

## MEMORIES OF MANSON'S LANDING. 2005.

Pat (Fuller) Haines, from a letter written to the museum and follow-up telephone conversation with Doreen Thompson. April/May 2005.

I came to Manson's Landing as a primary school teacher in 1950. I was twenty and had just graduated from Victoria Provincial Normal School in Victoria, the city in which I had grown up. I had applied for a teaching position in BC, preferably on Vancouver Island in order to be able to drive home and maintain my family ties. My letter of application was answered by the District 72 School Board in Campbell River.

Dad drove me up to Campbell River, happy with my job prospects. I was hired -- and dismayed to find out that the job was NOT in Campbell River or even on Vancouver Island but across the water on Cortes. I had never heard of Cortes Island. So what to do? "No problem," said the lady in the office, a Mrs. Heatherington, "just hire a fish boat or a float plane. Bob Langdon has a Seabee. He'll fly you over to Manson's Landing where you can meet Mr. Lowes, the Cortes Island school representative."

So far, so good! We found Bob Langdon where his palne was beached down in front of the Willows Hotel. That was long before the landfill that created the parks, the parking area and the Tyee Plaza. Willows Hotel stood just south of the St. Ann's Road/Island Highway intersection with nothing in front of it but the road and the beach from which the airlines operated.

I had never been in a plane. I asked my folks if they would like to come with me. "Sure," said Dad, "I'd love to go for a plane ride." Mother, on the other hand, declined, "No, thank you, I'll stay and have lunch at the hotel." It was a bright sunny day. Quelling my fears I followed Dad into the plane, we took off over Quadra Island and flew across Sutil Channel. We were preparing to land - circling over Manson's Bay - when Bob glanced over at me and realized, just by the way I was gripping the seat, that I had never flown before!

Mr. Lowes, who was on the dock to meet us, took us up to the Lodge to meet his wife, Ella. She provided rooms and meals for visitors and said I was most welcome. But as I surveyed the area I spied some neat little cabins along the beach and asked if I could rent one. Mrs. Lowes didn't think that was a good idea. I told her that I had been raised in a log cabin on Saltspring Island before moving to Victoria in 1938 and was used to wood stoves, coal oil lamps and outhouses. So, reluctantly, she said, "OK, but it's against my better judgement." The rent was very affordable, so it was set. I had a job AND a place to live.

Mr. Lowes then took Dad and I about a mile up the road to tour the three-room school that had just been finished after a 1949 start with the first of the three rooms. It was a replacement for the old log school that was still standing near the big dogwood tree a former teacher had planted on the grounds in the First World War years. That school had become woefully inadequate, spilling over into the hall, the church and an old teacherage hauled down the road from the Rexford place. We toured the new school and ended our day on Cortes with tea at the Lodge

and a flight back to Campbell River with Bob, who had waited for us.

Mother was waiting for us in Campbell River and relieved to see us back. Dad had enjoyed the whole adventure.

I had to attend Summer School back in Victoria to improve my Teaching Certificate. When that was finished I packed my suitcase and my basic essentials and, with my Scottie dog, Sandy, went down to the CPR dock in Victoria to sail to Vancouver. From there I boarded the Union Steamship *SS Cardena* for the voyage to Manson's Landing. I spent the night in a comfortable stateroom, Sandy spent his in the ship's hold. What an adventure!!

We arrived at Manson's the next morning, walked down the gangplank and were welcomed into our new life by the folks of Cortes Island. Mr. Lowes helped us settle in our little cabin. It had three rooms, bedroom, living area and a tiny kitchen with a wood-burning boat stove. (I later found that several young men from the community, Robbie Graham was one, would be eager to cut wood for me!) We met our next door neighbours, Jim and Julie Henderson. Mr. Henderson was the newly appointed principal.

Miss Pauline Helikoski, the intermediate room teacher, was my neighbour in the cabin on the other. She was from an entirely different background than mine, smoked like a chimney and sometimes invited me into her tiny smoke-filled cabin, an invitation I declined as often as possible. We were not destined to become friends.

I taught the primary grades, 1 to 4, for two years. The school, as I remember it, had very little in the way of supplies. There were few textbooks. Teachers had to copy work from them using a mimeograph. It was a gelatinous substance, about an eighth of an inch thick, on a firm backing the size of a sheet of paper, that would absorb the ink from a specialized pencil used to make a master copy of the information required from the text: math quizzes, spelling words, grammar lessons.....anything that had to be handed out to the students. The master copy was placed on the gelatine (for want of a better word), the ink from the pencil absorbed, the master sheet removed and replaced by plain paper onto which the writing was transferred. It would never have worked for a large class. The gel was good for only a limited number of pages before the ink faded away. It also had to be refreshed between uses.....which meant taking it home, melting it in the oven and reapplying it to the backing. That was the only "modern" teaching tool we had. It did replace a lot of copying from work written on the blackboard.

There was a piano in the school, which I could barely play, and some ancient sheet music.

I went back to Summer School (1951) between my two years of teaching at Manson's. It was great to see many old friends who were also going back to improve their certificates.

In September Sandy and I were back for the next school term. I still keep in touch with some of my students, one being Harvey Smith. Others in my class included Bert Hansen, Marjorie Rexford, Kenny Summers, Jimmy Hansen and Jimmy Guthrie.

Pearl Graham was the school janitor, Ernie Guthrie was the bus driver/handyman who kept

things, including the wood furnace, going. Everyone was helpful and friendly.

The social scene included dances at Manson's Hall or over at the Gorge. I met my future husband, Lawrence Haines, at a Manson's dance in 1952. In June it was back to Summer School again. Lawrence and I were married in August of that year and moved to Ramsay Arm where he was working at a logging camp.

The logging camp owners had moved a schoolhouse from Von Donop Creek into the camp for the camp family children. I taught grades 1 to 9 at Ramsay Arm School. It was challenging and fun. The camp owners were good to us, we still keep in touch with them. The children are long since grown up and still friends. Lawrence's job (which changed from logger to fisherman when we bought a troller) later took us to Quadra Island and finally to Campbell River. I spent several years teaching in both of those communities.

I enjoyed my job teaching the children and Cortes Island still has a place in my heart.