

Otis (Christensen) Coulter in conversation with Susan Ellingsen, Dianne Hentschel and Doreen Thompson. At her home in Willow Point. January 2005.

We lived at Manson's twice. The first time was in 1948. We had a little shack on a float down at Buster (Hiram Christensen) and Mabel's, by the creek in the lagoon. (End of Lagoon Road). Buster and Merv were logging up behind the Hawkins place which was across from the end of the spit. We were only there for about a year.

Buster and Mabel (Hague) with Eleanor, Robert and Jimmy were our closest neighbours. Nellie and Baron Jeffery and their family, Joan, Judy, Charlie and Barry were living around the point from Hawkins, out at Green Patch. Martineaus were living on a float at the head of the lagoon. They were loggers.

We kept a car at Heriot Bay, didn't have one on Cortes in those days. Buster had a car. We visited with friends and neighbours in the community, went to dances at the hall. Clarence and Etta Byers came to the dances, he was the BEST dancer. Elmer Ellingsen and Jack Summers provided the music.

Boat day was a social occasion. Eva Freeman, who was the first person able to see the boat as it came up the channel, alerted everyone who had a phone by giving a general ring that everybody was supposed to pick up. It was used for emergencies too. People would go down to the wharf to pick up anything they'd ordered from Vancouver, visit with neighbours, buy an ice cream cone for a nickel. Boat days were the only time ice cream was available. Stores didn't have freezers for keeping it.

Jack and Ev Summers were running the store, their boys, Ken and Bert, were just little guys. Ev's parents were with them. Mr and Mrs Lowes. They were all living in the lodge. I remember going to a New Year's Eve party there.

We left the island when the logging shut down for the winter. Moved to Campbell River where Merv worked in the pulp mill. It was 1968 when we came back. We were semi-retired, Merv had a troller, the *Ethel R*, and fished out of Manson's until the buy-back came then he sold it to the government. We bought the old Hawkins place from Arnie Haukvik (1003 Lagoon Road). Eleven and a half acres of waterfront at the mouth of the lagoon. The old Hawkins house was in pretty sad shape but we moved in and lived on the ground floor until we were able to get another house. There was a kitchen, a big room, a couple of bedrooms and a bathroom..

It was a year before we got a house that we bought from the people who owned the place Aaron Emanuelson and later George Bone owned at the head of the Gorge. It had been a float house that was built for Sigurd Ellingsen up in Phillips Arm but was ashore in the Gorge. The Emanuelson and Bone families lived in it while it was there. Robert Christensen pulled it onto a float and moved it around here where it was set up just above the beach.

We kept the car at Heriot Bay until the ferry arrived in the fall of 1969, then brought it to the island. The arrival of the ferry and hydro made life a lot easier. No more generators, no more boat trips to town in bad weather. We wouldn't have bought there if the ferry and hydro hadn't been coming soon.

I put in a big garden that was soon discovered by a deer. She'd come down and find a place she could squeeze under the fence and just come in and help herself. She didn't eat too much stuff so I let her keep coming in. We were often in the garden together. Haukviks had brought blackberry vines in from back east somewhere, they were different than the ones that grow wild. Very good. Shermans gave me some red currant bushes that weren't doing well in their garden. Merv had some dogfish so I said, "you dig the holes and we'll put half a dogfish in each one." He told me to cut them up while he went about digging the holes. So I got the axe and put them on the chopping block and took a big swing and every time I hit one the axe just bounced back. You could not break the skin. Merv eventually got them cut up and buried. No more dogfish for the garden.....but we had a good crop of currants. I planted corn one year but the raccoons came in and got it. What they didn't get I picked whether it was ready or not, they weren't getting the rest of it.

Sherman's owned the place next door (999 Lagoon Road) but weren't living there. It was just a summer place. They sold it to the Korths who became our next-door neighbours.

My mother was in the extended care unit at the hospital in Campbell River in 1974. I was going over to see her once a week and it just seemed like it was time to sell the place on Cortes. It had appreciated considerably in value over the eight years we had been there. Ian and Joan Disney bought it from us and we built a new place at Stories beach, south of Campbell River.

The biggest difference between living there in 1948 and in 1968 was that the first time there weren't so many people but we knew most of them, the next time there were a lot of people but we didn't know so many.