

MR. ARCHIE BLAIR

(South Arm United Church)

INTERVIEWED:

March 10, 1975

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First attended Sunday School 1887 in church south end of No. 2 Rd. at London's Landing. It was a Presbyterian church and same minister served both Sea Island and South Arm.

As land was donated by Thomas Kidd in 1893 for a school at Shell and Steveston Highway, church services were discontinued at London's Landing and taken at Shell and Steveston.

By 1902 the population at South Arm had grown so that it was decided to split Sea Island and South Arm.

April 1903, Rev. Burton was appointed as missionary to the South Arm area. Services were held at London's Landing in the forenoon, the school in the afternoon and in the evening in Steveston.

1905 - proposal for a church to be built area No.3 and Steveston. Half an acre was donated by Mr. Alexander to the congregation. An energetic building committee was responsible for the building of the church in 1906 at cost \$1,156.56. This building is now known as the Pioneer Church in the northwest corner of the land where South Arm United Church stands. Later additions of a hall and kitchen, served the community from 1906 - 1959.

As the population grew, it became inadequate for all the groups.

June 1, 1958 - sod-turning ceremony.

May 10, 1959 - opening of new church.

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Church groups and Sunday School have grown since. This new church was put up during the tenure of Doctor F. Runnalls who stayed till 1962.

The old building was moved over at the cost of \$300.00 to its present location on the church grounds - is well used by church groups. The tower did have a bell but was replaced by recorded peals.

Heating - Had a pot-bellied stove, first wood then coal, not there now.

Organ - Was a foot-pumped organ but has been replaced.

Lighting - Electricity put in 1907-08 after oil lamps.

Seating - Approximately 60 people - often chairs in aisles and at back in later years.

Mr. Blair describes the dyking arrangements in Richmond to 1906-07 and afterward.

Congregation

Mainly local people - no Orientals up to 1903-05. They settled in Steveston and went to church there.

Ministers

Rev. Benton	-	1903	-	1908
Rev. Ross	-	1909	-	1916
Rev. MacKay	-	1916	-	1919
Rev. Alver MacKay	-	1919	-	1929
Rev. Francis Runnalls	-	1953	-	1962
Rev. Glen Baker	-	1962	-	1967
Rev. Don Robertson	-	1967	-	1974

The church is being served by visiting ministers and lay preachers awaiting a new minister.

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Life of the Church

The depression years did not hit here as badly as in Saskatchewan and the church groups sent much help to them. War years -- many men joined the Forces, and sewing and knitting bees provided supplies for them. Mr. Blair describes life during the second world war.

Fall Bazaar is still a very active occasion.

Plans for New Church

There were some memorial windows in the old building, provided by pioneer families. These windows were removed on moving the church - they are now in the hands of one of the members and are intended for installation in the new church. Mrs. Jean Lewis is working on the project.

MURIEL NOBLE