



## Growing Up in Burquitlam

📅 June 13, 2016 👤 CQ125 💬 No comments



Jeanie's family home in Burquitlam

"We've been bushed," was my initial reaction when our MacLeod family moved from East Vancouver to five acres on Smith Avenue in the Burquitlam area in 1953.

It wasn't too long, however, that I embraced our rural environment and the freedom of movement it offered.



On our acreage was a three-storey home – built in the 20s – a double garage with living quarters above, a gazebo, an orchard with multiple fruits, a large vegetable garden, which included strawberries, raspberries, and a rhubarb patch. There was also a chicken coop, small barn, as well as a forest of majestic Douglas fir, cedar and hemlock trees in the back half of the acreage. This forest became my brother's and my favourite playground where we defended our "Fort Grave" from possible "invaders" and played and ran through a maze of trails. Sometimes I ran on one particular trail which led me to Como Lake Avenue and Soupy's Market for

emergency grocery items.

We had a large open field on the west side of the property, where our neighbourhood friends would gather to play softball or "kick the can". Two good friends of mine walked their family cow down Smith Avenue from Blue Mountain Road, and tethered her in the field, so they too could participate in our games!

The MacLeod family's orchard and garden.

The Farmer's Institute, now Hartley Park, (the property directly west of us) was the supplier of feed for chickens and other livestock in the small acreages throughout our Burquitlam neighbourhood. There were also mink farms in the area. On the east side border of the acreage ran a small creek, the site of many races with friends involving our miniature homemade boats. Across the road, on a gentle slope, was another five-acre parcel of cultivated strawberries, just east of Mountain View Elementary. During the winter, when the temperatures dipped well below freezing, a nearby slough was our skating rink or, much further away, Como Lake. Bike riding was my preferred mode of travel and I would pedal a fair distance to visit a girlfriend who lived in the new subdivision, Harbour Chines.

Every home had a party line telephone with each home having a specific ring or rings; two long, one short, or two short or some combination of long and short rings. We were part of the Lakeview exchange (New Westminster), whereas my girlfriend in Harbour Chines was in the Port Moody exchange, which meant a long distance charge to chat with her!



Our family was one of the last to buy a black and white television, much to my chagrin! Our weekend family entertainment was often listening to stories or music on the radio or playing cribbage or board games. It was a big deal when our parents purchased a combination radio and record player.... and an even bigger deal when a television set finally arrived in our living room in 1957!

My brother George and I continue to make Coquitlam our home.

- *Images and story submitted by: Jeanie (MacLeod) Lutz*

Jeanie and her brother George.

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