 Mr. Monk of the South End had the misfortune to lose a valuable horse off the Beaver Point wharf.(118)

But the greatest problem for horses, and it was to radically alter the lives of their owners as well, was the arrival of automobiles on Salt Spring Island in 1911. Not only did automobiles cause panic to horses and livestock and annoy people with their noise, they were in fact a “menace to the safety of the public.” For two decades roads on the island were too narrow, winding and hilly to make motoring anything but a grave danger to vehicular (i.e.horse drawn) traffic said the local correspondent of the Cowichan Leader.(119) Rev. Wilson had moved to California by 1911 but his children sent him vivid reports of the disruption caused by the automobile.(120) “I think you are very lucky to be away from the island now with this beastly motor car about,” wrote Norman. Evelyn added: “The motor cars here now are dreadful. We are afraid to take out our pony cart.” And then there was Mr. Blackburn and his car. In April 1911 daughter Kathleen wrote her father, “Our latest excitement on the Island is a large motor; it makes noise enough to frighten 100 horses.” Added Nona in a letter of May 30, 1911: “We can’t go out on the roads now as motor cars are all over the place. The Blackburns drive up and down just looking as if they wanted to meet some more people and buggies to smash up.” Norman was suing Blackburn, she reported, because of an accident. “All his [Norman’s] eggs and cream were smashed up and the horse so terrified it nearly killed Di and me at the gate... People say Capt. Sears [one of the few survivors of the recent sinking of the Iroquois] and Blackburn ought to be put in jail together as a public nuisance.” But the automomile was on the island to stay. In 1914 a fleet of nearly twenty autos had a first “auto picnic” assembling at Ganges and going for lunch to Vesuvius.

4. Signs of Change

The application of the internal combustion engine to farm needs and the coming of the automobile were only two of the signs in the years just before

World War I that changes were occurring that would alter the character of Salt Spring as a peaceful and purely farming community. The feeling was beginning to develop that farming on the island didn't pay. Bohemian in 1911 after extolling the virtues of life on this "singularly attractive and restful" island went on to state, without reservation, "that in spite of all the advantage of soil and climate farming does not pay." He cited two cases of hard-working, intelligent farmers who over the last fifteen years had worked diligently to succeed but had ended up poorer than when they started. And, he added, "I am told that these conditions are typical of the Island as a whole."(121) Norman Wilson, running a successful small family farm apologized for late payment of his rent to his father in 1914 saying, "Very sorry I am rather late, but money is hard to get."(122) Balancing the pessimism was the optimistic prediction by Mr. Hamilton of Fulford. In January 1913 he wrote in the Sidney and Islands Review: "Between the service given by C.P.R. steamboat 'Joan', the Sidney [Cordwood] railway and the projected Saanich Electric railway to Deep Cove, a new era is opening." The Fulford Harbour Development League had secured some new residents of the best type and land values were rising. The electric railway in particular he thought should open up "a new branch of industry...which depends upon daily access to markets... I refer to small fruit growing, especially strawberries, than which no branch of farming pays better."(123)

The prosperity of the future was not to be with the strawberry, however, but rather with the island's popularity as an attractive locale for retirees and for people from nearby urban areas seeking sites for summer homes. Again alluding to the B.C. Electric Railway the Cowichan Leader commented that "Salt Spring Island is particularly well adapted for retired professional men with small incomes, who wish for a quiet life in a beautiful setting with a glorious climate."(124) In fact, even before completion of the railway, Salt Spring was developing as a haven for refugees from the city. An article in Saturday Sunset in 1913 said of the Ganges area: "The residents ...are for the most part retired Old Country people of an excellent class... The district is particularly suited to fine summer residences and lately the demand for small acreages has been very keen, with a large number of sales of pieces from three to twenty acres at prices ranging up to \$300 per acre."(125) In the same year the Sidney and Islands Review pointed out that Fulford was the nearest point to Sidney and "has all the attractions of the district in a condensed form... A year or two will see this a regular summer resort."(126)

The movement away from agriculture toward the development of residential properties was felt on several parts of the island and some prosperous farms of an earlier day suffered in the process. After Theodore Trage's death, his son Adolf sold off the farm in 1910. On one portion of it Mr. Longstaff erected a handsome residence and on another A.W. Bridgman of Victoria built "a most

picturesque and comfortable home on the shores of the same bay.” In the same year, 1910, Percy Purvis disposed of several fine blocks of useful farm land from his estate west of Ganges. The following year E.J. Bittancourt started selling off blocks of his large property at Vesuvius.(127) And in 1912-1913 the Ganges area succumbed to development pressure. Norman Wilson reported this to his father in California in a letter of March 19, 1912: “Mr. Ward has had all his place [the old Charles Tolson ranch] surveyed off into blocks of 1 and 5 acres, and is having 3 roads made right through it up to Speeds’ named Rainbow, McPhillips, and Hereford Rd. They hope in time one of them will connect with Layard’s Rd. across the canal.” And, finally in 1913 it was reported that the surveyor was busy cutting up Fred Crofton’s place into small acreage. The transformation of Salt Spring from a farming community into a residential community where farming was only a sideline or a hobby would take more than a generation to accomplish. But the signs were already present that life in the future would not be quite the same as it had been in the heyday of the small family farm from 1885 to 1914.

Morton B. Stratton 2/27/1992

V. WORL WAR I (1914 - 1918) - “a sort of milepost of everything”

World War I, considered at the time the Great War, dragged on over four long, difficult years. They proved to be a watershed in the history of farming on Salt Spring. Neither the recent growth of the farm population nor the prosperity of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were to be matched in the years from 1914 to 1939. The most immediate and obvious repercussion following the outbreak of war was a labour shortage on the farms. Nearly 150 able bodied males went off to serve their country in a genuine burst of patriotism. Nineteen of one hundred and fifty who left the island failed to return.[1] Among them was Jim Maxwell, who had taken over pioneer John Maxwell’s Burgoyne Bay farm from his father on the latter’s death in 1897. On many farms women or older men were left to do the farm work during the war years.

The labour shortage was aggravated by the fact that the flow of new immigrants that had characterized the last two decades before the war had dried up completely by 1915 when the last of the pre-emptors moved onto the hills west of Fulford Harbour. The era of the remittance man and pre-emptor was basically over. World War I marked a line between the often easy and sometimes prosperous farm life of many recent better-to-do immigrants and that of their children after World War I. This was true not only on Salt Spring but all over the province. Said a teenager from the Interior, brought to Canada in 1905:

“It was a very happy-go-lucky sort of life in those early days before World War One. But the war seemed to be a sort of milepost of everything.”[2]

Not only was there a labour shortage and few new recruits, but farmers were plagued with several years of low prices and a depletion of the fertility of the soil due to the strain of all-out war production. J.C. Lang, who had bought the lovely Fernwood farm in 1910, records in his Log Book that 1914 and 1915 were good fruit years but with bad prices and especially no market for his cherries in 1915.

A report in the Cowichan Leader for Sept. 13, 1915 adds:

“A splendid crop of apples this year is liable to prove almost a drug on the market, as prices realized hardly cover the labour of production and shipment.”

Also, it reported, the wartime campaign for cultivating waste city lots “has so reduced the demand for vegetables that they can only be grown and shipped at a loss.”

1917 was no better - it was a bad fruit year because of the weather.[3] It was not until 1918 and 1919 that prices improved and a good profit was possible, says Mr. Lang.[4]

The drain on the soil of wartime production was attested to by Mr. W. T. Burkitt, a veteran who in 1920 bought 40 acres of the old T. W. Mouat farm on St. Mary Lake. He found after he arrived that the land gave very low yields due to the fact the Mouats had taken off crops of wheat four years in a row in support of the war effort.[5]

As might be expected, the farmers’ organizations suffered from the strains of war, too. The annual Fall Fair continued but the Poultry Association, for example, gave up its special show after 1915 as many breeders were out of business or had enlisted and “the show was not nearly so good as in previous years.”[6] Wartime shortages and priorities made it difficult also for the Farmers’ Institute to keep up its educational programs.

Even before the war W.E. Scott had suggested to the members of the Institute that they merge with the Islands’ Agricultural and Fruit Growers’ Association.

Membership in the Institute was only a fraction of that in the other body and in any case, members of the Institute were also members of both groups. The first initiative on the island toward amalgamation came when the Directors of the Agricultural Association moved on December 20, 1917 to write the Farmers' Institute and the Poultry Association with regard to amalgamation and ask their views on the matter. but apparently the Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes of B.C. was behind the move. When the matter came up at the Annual Meeting of the Farmers' Institute held January 10, 1918, the Minutes note:

“In discussing amalgamation of Institute with Agricultural Society it was decided to submit the Superintendent's letter respecting same to the Directors of the Agricultural Society and arrange, if approved of, to have a joint meeting of the Directors of the two bodies and be guided by decision of such meeting of the Directors.”

Things proceeded quickly, though nothing more is heard of the Poultry Association in these negotiations. Amalgamation “for the present year” was agreed on Feb. 11, 1918, officers for the new society were elected a week later with John T. Collins, President, and on March 11 the by-laws of the newly named “Islands Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association and Farmers' Institute” were adopted and the accounts, books and effects of the former Institute were turned over by its Secretary, Mr. Ashton, to the new society.[7]

Given all of their problems it is a credit to the farmers of the island that they came through the war years as well as they did. In opening the 1918 Fall Fair, Mr. M.B. Jackson, M.P.P. for the Islands, congratulated the Society for a fine show “considering the difficulties of labour and transportation,” and Dr. Tolmie referred to the improved stock shown. Patriotism played a part in this. Farmers during the war years had been spurred on by frequent appeals such as that printed in the Programme of the 21st Annual Exhibition held September 22, 1917:

“If Germany is to be beaten and stay beaten, it is through Agriculture it has to be accomplished and it is therefore due to every man, woman and child to do all in their power to produce food . . . The Island District can do their little bit by supporting their home Fair . . . Be British, magnanimous. . . do your bit to develop Agriculture, and when all do likewise the safety and solidity of the Empire is assured.”[8]

But despite their best efforts and that of other farmers in the province, it is the judgement of Prof. Ormsby of the University of British Columbia that agriculture and “particularly fruit growing” were still languishing in B.C. in 1918; not a good situation from which to face the difficult years that lay ahead.

[9] I have found no specific indication where should be placed the footnote number for the general reference

VI. 1918 - 1939 “The Best and Worst of Times”

1. Introduction

It is not easy to characterize this period in a phrase or two. Jean Barman in her recent history of B.C. calls the period from 1918 to 1945 “The Best and Worst of Times”. [10] It was certainly a time of disruptions, of rapid change (including some mechanization of farm operations), of deep and long depressions and even of a few years of almost boom times. But the brief interlude of prosperity in the middle and late 20’s (maybe 5 out of 25 or 30 years) was preceded by the dislocations, hardships and inflation of World War I which had been followed immediately by a long and severe world-wide depression that lasted until about 1923. And the good middle years of the decade were followed by the even more severe so-called Great Depression of the 1930’s which in its turn gave way rather abruptly to the more prosperous years (at least for some) of World War II.

In the few good years there were some very promising developments in the poultry and dairy industries but the relative prosperity of certain lines of agriculture did not really slow down the erosion of agriculture as the mainstay of the island economy. Fortunately for the farmers, many of whom owned large areas of forested land, this was a boom period for logging on the island. And it is in this period that some profited from the fact that more and more Vancouver business people were investing in land here and building summer or retirement homes. But profits continued to drain slowly out of the orchard industry especially. During the Depression of the 30’s with a very few exceptions nearly every line of agriculture stagnated and many farms were abandoned. With the influx of non-farmers after World War II seeking summer or retirement homes, Salt Spring’s transition from a farming to a leisured community accelerated.

2. The difficult Years: 1918 to the mid 20’s

These were tough times for Salt Spring farmers - partly because the inflation of the later war years was followed world wide by a prolonged economic recession. [11] Partly, too, because of the vagaries of the weather. J.C.C. Lang’s Log Book records that 1919, 1920 and 1921 were all poor fruit years and that the summers of 1922, 1924, 1925 and 1926 were all marked by drought and heat. Dorothy James, helping with the family seed business at Fernwood, recalls vividly the terrible hot summers of the early 20’s when farmers’ shallow dug wells went dry and they had to haul water from the lakes. [12] In the Diaries of Gerald Young, one finds frequent entries in the 1920’s indicating it was necessary every year in late summer and fall for him to haul water from St. Mary Lake in barrels for his stock. [13] Several farmers gave up

on farming at this time. Jessie Bond, one of Bullock's boys, tried to make a start at farming on his Soldiers Settlement land in these years of depression and bad weather but couldn't make ends meet so turned for a time to logging.[14] George Heinekey's father, who had come here from South Africa in the early 20's when George was about 4 years old, tried farming on the south side of the road between Central and Mobrae but gave it up and moved away.[15] John Hepburn of Fulford had come to the island about 1910 with considerable money in his pocket. He developed a farm above Fulford on the Beaver Point Road. But when his barn burned down in 1926, leaving the still standing square concrete silo as a local landmark, the family gave up farming because, as they said, the profit had already gone out of it for them.[16] Surprisingly, Norman Wilson, still a young man, gave up his nice farm at Central and leased the land to the James Seed Co. for a few years (1917-1922) and soon after leased it for ten years in 1928 to the newly organized Salt Spring golf and Country Club and became its greens keeper.[17] To be sure not everyone gave up so easily and in any case the economic climate improved slowly after 1923.

3. The More Prosperous Middle and Late 20's

a) The Dairy Industry

In the decade of the 20's dairying replaced the orchard industry as the mainstay of island agriculture. Salt Spring was well known at the time for the dozens of small Jersey herds scattered from one end of the island to the other. But Dairy farming never saw the degree of specialization that had earlier marked the production of tree fruits. It always existed in the context of small mixed farming operations. Dairies of 20 or more cows such as that of A.J. Smith near Ganges or the Price brothers on Ford Lake were the exceptions. More typical were farmers like Gerald Young at Fernwood or Harry Bullock. Mr. Bullock had only a half dozen cows and this as only one part of the farm's production. Like most of the more progressive farmers Harry Bullock, for example, was into many things. He had 12 acres of orchard with several hundred fruit trees - apples, plums, pears and the cherries for which he was famous. He hired local apple pickers. The apples were boxed and stored in the old creamery on Upper Ganges Road. Down on the flats he grew half an acre of asparagus for sale. Other vegetables were grown and stored in his root cellar. He hired Japanese to help with the garden work. Mr. Bullock also kept bees, pigs, chickens and about 20 sheep. There was a smoke house near the big house to smoke ham and fish. All this in addition to the small herd of registered Jerseys that had been developed for him by Bill Evans during World War I.[18] But the aggregate production of milk from the many small herds on the island such as Bullock's was considerable, for even

those for whom farming was only a sideline, like Ted Brown up the Cranberry, kept a cow or two and sold their surplus milk.

The stability and prosperity of the dairy industry was centred in the cooperative creamery that had begun operation at the foot of Ganges Hill in 1904 for the production of butter. Virtually every farmer on the island sold to the creamery. Some might sell a little milk to a neighbour; and one or two like A.J. Smith in the 20's and Guy and Margaret Cunningham in the late 30's sold bottled milk to the growing non-farm population in the North End.[19] But most chilled the milk on the farm, separated the cream in a De Laval separator bought from Mouats and shipped it twice a week to Ganges.

Cream was collected in the South End in the 20's by Johnny Pappenburger or his son, Tom, whose route ran from the Ruckle farm at Beaver Point to Fulford and up Burgoyne Valley past the Price Brothers Mereside farm to the Divide Harry Noon ran a similar route in the North End. Farmers like the Gardners or Waggs up the Cranberry or Raffles Purdy down Beddis Road delivered their own cream to Ganges. Twice a week also cream came in to Ganges wharf from farms on the Outer Islands.

At the Creamery the cream was sorted into three grades and put into large vats where it was heated to 160° for ten minutes. The vats were fired by cordwood bought locally at \$2.25 a cord. Once sterilized, the cream was churned in two large churns, one producing 1000# of butter, the other 500#. When churning was over the buttermilk was pumped out into a big tank up the hill behind the creamery. Farmers came and got it free of charge to feed their pigs and chickens. The butter itself was wrapped in 1 lb. packages and then shipped off in 50 lb. boxes via the C.P.R. ferry to the Northwestern Creameries in Victoria, who sold it to the stores. Salt Spring butter during these years when Arthur Drake was buttermaker was justly famous. Not only did it win prizes at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, but on invitation a special batch was churned for the King and Queen when they visited Victoria in 1939.[20]

Peak output of the creamery came in 1928 when 136 farmers on Salt Spring and the Outer Islands were reported to be supplying cream, and about 140,000 lbs. of butter were produced annually. It became necessary to double the capital of the Creamery Company to \$10,000 in 1927 and reorganize the old Co-op as the Salt Spring Island Creamery Co. Ltd.[21]

It should be noted that the government played a supportive role for the dairy industry. It not only passed legislation facilitating the organization of creameries but sought also to increase the quality and quantity of dairy production. The government sponsored program of tuberculin testing of herds was maintained throughout the century and Salt Spring herds remained tuberculin free. In the 20's the government was working with farm groups such as the North Salt Spring Island Dairy Association to improve the quality of their herds. The Department of Agriculture loaned high production bulls that were moved around periodically from one farm to another. The Sidney Review, for example, reported in 1927 that one government bull was to be moved from the Ganges area to Beaver Point and another from the Valley to Ganges. It would appear this program ended in 1929.[22]

b) Other Lines of Small Farm Production

Harry Bullock's case was mentioned as an example of the fact that dairying existed as only one of several enterprises on the typical small farm. This point deserves emphasis. Pigs, for example, were raised on nearly every farm too, but one farmer who made it a specialty was W. E. Burkitt on Tripp Road. To be sure, he had a prize Jersey herd and sold cream to the creamery and kept 10 crossbred ewes, though the latter soon wandered up to the Anglican vicarage at Central where Reverend Popham appreciated them keeping the grass cut around the house. But Burkitt was most proud of his pedigree Berkshire pigs. He bought a champion boar at the Victoria Agricultural Show which he used to produce the pedigree boars he sold throughout B.C. and even into the Yukon and to service the sows of farmers on the island.[23]

Other farmers favoured the raising of sheep. Bob Akerman's father, Ted, sold cream to Ganges like all the others, but he and Bob after him, were sheep farmers at heart. Bob was a member of the Salt Spring Sheep Breeders Association and later in the 1930's ran up to 1,000 sheep on the mountain above his Burgoyne Valley home.

Poultry for egg production was another popular source of income on the mixed farm. Along with their many other farm activities such as potato growing, dairying, beef cattle and sheep, the Ruckles were into egg production. Daniel Henry Ruckle, who continued to oversee the farm's operation until his death in 197___, had joined the B.C. Egg and Poultry Cooperative Association in 1928 and in the years following he and his son, Henry Gordon, and Henry's wife, Lotus, kept a flock of 200-300 layers. Other farms of the period that went particularly into egg production, and there were many of them, were those of Major Green Wilkinson on Simson Road, Paul Bion on Epron Road,

Mr. Fletcher on Mansell Road and bob Price down Price Road. Eggs were normally sold wholesale through Mouats, who retained Mr. Stevens as a full time candler in the shed beside the store.

The raising of small fruits such as raspberries and strawberries was also part of the repertoire of the mixed family farm. In the earliest days Theodore Trage had raised and marketed strawberries as had A.A. Berrow at the turn of the century. but the difficulty of getting their perishable crop to off island markets in good condition had always been a problem. It was this perennial problem plus the existence on the island in the 20's of a surplus of other fruits as well that led to the short-lived Salt Spring Island Jam Factory. The Sidney and Islands Review in January 1921 suggested that the increase in acreage on the island of fresh fruits and strawberries was an incentive for the jam factory, which, it said, was soon to be built. Operation actually commenced in 1922 when the cooperative , operating from a building on Hereford Avenue (now a small apartment building), had 107 shareholders and a subscribed capital of \$2,700. shares cost 25 cents each. Jam from this small business was shipped off in 4 lb. cans. The factory advertised regularly in the Fall Fair Programmes for the period 1922-25. In August 1924 the Sidney Review reported that it had put up 600 cases of strawberry and raspberry jam. But by 1929 production had ceased and the property was put up for sale - perhaps because the company refused the offer of David Spencer's store in Victoria to buy all of its production if the company would let him market it under the spencer name.[26]

c) Some Specialty Farm Operations of the 20's

In addition to the typical mixed farm of the period, there were a few specialty farm operations. Certainly the most significant of these in terms of its economic impact on the island's economy was that of the James Brothers Seed Co. This family business had been started in 1915 on Parker Island by P.T. James, a trained horticulturalist from England, and three of his sons. their mail order flower and vegetable seed business grew so rapidly that they sold Parker Island for \$4,500 in 1917 and moved to Salt Spring. For four years they leased Norman Wilson's Barnesbury farm and then from 1922 to 1930 the larger J.C. Lang farm at Fernwood. the latter had the advantage of better soil and water. After the war when Jack James joined the family business, their fruit and vegetable seeds were sold world-wide and they also shipped large quantities of corn, broccoli, potatoes, etc. to Vancouver markets. During these year the elder Mr. James supervised the greenhouse work, his oldest son Fred, trained at Arnold Arboretum in boston, was the geneticist. Jack was publicity and sales manager. The two younger brothers, Harry and Jim, were in charge of cultivation, developing some

specialized machinery such as a transplanting machine that could plant 800 cabbages an hour. The women of the family, including Jack's wife, Dorothy, handled the seed packaging, shipping and office work.

By the end of the 20's the James seed operation had become too big to operate effectively even from Salt Spring. The irregularity of the mail service and the too infrequent steamship service (3 times a week) hindered their work and they had outgrown the Lang Farm. In 1930 they moved to a larger 300 acre farm at the head of Cowichan Bay and continued operating until after World War II.[27]

A not insignificant farm specialty of the 1920's was that of raising poultry breeding stock for sale on and off the island. This had been done in a small way before World War I by H.O. Allen in the Cranberry and Postmaster R.P. Edwards in the Valley. After the war Percy Lowther was advertising the Leghorn breeding stock of his Cottonwood Creek Poultry Farm. But the really big producers were Chaplin and Oswald who, with thousands of birds, had the biggest industry in the Vesuvius Bay area in the 1920's. In 1924, one of the Chaplin's Barred Rocks was the champion producer for the whole of Canada. By 1927 when Oswald had joined the business, they were shipping world-wide. Their prize birds were exhibited as far afield as London and Tokyo and won awards at the World Poultry Congress in Ottawa.[28]

There were a few other interesting special farm operations on the island that should at least be mentioned, though they were not of great economic significance and not much is known about them:

- The Richmond family at Vesuvius had about five acres of violets and in the mid-20's were reported to be shipping thousands of violets to Victoria three days a week.[29]
- Down Sharp Road in the flatlands between Ganges Harbour and Booth Canal a little Japanese community developed a flourishing market garden business. Mrs. Murakami tells us that her father, Mr. Okano, had been a fisherman in Steveston and had moved with his family in 1919 to Crofton and soon after to Salt Spring. He cleared 100 acres of virgin timber, established a farm with extensive market gardens and built the first large greenhouse on the island.[30]
- Down near the head of Fulford Harbour, John Shaw's daughter Betty ran a financially unsuccessful silver fox business in the years from 1926 to 1930. In an interesting account of this enterprise she tells us that she handled

the foxes with tongs. They were fed tripe and other meet scraps from the slaughter operation up on Tripp road run by bob Wood for the Mouat store. she also got the heads, necks and poorer parts of rabbits Mrs. Eaton bought for the Fulford Inn. The silver tipped pelts, which were of quite good quality, were sent East to a fur auction.

- During the 20's there was also a big mink farm between Fulford and Ganges and a chinchilla rabbit farm near St. Mary Lake.[31]

- More economically viable than any of these small animal farms were two goat cheese factories on the island. One was that of Colonel Bryant across the road an dup the mountain from the Hepburn farm near Fulford. Colonel and Mrs. (Dr.) Bryant retired to Salt Spring from military service in India. During the 20's and perhaps right into the 50's Col. Bryant kept a herd of goats. with his wife's help he made the cheese each day and aged it in a cave on the property. With advice from Prof. Golding of U.B.C., Col. Bryant developed a Roquefort-type cheese that won a first prize in Vancouver. His cheese was shipped to Spencers in Victoria.[32] Frank and Arnold Smith on Musgrave Mountain also produced goat's milk cheese during the inter-war years.

d) Expansion of Farm Activities to Musgrave Mountain

Another interesting aspect of the agricultural history of the island in the 20's was the emergence of a fragile farm community on the west side of Musgrave mountain. Its history deserves to be told. It is hard to believe as one drives through that wilderness (slowly being transformed now into residential estates) that it was home in the 20's to as many as 25 farm families. Prosperous would hardly be the word for them, but the mere fact of their existence speaks to the optimistic spirit of the period and the desire of people then as now to live on the West coast. Back in the 19th century, first the Pimbury brothers, then Edward Musgrave and after 1892 Capt. Trench owned most of the mountain. There were orchards and cultivated fields of oats, root crops, etc. near Musgrave Landing. In the pre-War period these men ran over 1,000 sheep on their holding of 6,660 acres. It was by far the most valuable property on the island from the point of view of the tax man - being assessed in 1915 at \$30,000. Before World War I Capt. Trench's two sons each had a house down near the water about 1/2 mile up the coast from Musgrave Landing. Apparently even then, though, they began to let most of their holding further up the mountain revert to the government in lieu of paying taxes.

Homesteaders (reported to be veterans from the Boer War) began to settle on

the mountain even before world War I. One of the more successful was Edgar Brantford who had made some money with his pack train in the mining districts of the Kootenays. He established his so-called upper ranch, where the road to the Buddhist Retreat now branches off the Musgrave road. In World War I he went off to war and left the ranch in the care of his uncle, Mr. Hill. Another early homesteader was George Laundry, who established a sheep ranch down the road from Brantford in 1910. His old barn is still to be seen, a bit dilapidated, on the left hand side of the road. These men and the homesteaders that followed them were nearly all sheep farmers. There wasn't enough pasture and hay on the mountain to support dairy herds. The Cowichan Leader reported there were 17 families homesteading on the mountain in 1915 - and incidentally they also reported the families didn't expect to get a decent road up the mountain until after the war when there would have to be an election.

Just after World War I came the Smith brothers who were to become the patriarchs of the mountain. The Oxford educated Smith brothers, Frank, Arnold and Walter, settled on down below the Laundry ranch. Frank had goats and a cheese factory in the 20's. As a hobby he discussed math problems with professors at U.B.C. Arnold helped in the cheese factory and developed an orchard. His hobby was painting water colours - self-portraits and copies of old masters. His wife shipped vast quantities of preserves to Victoria and in her spare time was school teacher for the local children. Walter, who had tried his luck in New Zealand, joined his brothers and among other things operated the Musgrave Post Office. In 1926 Bob Akerman's father put through the present road across the mountain from Fulford. But it was only a track and not much used. Walmie Newman, who lived down at the Landing from 1925 to 1948, says these families were all dependent on the C.P.R. steamships. On Mondays and Fridays the families would come down to the Landing. The ships brought in the mail, feed and supplies and took away the products of the farms - mostly wool and meat, just like boat days at Ganges, Beaver Point and all other isolated settlements on our coast.

When the Depression came, most of these families on the mountainside drifted away for one reason or another and the Musgrave community went into decline.[33])

e) The Farm Way of Life in the 1920's

Probably the life-style of the average farm family in the 20's was not too different than it had been before the war. However, the proliferation of the automobile and better roads made travel easier and more pleasant and hence reduced the isolation of all families, especially those living in

communities like Beaver Point or the Cranberry. Somewhat of a novelty before the war and a threat to the peace and quiet of the island, cars were becoming more commonplace by the mid 20's. When Ted Brown went to work in Richard Toynbee's new garage in the early 20's he estimates there were about sixty-five cars on the island, most of them Model T Fords.[34] By the early 30's when Bob rush was growing up as a boy on Ganges Hill there were still a few horse carts on the road but most of the traffic by that time was Model T or Model A Fords.[35]

The gradual introduction of more machinery onto the farm, especially the use of tractors instead of horses for farm work, took some of the hard work out of farming - at least for those who could afford such expensive machinery. Though impossible to document fully the introduction of tractors and tractor drawn equipment was apparently a slow process, either because of the expense involved or simply due to a reluctance to change. It is known that successful farmers like the ruckles were relying on horses for field work up to the 40's and a few horses were still being used for farm work until Cyril Beech, who had a nice dairy where Brinkworthy is now, sold his pair of dappled greys in the 1960's and bought a tractor.[36] Modern farm machinery did appear here and there. Thomas Reid, a wealthy dairyman from Scotland, who took over the old Nightingale property in the Valley in 1911, imported a binder from Ontario (with a man to assemble it!) in 1919.[37] Soon after he bought a caterpillar tractor for use by his son, John, "who loved motors" and sold off his horses, certainly one of the first on the island to do this.[38] Bullock got a tractor soon after 1922. John Hepburn was reported to have saved his tractor when his barn burned in 1926, and in 1927 Ted Brown bought an interesting tractor conversion kit for his old 1919 Chevrolet truck[39]

Fortunately the gradual introduction of tractors, tractor drawn ploughs, harrows, etc. and belt driven machinery such as ensilage cutters and threshing machines, though it lightened the work on the farm, did not altogether eliminate the old spirit of cooperation that existed in farm communities. Neighbours still helped each other with the heavier chores such as threshing, silo filling and digging potatoes, moving around with the threshing machine, for example, from farm to farm in the autumn months. also some of the special chores, such as butchering pigs, were done cooperatively in the same fashion, says Johnny Bennett.[40]

Electricity was to lighten the load for a later generation on the island. One of the first things Mr. Burkitt did after electricity came to the island in 1937 was to buy a 2-unit milking machine and a water heater and have the

barn wired for electric lights. For most of the period between the wars, though, this was a labour saving convenience denied to all but one or two. P.C. Mollet was reported by the Sidney Review in 1926 to have installed the first Delco light system on the island for his house and his chicken plant. Innovative Mr. bullock had a generating system in use in the 20's as well.[41]

f) Farmers' Organizations

The spirit of working together, evident in the sharing of heavy seasonal tasks, was reflected also in the many organizations serving the interests of farmers in this period. Some, about which little is known, such as the sheep Breeders Association, the North Salt Spring Island Dairy Association, and the Poultry Association have already been mentioned. Two others, not already mentioned, were the Seed Growers Association founded in 1919 at the prompting of the James Seed Co. and active throughout the 20's, and the South Salt Spring Local of the United Farmers of Canada (date of organization unknown).[42] Best known of all, however, was the body that staged the annual Fall Fair - the Islands' Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association and Farmers' Institute. It had a somewhat chequered career in the decade of the 20's and for some reason seems to have done better in the earlier 20's than in the more prosperous later years. Membership peaked at 131 in 1923 and fell to only 77 in 1928.[43] The usual agricultural exhibitions were staged each September, however. The variety of items entered in the shows by just one family, the Burkitt family, reveals a high level of support for this annual event. Mr. Burkitt in his Memoirs speaks of the "highly successful agricultural shows" of the 20's and his family's participation:

"In addition to winning 1st and 2nd with our horses and cows and pigs we had a display in the hall of butter, cream, brown and white eggs, bread, cakes, jam, bottled fruit, sheaves of wheat, barley, corn (8' high), pies, plums, cider, pears, all sorts of flowers, hops, even potted chicken and salmon. the only thing we lacked from the farm was honey." [44]

The one-year trial amalgamation of the two major farmers' organizations, discussed earlier, began in 1918 and was continued on an annual basis until 1928 when it was finally made permanent. It was moved at a General Meeting held March 23, 1928 that the name of the organization be registered as "The Island (i.e. just Salt Spring) Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association and Farmers' Institute.[45] One wonders about the logic of this because the pre-war Farmers' Institute did not stage Fall Fairs - the principal activity of this revamped organization of the 20's. the newly adopted name continued

until March 24, 1937 when it was changed to that still in use, "The Islands Farmers Institute.[46]

Another organization of the period, the Salt Spring Island Development Association, though not exclusively a farmers group, had farmers on its Board of Directors and concerned itself with problems that affected farmers - notably the need for better communication links with Vancouver and Victoria. This need was a major concern of commercial interests such as the Mouat store which was deeply involved in wholesaling products of the farm, but it also reflected the desire, in the age of the automobile, of both farmers and the growing number of retirees on the island for more convenient and frequent contacts with the outside world.

The attempt to create a representative body to press the interests of the whole community was not without its difficulties. Actually the Development Association, created in 1926, had been preceded from 1919-1926 by an earlier body, the Gulf Islands Board of Trade. This group had been concerned especially with the transportation needs of the Outer Islands and with concerns of all the islands such as the repair of deteriorating wharves, the need for a better system of handling perishable goods on the "Island Princess", better railway service from Pat Bay to Victoria, and especially the urgent need for telephone service to Vancouver Island. Over time, the members of the Outer Islands found it difficult to attend meetings. At its 1926 A.G.M. only seven attended, all from Salt Spring, and they resolved "that in view of the lack of support from this and the other islands, we hereby disband as a Board of Trade".[47]

The need for some community body was still a concern on Salt Spring. On November 12, 1926 about 80 people attended a meeting to create an organization "to look after and promote the interests of Salt Spring Island." Poultry farmer, L. Chaplin, was elected president of the new S.S.I. Development Association.[48] But its record was not much better than that of the body that preceded it. Several island farmers such as C. P. Mollet, R. Price, D. H. Ruckle and Harry bullock were members. Items of concern to farmers that came up for discussion were better wharves (both at Fulford and Ganges), better C.P.R. steamship schedules so Outer Islands farmers could get their cream to the Ganges creamery more quickly, and better off-island mail service (an especially critical need for the James Seed Co.). but only 45 attended the 2nd A.G.M in 1928. Mr. Price spoke of the difficulty of getting subscriptions suggesting there were too many organization on the island asking for support(!)[49], and in fact, the Association ceased to meet until it was reorganized with new officers in 1931. One of the few accomplishments of this

first Development Association was to strike a committee at Major Turner's suggestion which initiated negotiations leading to the creation in 1928 of the Salt Spring Island Golf and Country Club.[50] Hardly a top priority for farmers.

The need for a community voice still would not go away, however. Yet another public meeting was held August 27, 1931 which formed a reorganized Development Association.[51] It lasted just four years. One of its first moves was to successfully negotiate with the Victoria Public Market Association the opening of a staff for Salt Spring farmers under the management of Mr. W.G. Stewart. The Association was unfortunately not successful in its other effort to exert political pressure on the provincial government to give island farmers a share in supplying produce to Piers Island Penitentiary.[52]

The final reincarnation of the S.S.I. Development Association occurred under Gavin Mouat's leadership in 1939 with the specific purpose of pressing for a Vesuvius-Crofton ferry service.[53]

4. The Great Depression and After

a) Signs of trouble

In recounting the successes of the few in the 1920's and the relative prosperity of the late 20's in particular, it is easy to overlook the fact that in this period many farmers were not doing well at all, that farm life was looking less attractive to the younger generation, and that with the growing urbanization of Vancouver and Vancouver Island, Salt Spring was slowly being transformed by its retirees and summer visitors.

The erosion of traditional lines of agriculture was most evident in the continuing decline of the orchard industry but one also senses a pressure on farmers to survive in the growing tendency of farmers and their children, even before World War I, to seek whole or part-time employment off the farm. Joseph Akerman's son, Ted, continued to run the family farm but for 45 years served as road foreman at the South End. In 1928 part of the old Akerman farm was sold to the French family and Ted's son, Jim, went to work for the Ganges Creamery. Up at the North End Henry Caldwell for decades supplemented his farm income with his work as a road foreman in that area. Tom Reid's son, John was another who left the farm to work on the roads, in his case driving motor driven road graders and construction equipment that came onto the island in the mid-20's.[54]

Fortunately for farmers feeling the pinch in the 1920's, this was a boom period for logging on the island. Peter Murray, in his recent book, *Homesteads and Snug Harbours*, states the situation clearly:

“As farming expanded on the mainland, with easier access to the new markets there, declining prices made most agriculture unprofitable on Salt Spring. The men turned to other pursuits, chiefly logging, which became the largest industry on the island by 1920.”[55]

Most farmers held fairly large holdings. In 1918 the average for 45 of the larger farms was 252 acres, of which perhaps 30 or 40 were cleared.[56] These large holdings of timberland proved a valuable resource when farming became less rewarding. But this logging boom was short-lived and had collapsed by the late 20's so that many farmers were in a vulnerable position.[57] The Depression following the stock market crash of 1929 dealt a near fatal blow to commercial farm operations and threw nearly everyone back onto themselves - farming for most became a subsistence operation. Most markets for cash crops dried up and money almost ceased to circulate.[58]

b. The Great Depression of the 1930's

One of the first casualties of the Depression years was the farming outpost on Musgrave mountain.[59] Edgar Brantford abandoned his sheep farm at the upper ranch about 1930 and bought Edward Trench's house and 400 acre farm down on the water. With perhaps 70 acres under cultivation, it was really the only good farm land on the whole mountain. Brantford died in 1934, his heir lived in India, and the property ran down. But it was bought towards the end of World War II by brigadier-General Miles Smeeton, the house was restored, and the farm brought back into production for a time on a much reduced scale.

The Clive Trench property, nearer the Landing and never much of a farm, was bought in 1937 by John Kellogg of Illinois (no relation to the Corn Flakes family). His wife, a daughter of the famous World War I aviator, Billy Mitchell, had the money. This was their summer home. The Laundry family gave up their sheep ranch in 1937 and moved to Burgoyne valley so that the children might go to school. By 1937 nearly all the other farm families had moved away. A thing of the past were the Sunday picnics they all used to enjoy together down by the water. The C.P.R. steamships had stopped calling years before and Walter Smith had to go up to Burgoyne Bay now to get the mail.

When a group of Japanese began cutting tall trees for wharf pilings in 1929 (some of their names are recorded on the books of the Musgrave Post Office now in our Archives) and when the Few brothers took over the old upper Brantford ranch about 1930, activity on the mountain shifted from farming to logging. Though they were getting too old to farm much, the Smith brothers stayed on until after the war. Frank, at least, profited from the logging activities by taking over some of the abandoned properties and selling off the timber.

The demise of the Musgrave community was paralleled by that of the Cranberry, another somewhat peripheral farm area that already had lost some of its pioneer farmers during World War I.[60] Other areas too, Vesuvius for example, were reduced in population. Ruth Heinekey, who lived there on the Goodrich farm as a girl in the 1920's recalls that many in the area moved off island after 1929, deserting their properties. Down Beddis Road, Geoff Beddis turned over his interest in the family farm and orchards to his brother, Charles, and went north to become a commercial fisherman for 20 years.[61] Voters Lists for the 30's indicate that the number of farmers in the Ganges area dropped from 91 in 1933 to 72 in 1937, with similar drops elsewhere.[62]

Nearly every line of agriculture on the island was dealt a crippling blow. Production at the Ganges Creamery dropped; butter prices dropped to \$0.30 a pound (less than in 1893), and the company's dividend for 1934 was only 3% - just half that of 1926.[63] The thriving poultry export business of Chaplin & Oswald at Vesuvius folded. Chaplin, like several others of the period, went back to England. Murray McLennan on his share of the old family farm down Beaver Point Road was forced out of the chicken business in 1935 by which time egg prices had dropped to \$0.12 a dozen. He moved to Duncan.[64] Another casualty was the Richmond's 5 acre violet and strawberry farm at Vesuvius. Down in Burgoyne Valley Mike Gyves gave up farming and went full time with the Forestry Service.[65] Members of the Salt Spring sheep Breeders' Association saw the profits go out of sheep raising, too, as the price of lambs fell to only \$2 a head.[66] Apple prices dropped so low the Ruckles began to pull up their trees in the 30's to make way for potatoes. Even in the 20's, Myrtle Holloman remembers that shipping costs became too high for most orchardists to make a profit and that apples were being left on the trees to rot.[67] There is more testimony to this effect in the Depression. Almost without exception Salt Spring farmers blamed the collapse of fruit prices on competition from the Okanagan apple industry. There was, to be sure, some market for apples for juice or sauce. They were usually sold in bags rather than boxes - especially when the price of boxes rose to \$0.52 and the apples in them were only worth \$0.50.[68] The fruit trees didn't just

stop bearing because of the Depression, of course, and one must admire the tenacity of such orchardists as Johnny Pappenburger, J.H.Monk, Charles Beddis and Raffles Purdy's daughter, Mary, who kept up their orchards through these difficult times and on into the post-war period. The difficulties the farmers were facing was reflected in the near collapse of the work of the Islands Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association. Membership dropped to 32 in 1930 and to only 20 in 1932, at which time the organization was nearly bankrupt and still owed on a mortgage. The Fall Fairs had to be cancelled in 1930, 1932 and in 1934 and 1935.[69] It was not an easy time.

Despite this litany of troubles those who stuck with it survived the Depression surprisingly well precisely because most had self-sufficient operations and were not totally dependent on the sale of cash crops. There is much testimony to the fact that though money was scarce there was usually food on the table. "You either made do or did without," said Val Reynolds later; or as Ruth Heinekey put it, "What you didn't grow or hunt you didn't eat." Johnny Bennett recalls: "People lived off their gardens and the bush. And they ate some of the darndest things - like a sheep's head boiled with vegetables." The Reverend Wilson had said back in 1895 that every Salt Spring farmer had a butcher shop at this own back door (i.e. grouse, deer and pheasants). This was never truer than during the Depression. "We only stopped hunting when the Game Warden was on the island," says Bennett. So great was the pressure on the deer population that you seldom saw them in daytime, recalls Bob Rush.[70] Deer are such a nuisance on the island late in the 20th century that it is hard to believe that during the Depression in 1932 W.M. Mouat felt that deer (and grouse) "were in a fair way to be exterminated" and urged the Salt Spring Island Development Association to take measures to prevent this happening.[71]

With so little money in circulation the island, to some extent, reverted to a barter economy. For many the only cash income was the monthly creamery cheque, "a real lifesaver for many families," says Charles Horel.[72] Bob rush's father was one of the two island doctors and Bob recalls that families that couldn't afford to pay their bills invited the Rushes to dinner or donated vegetables and other produce to the patients in the hospital. bills were often settled in the same way at island stores.[73] Some ingenious ideas cropped up in this time when people were trying desperately to make a dollar wherever they could. Two were suggested to the Development Association. Perhaps not totally disinterestedly, Capt. McIntosh proposed in 1931 a pheasant propagation scheme to generate extra revenue for the farmers. Farmers, he suggested, should form an association to raise pheasants. Hunters would then be asked to pay them for feeding the birds and

for shooting rights. Nothing came of this, nor of another idea that lakeshore owners might earn a little extra income by having boats for hire for fishermen.[74]

Adversity, of course, can draw people together and bring out the best in human nature. This was dramatically demonstrated by the generosity of island merchants who permitted their long-time customers and friends to run up bills into the thousands of dollars. Pattersons, the Trading Company and Mouat's carried many and island family through the Depression. It was said Gilbert Mouat would never let a family starve "whether they deserved it or not." [75]

Not everyone was in such desperate circumstances. Gavin Mouat, for example, bought what had once been the Broadwell farm north of Vesuvius about 1928 and through hard work, clearing and cultivating, made it possible for the lovely Mountain Park farm to come into being.[76] Down Sharp Road in the Japanese community, Mr. and Mrs. Murakami, who had married in 1926, had cleared 10 acres of a small 17 acre farm by the 1930's. They had 3 1/2 acres in flowers and 3 1/2 in strawberries and loganberries, and had started a chicken farm. By the end of the Depression, when they had 3 incubators hatching 1200 chicks at a time, they had over 3,000 chickens kept in coops that Mr. Murakami had built. Tragically, in 1942, their property was seized and they were deported to the interior. The recent Murakami market garden on Rainbow Road dates only from 1954.[77]

Two other chicken ranches with origins in the early 20's, those of the Parsons family and the Chantelus, developed into thriving family businesses in the difficult Depression years and continued to flourish after World War II. Of greatest human interest is that of the Bion family and Chantelu children. Though not so big in dollar terms, it is of exceptional human interest because one of the Chantelu children, Simone, is still carrying on at age 86 a family enterprise that began with her uncle after World War I.[78] Francois Chantelu, an accountant for the Bon Marche department store in Paris, moved to Salt Spring in 1910 seeking a purer air for his wife, Palmyre, who was suffering from T.B. With them were their son John and their twin daughters, Simon and Paulette, born in Paris in 1907. Accompanying the Chantelu family was Palmyre's brother, Paul Bion, earlier and electrical engineer in Saigon and his wife, Marie. Paul bought a farm on Epron Road from Mr. Epron, whom he had met on the train coming out from Ontario, and he and Charlie Beddis built a house in which the newcomers lived and where Simon still lives to this day. Together the families started the usual mixed farm - cows, chickens, etc. But tragedy struck. Palmyre died in 1911 and Francois, distraught, took a job in Vancouver and soon moved to San Francisco. He did not return to the farm until after the Crash of 1929. In 1914 the war came. Paul Bion went off and served in the French army as a Captain for four years. Young John Chantelu followed his father to San Francisco and became a street car operator. In 1916 (1914?) another tragedy - Paulette was stricken with polio in the same epidemic that crippled Gilbert Mouat. The Chantelu sisters, in the war years and beyond, were raised by their Aunt Marie and Uncle Paul..

On his return from war, Paul had great dreams of importing from France breeding stock of the

popular utility chicken called Salmon Faverolles. This didn't work out. He settled for laying on as many as 1,000 Leghorns and selling the eggs to Mouats. Simone from her earliest years helped with the chickens and other farm chores. Changes came in the 30's. Francois and son, John, returned from California after the stock market collapse and bought land adjacent to the Bion farm. Paul died in 1938, by which time Simone was running the chicken business with the help of her sister, Paulette, who helped pick the meat birds and did the accounting, and of brother John. John had a truck and delivery business (he did a lot of deliveries for Mouats) and took dressed meat birds to stores and restaurants in Victoria. They sold a lot of broilers and heavier birds for meat but they also kept egg layers as well. By the end of the Depression they were up to 1,000 birds again. Father Francois died in 1966 and the business had to be scaled down after John's death in 1969. The production of meat birds stopped altogether in 1986. Simone, now in her mid-80's is carrying on alone even after her sister's death a few years ago. All in all, an inspiring story of courage and tenacity - of love for the farm and loyalty to their customers - a business that has been in operation for over 70 years.

The story of the Parsons chicken business lacks the elements of personal tragedy that marked the Chantelu family history and is really a straightforward account of hard work, good business judgement, expansion and success.[79] Ted Parsons was born in Bristol, England, the day before Christmas 1885. He came as a four year old with his parents to Victoria and as a young man started farming on Salt Spring in 1911. He and his step-father, Mr. Fletcher, bought a 160 acre farm on Mansell Road. Ted and his wife, Ruby, whom he married in 1912, set to work clearing the land and establishing the usual mixed farm. In 1928 on Mr. Fletcher's death, Ted took over the chicken business which his stepfather had been developing. (Mr. Fletcher had been active in the Poultry Association before and during the war and was a frequent exhibitor at the Fall Fair.) Rapid expansion of this chicken business began after Ted's son, Gordon, joined him as a fulltime partner in the early 30's. It was not long before they had 4,000 Leghorn laying hens. They raised their own breeding stock, had eight 500 egg incubators and hatched three batches of chicks a year. In other words, they set 12,000 eggs each spring. The chicks were raised in big brooder houses with sun rooms attached. The young cockerels as well as the retired two year old hens were sold to an old Chinaman named Lee who came over with his truck from Victoria. (Lee also bought from the Chantelus.) The Parsons figured to make enough from these sales of roosters and hold hens to pay for the cost of raising the pullets.

Feed was purchased from Mouat Bros. (up to 20 tons a month) and in the 20's and early 30's the eggs were sold through Mouats. Because the store kept a full time employee to grade and candle eggs, all the big egg producers like Bob Price (down Price road) for example and Paul Bion sold to Mouats as well.

It was in the midst of the Depression, in the mid-30's, that Ted and Gordon made what was to be a very wise business decision. They established a relationship with a big commercial hatchery, Rump and Sendall, in Langley, and from this time on sold almost all their eggs at a premium price as hatchery eggs, sending the culls only (wrong size, shape, colour, etc.) to Mouats. At this time

t, too, they stopped keeping their own breeding stock and instead got sexed pullet chicks from the hatchery. By the end of the Depression they were selling 40 cases of hatchery eggs a week to Langley (at about \$0.50 a dozen and 30 dozen to the crate) and maybe 5 or 6 cases a week of culls to Mouats. In 1946 this highly successful family business was turned over entirely by Ted to his son, Gordon, who continued operations until about 1954 when the business was sold and began to run down.

It should be emphasized that business successes were few and far between in the 30's. For most it was a matter of just hanging on, in the hope things would improve in time. There is an important point that should be made here. Life in a rural community such as Salt Spring in the early 20th century was one of relatively low expectations. Happiness didn't depend so much on money as it does today. There is plenty of testimony to the fact that families that struggled to survive and didn't have two bits to rub between their fingers still didn't feel poor. Of course, it didn't take as much money in the 30's when cigarettes cost 10 to 15 cents a package, gas was 25 cents a gallon and Woodward's monthly flyer was a monthly 95 cent sheet (not \$1.49)[80] Charles Horel, who grew up on Salt Spring between the wars, recalled later that though they were probably desperately poor, they didn't realize it. Depression or no, farm families continued to enjoy their special island lifestyle that had caught the attention of outsiders even before World War I. They had their picnics, corn roasts on the beach, dances, sports and other amusements. Life was not all work. Gerald Young's farm Diary is sprinkled with references to the North Salt Spring Tennis Club. Neighbours, including the Bions, met monthly for a tennis tea. The season began in late May or June and lasted through September. Two or three times during the summer they played the Ganges club in a tournament - an event invariably lost by the North End farmers. A major regional sports rivalry was that between the North and South End teams that came to a climax in games at the annual Fall Fair. No matter how busy life may have been on the farm, there was always in this very British society, time for a cup of tea.[81]

Speaking of these years before World War II Mary Inglin remarked: "We didn't feel hard done by." There is not much bitterness in Ruth Heinekey's childhood memories of a rather spartan life on the Goodrich place at Vesuvius. It is certainly true that summer visitors such as those that came to Arnold Smith's cabins on Musgrave Mountain or to Mr. Burkitt's fish camp on St. Mary Lake, which attracted people from as far away as California and New York, thought this a wonderful place to live. Mr. Burkitt's reply to visitors who sang the praises of Salt Spring was simple: "True, true. We do have a wonderful life on the island. All we lack is the money and time to enjoy it." [82]

VI. POSTSCRIPT

The overall impression one gets when looking back over the history of farming on Salt Spring was that it was farming the hard way. For most families most of the time in the period from 1859 to 1945 farming was on quite a small scale, was almost endless hard work (Mr. Burkitt says he lost

15 lbs. every summer), and the financial rewards were often meagre and precarious. No big bucks were made at farming on Salt Spring. One should not be misled by the historian's tendency to stress the successful and the exceptional and conclude that they were typical. An interesting commentary on island life at the end of World War II is found in the writings of a newcomer to the island at that time, Brig. Genl. Miles Smeeton:

“Our first ram we also found on Salt Spring. The Mouats, of course, who knew all about all the sheep on the island, told us about him. He belonged to an old farmer who was going to keep sheep no longer. Beryl and I drove over the hill in the truck and found the farm up a narrow lane, with the fence rails on each side buried in bramble and wild roses. The small house on a low hill in the centre of his land was built of the logs that the farmer had cut from trees that he had felled, although subsequent additions had been made from board siding. He had gradually extended the original clearing to make two or three fields and an orchard, with the bush behind waiting to return when he should grow too old to battle with it.

At its best he had run perhaps twenty ewes, kept a couple of breeding sows, a cow or two, and some hens for the house. This he had achieved with immense labour, courage and initiative. Now he was too old to battle any longer with bramble and thistle and the invading bush, and the old age pension had made it unnecessary. The weeds and thorns grew almost unnoticed about the yard and the farm buildings that he had made. Beryl and I - knowing a little what it takes even to remake a place - were continually humbled by the thought of all the hope and effort that must have gone into making these small farms, and what little visible reward it had reaped in rest and comfort.”[83]

Although economic conditions had picked up somewhat in the years from 1939 to 1945, the decline of farming as the mainstay of the island economy continued uninterrupted in the post-war years. There were, to be sure, a few new initiatives such as the major turkey farms of the Gears in the Valley and the Milners at Central.[84] For a variety of reasons, however, one old farm after another went out of production. This is reflected in the demise of the once flourishing dairy industry. Due to a diminishing supply of cream, a result due partly to the death of older farmers and partly to the increasing complexity and cost of government health regulations to the island's small producers, the Creamery slowly declined. Arthur Drake, after 37 years as manager, retired in 1949. His chief assistant, Jim Akerman, had moved on in 1937 to become manager of the Cariboo Creamery in Quesnel. The Ganges Creamery passed briefly into private hands (Mr. Mackenzie of Fernwood Farm) and closed its doors in 1957. Percy Jones, manager at the time, read its epitaph: “The old farmers are retiring or passing away and the young ones seem to be finding other ways of making a living.”[85]

The old apple orchards, too, that had remained in production to mid-century were one by one almost all abandoned or their production became incidental. The Ruckles, for example, stopped picking pears when the Sidney cannery closed.[86] So did a near neighbour, J.H. Monk, who moved off island beyond Sooke in 1946 and turned over his orchard to his daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Bapty.[87] Charles Beddis died in 1950 while picking apples on the old

family farm. though brother Geoffrey returned from fishing a few years later, the farm was put in the hands of Salt spring Lands in 1960 for residential development.[88] The nearby Purdy orchard, run in the post-war years by Mary and John Inglin, was kept up only until 19780. A few moss covered un-pruned trees, remnants of the old orchards, still exist of course, like those of the Furness family (later Ted and Daisy Gear's) in the Valley or of the Rev. Wilson at the entrance to the golf course, or the pear trees at the Ruckle place.

Visitors to Ruckle Park today will see little evidence of the versatile mixed farming operations that gradually wound down after World War II. William Norman Ruckle died in 1953 and by the time his brother, Henry Gordon, had relinquished supervision of the farm to his daughter, Gwen, the potatoes, beef cattle, poultry and orchards had given way entirely to sheep.[89] Up the road after the war, all of the old McLennan farm had passed into the hands of two retired fishermen, the Stevens brothers. Mixed farming was given up and they too went entirely into sheep ranching. By the 1980's most of their land had been sold off and only a few sheep remained.[90]

One of the last commercial farm operations on the island was probably that of the Burgoyne Valley Dairy which continued into the 1980's. Long before the 80's most who lived on Salt Spring, though they may have kept a few sheep or pastured a few beef cattle and raised a good garden, no longer made their living from the farm.[91]

Looking at Salt Spring in the context of the province and the larger world it seems apparent that even if agriculture on the island had not been relatively difficult, given soil and terrain, and relatively unrewarding financially, the island would still have evolved from a farm community to one of retirees, tourist and summer visitors, urban dropouts and the service personnel to care for their needs.

As British Columbia's population and economy expanded, farming became a less and less advantageous way to use the island's special resources. Farming could be done more efficiently in the Fraser Valley, or the Okanagan or elsewhere. With the growth of population in surrounding areas such as Vancouver and Victoria, Salt Spring's special advantage was as a relatively quiet, secluded residential haven. As its charms became known locally, they in time spread to the world so that people were attracted from as far away as Quebec and California. Also, as British Columbia developed economically and people became more mobile, Salt Spring began, as Lotus Ruckle has said, to export its young people to places where there were better jobs.[92] Life as urban professionals seemed preferable for the post war generation to minding the local farm, mill or store.

Despite the exodus from the farm and the change in the island's population, if one takes the time in the 1990's to visit the farmers markets in Ganges on a Saturday morning, or watch the coming and going of patrons at the farm stores and nurseries, it would appear that creative use is still being made of the soil. The old C.P.R. boats are gone, cattle, hogs and sheep are seldom seen on the ferries

going off island to market, but there is still an amazing variety of small-scale agricultural production as is evidenced also in the marvellous exhibits on display at the rejuvenated Fall Fair.

FOOTNOTES 1914 ff

1. Ivan Mouat, talk to SSI Historical Society, (hereafter cited as SSIHS), November 10, 1992.

2. Jean Barman, "Race and Ethnicity", in Peter Ward and Robert McDonald, *British Columbia Historical Readings*, (Vancouver, 1981), p.616.

3. Farm prices of the period are detailed by Fernwood area farmer, Gerald Young, for 1917. Some examples: eggs retail, 306 to 496 a dozen; roosters live, 206 a lb; old hens, 136; baby chicks, 206 each; calves, 166 a lb; pigs, 206 a lb; pears, 1 1/46 a lb; apples, 756 a box. Egg and pear prices were no different than those reported by island farmers in 1893; apple prices were actually lower in 1917 than in 1893. See his Diary in SSI Archives, (hereafter cited as SSIA).

4. See J.C. Lang's Log Book in SSIA.

5. Same for W.T. Burkitt's Memoirs.

6. Cowichan Leader, December 30, 1915.

7. On amalgamation see Islands' Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association, Minute Book, 1912-1920, and Farmers' Institute, Minute Book, 1915-1920 - both in SSIA.

8. This programme and others are in SSIA.

9. On agriculture in British Columbia in the early 20th century see Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia, A History*, (Toronto, 1958), p.402.

10. Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, (Toronto, 1996), p.236.

11. Apples, worth 756 a box in 1917, were bringing \$1.50 in 1919. See Young, cited earlier, and William Caldwell's farm accounts in SSIA.
12. Sharon White, article on James Seed Co., Gulf Islands Driftwood, Feb. 5,

1986, p.13.

13. See Gerald Young, Diaries, in SSIA.

14. Lillian Horsdal, "Farmer Bond of Salt Spring", Daily Colonist, June 17, 1973, pp. 4-5.

15. Conversation with Ruth Heinekey, November 1, 1993.

16. Lillian Horsdal, "Hepburns of Salt Spring", Victoria Daily Colonist, March 11, 1973, p.10 ff.

17. On Norman Wilson and the Golf Course see Hal Stone, ed., Salt Spring Golf and Country Club 1928-1988, (Ganges, 1988).

18. On Bullock's farm operations see: Patrick Dunae, Sept. 9, 1986, Tape #60, SSIA; Daisy Gear, July 25, 1990, Tape #71, SSIA; Donald Goodman, 11/2/77, Tape File 10A, SSIA; Goodman, Oct. 19, 1990, Tape #85, SSIA; Goodman, August, 1990, MS report of conversation with Ruth Sandwell; Kimiko Murakami, July 11, 1990, Tape #66, SSIA; Irene Palmer, July 17, 1990 MS interview with Ruth Sandwell.

19. Jack Smith tape, File #38, SSIA; Margaret Cunningham, July 5, 1990, Tape #65, SSIA.

20. Conversation 11/15/1992 with Jim and Bob Akerman on details of creamery operation. For Pappenburger creamery route see also "Fresh local honey", Gulf Islands Driftwood, Dec. 6, 1989, p.B18; for production figures see Sidney and Islands Review, 1924-1934, passim.

21. Murray, Homesteads, p.119; [A.F. [Flucke?], "Saltspring Island, 1900-1945", unsigned and undated article [about 1950?] in SSIA. See also miscellaneous business records of creamery in SSIA.

22. On government support of agriculture see: Sidney and Islands Review,

April 18, 1913 and September 29, 1927; MS letter dated 26 January 1929 from Alfred Clark, Secy., to H. Caldwell, Esq., President, North S.S.I. Dairy Association in Caldwell Papers, SSIA.

23. For interesting details on the Burkitt farm, 1920-1948, see his Memoirs in SSIA.

24. Conversation with Bob Akerman, 11/15/92.

25. Ken Pedlow, Ruckle Provincial Park: A Documentary History, (Victoria, 1984), p.29; conversation with Lotus Ruckle, October 1, 1993.

26. On the jam factory: Sidney and Islands Review, 1920-1929, passim; J.C. Lang, Log Book, 1921 entry; Daisy Gear, July 25, 1990, tape #71, SSIA; Margaret Cunningham tape, October, 1965, tape #5, SSIA; Programmes of Fall Fair, 1922-1925; Ivan Mouat, article on SSI real estate company in supplement to Gulf Islands Driftwood, n.d. [late '80's?]; conversation with Ruth Heinekey, October 1, 1993.

27. Most details on James Seed Co. from Dorothy James. See Sharon White article cited Footnote #12; conversation with Mrs. James, October 13, 1983; talk by Mrs. James to SSIHS, November 8, 1983; interview with Ruth Sandwell, Aug. 22, 1990, tape #82, SSIA; articles in Sidney Review, 1921-1927, especially Aug. 9, 1923.

28. On Chaplin and Oswald: Ruth Heinekey, 1977, tape File #8, SSIA and conversation of October 1, 1993; also articles in Sidney Review, 1924-1928.

29. Heinekey conversation and tape; Sidney and Islands Review, April 5, 1923.

30. See Murakami, tape #66 and Daisy Gear tape #71 cited earlier; also Sharon White, "War's arrival ...," Gulf Islands Driftwood, March 12, 1986, p. 13.

31. Information on these small animal farms is from Betty (nee Shaw)

Drummond's talk to SSIHS, May 10, 1993 and her MS account, "Roseneath Fox Farm" in SSIA.

32. Details on Col. Bryant's cheese factory from conversations with Mollie (Mrs. Edward) Lacy, October 6, 1993 and Ruby Alton October 7, 1993, and Sidney and Islands Review, Sept. 3, 1925 and Dec. 2, 1926.

33. Discussion of Musgrave settlement is based on Diary of Alexander Aitken, 1890-91; May Taylor, "Musgrave Landing Saltspring. Recalled by Walmie Newman who lived there from 192-1948", (MS in SSIA); Musgrave Landing Post Office - list of registered letters, Sept. 12, 1923 - March 22, 1941 in SSIA; Cowichan Leader, 1914-1915, passim; Miles Smeeton, A Change of Jungles, (London, 1962); conversations with Wm. Brawnell, 1991, Irene Laundry, October 6, 1993, and Bob Akerman; and SSI Tax Assessment Roll 1918 in SSIA.

34. Ted Brown, April 13, 1982, Tape: File #17, SSIA.

35. Talk to SSIHS, May 11, 1993.

36. On Ruckles see B.C. Parks pamphlet, "Ruckle Provincial Park", (n.d.); on Cyril Beech see Johnny Bennett, August 27, 1990, tape #83, SSIA.

37. Sidney and Islands Review, June 12, 1919.

38. Interesting details on the Thomas Reid family are recorded by his son in John Dunlop Reid, Autobiography, [1956?], in SSIA.

39. Conversation with Bruce Smith, November 23, 1992.

40. Conversations with Johnny Bennett, August 27, 1990 and with Bob Akerman, Nov. 15, 1992; Ron Lee, tape: File #48, SSIA; Burkitt, Memoirs, p.116.

41. Burkitt, Memoirs, p. 99; on Mollett's Delco plant, Sidney and Islands Review, Dec. 9, 1926; on Bullock see footnote 18.

42. Little is known about these organizations except the name.

43. Islands' Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association, Ledger, 1912____, pp. 226, 322.
44. Burkitt, Memoirs, p.113.
45. Islands' Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association and Farmers' Institute, Minute Book, 1921-1940, p. 130.
46. Same, p.326.
47. Gulf Islands Board of Trade, Minute Book, 1919-1926, p.128 in SSIA.
48. S.S.I. Development Association, Minute Book, 1926-1939, in the same volume as the preceding, pp. 192, ff.
49. Same, p. 244.
50. Same, p. 225 and pp. 231-232 and Hal Stone, cited earlier.
51. Minute Book, pp. 247-249.
52. See also MS correspondence of Association in SSIA.
53. Minute Book, pp. 291-294.
54. Reid, Autobiography, p.11.
55. Murray, Homesteads, p. 113; see also Joe Garner, "Logging on Salt Spring was vital to the island", Gulf Islands Driftwood, Feb. 27, 1991, p. B15.
56. SSI [Tax] Assessment Roll 1918 in SSIA.

57. Charles Horel, January 17, 1986, tape #43, SSIA; Joe Garner, cited above.

58. The absence of money is mentioned by nearly everyone who lived on Salt Spring during the Depression.

59. See sources cited in footnote #33.

60. Ted Brown, Jessie Wagg and Manson Toynbee, October 13, 1992 tape # _____ SSIA; article on Audley and Thelma Gardner, Gulf Islands Driftwood, March 19, 1986, p. 13.

61. On Vesuvius: Heinekey, as cited in footnote #29; on Geoff Beddis: conversation with Mary Inglin, May 25, 1981.

62. B.C. Voters' List, Islands District, 1933 and 1937 in SSIA.

63. Sidney and Islands Review, Feb. 4, 1926 and Feb. 14, 1934; conversation with Jim Akerman, 11/15/92.

64. Conversation with Mary Davidson, June 11, 1993.

65. On Mike Gyves Jr: Bob and Dorothy (nee Gyves) Dodds, Aug. 8, 1990, tape #76 (1), and Mary Brenton (nee Gyves) and Caroline Gyves May 5, 1977, tape 9A, both in SSIA, and "His father came to island when coast went Yank", Gulf Islands Driftwood, June 1, 1967.

66. Bob Akerman, April 28, 1990, tape: File 11B, SSIA.

67. Myrtle Holloman, April 18, 1977, file 10B, typed MS.

68. Conversation with Mary Inglin, October 6, 1993; Horsdal as cited in footnote #16.

69. Islands' Agricultural and Fruit Growers Association, Ledger, p. 353 ff;

Sidney and Islands Review, January 31, 1934.

70. See also Bob Rush, talk to SSIHS, May 11, 1993; Val Reynolds, July 31, 1990, tape #74, SSIA, and earlier references to Heinekey and Bennett.

71. SSI Development Association, Minute Book, January 9, 1932, pp. 262-3.

72. A point frequently made by others as well.

73. Ivan Mouat tells a story of how old Percy Lowther, reminded of a debt to the store of over \$2,000, brought in his last half dozen Wyandotte hens in a gunny sack and dumped them unceremoniously at Gilbert Mouat's feet saying in disgust: "I can't help it if my hens won't lay." Rumours circulated that some farms were given up for debt in the Depression years--a time when farms were nearly worthless on the real estate market.

74. SSI Development Association, Minute Book, pp. 257 and 259.

75. Charles Horel's remark, August 24, 1990, tape *86(2), SSIA. On generosity of the Trading Company see Bob Hele, August 14, 1990, tape #78, SSIA.

76. See, at time of his death, a special edition of the Gulf Islands Driftwood, November 27, 1961.

77. Sharon White, "War's arrival ..." article on Murakami family, Gulf Islands Driftwood, March 12, 1986, p. 13; "Kitsuyori recalled", Gulf Islands Driftwood, April 6, 1988, pp. B1-2; Kimiko Murakami, July 11, 1990, tape #66, SSIA.

78. This account is based on phone conversations with Simone Chantelu, February 20, 1992, and with a close family friend, Jan Jang, January 7, 1993. Also, MS letter from Mrs. Jang to Peggy Tolson, July 1, 1991 and two tapes of interviews with Simone Chantelu on August 19, and September 15, 1991, all in SSIA.

79. This is based entirely on a conversation with Gordon Parsons, September

29, 1993.

80. Reid, Autobiography, p.20.

81. Gerald Young's Diaries or, for an earlier period, the Diary of Lt. Col. B.W. Layard, 1906-1919.

82. Burkitt, Memoirs, p. 105.

83. Smeeton, A Change of Jungles, p. 169.

84. Daisy Gear, July 25, 1990, tape #71, SSIA; article on Arthur and Joan Milner's turkey ranch at Central in Gulf Islands Driftwood, March 31, 1982, p. 32.

85. On creamery after World War II: conversation with Garnet Young, November 10, 1992; Spotlight, Ganges, B.C., July 15, 1951; Burkitt Memoirs, p. 117; S. Chantelu, Sept. 15, 1991, tape 1A, SSIA; Ted Brown, August 21, 1990, tape *81, SSIA; Victoria Daily Colonist, Sept. 15, 1957, p. 20.

86. See ad of Sidney Cannery in Programme, 22nd Annual Exhibition [Salt Spring Island], Sept. 18, 1918.

87. Conversation with Mrs. Bapty, October 1, 1993.

88. Gulf Islands Driftwood, March 31, 1960.

89. "Island shepherdess cares for family of 227", Gulf Islands Driftwood, The Gulf Islander, summer 1991, pp. B1-2.

90. On Stevens brothers: Andrew Stevens, January, 1982, tape #15(1), and Joan (nee Stevens) Ingram, April 10, 1991, tape #_____, both in SSIA.

91. The gradual passing of the last generation of true farmers, the backbone

of the rural economy of the period between the wars, is revealed in the death statistics - 14 heads of well known farm families died in the 1939's, 7 in the 40's, 17 in the 50's, a similar number in the 60's. One of the last of that generation was probably Ted Parsons who died in 1981.

92. Conversation with Lotus Ruckle, October 1, 1993.

That's why conventional farmers use herbicides"and organic farms use tilling. Bailey is concerned about soil erosion, so he's trying to find ways to till with a purpose, as he calls it. In the field that produced the hyphae and the darting spider, he had experimented with leaving plant roots in the ground after harvest to help maintain soil structure and encourage life. There's a very high cost of cheap food, and you don't pay it at the checkout counter"farmers are paying it that are going out of business. Bob Quinn, Farmer. "Deep down, I was like, "That works and it'll be there forever," he says of conventional farming. "And all of a sudden, [weed killer] Roundup 's not working. So I've actually become a little worried.