

Interview of Josephine Peters February 14, 1993 by Carrie Bratlie, at Olympia, Washington.

Were you born on the Island, Josephine? Yes.

What year were you born? 1904 , June 21. I'm Supposed to be 88 years old.

Do you remember much of your childhood on the Island? Before school we used to go down and play on the beach and did clams. My sister and I would take tiny little rocks and swallow them for the salt on them.

Were you're mother and father born on the Island? My mother was I guess. My dad was born in Dungeness country, Port Angeles area.

What did your parents do for a living? My father was a logger, my mother stayed at home. She gardened and we had our own orchard on the island.

Did you go back to the Island after you moved off? Yes, we moved to the Skokomish Reservation. We lived there for a long time. From there we moved up to Lake Cushman, my dad worked in a logging camp up there. That is where my mother passed away. From there we came back to the Island for a while. We stayed on Heartsene Island on a float house. It was on land but was able to float.

Was this while you were in school? I went to boarding school in Tacoma, at the Cushman school. Cascadia is what it is now.

Was that an Indian school or was it a white school? It was an Indian school. Then after that we moved to lake Cushman and went to a regular school.

Did you like the Cushman School? Yes

Did you like it better than the school on Cushman Lake? I don't know. At boarding school we had games to play like baseball, basketball and they had dances. That is where I learned to dance. The Girls had their own building from the boys. Between leaving Tacoma and going to the lake I can't remember where I went to elementary school. We lived at Lake Cushman for a long time. Marion, my sister, was born at Lake Cushman.

When you lived out on the Island there was no electricity. How did you get water? We had a 50' well, it was really good water, my dad built a well house for the well.

Marlene Peters asks, is that well still on the Island? I don't know now but it used to be, it was an artesian.

For light you had what source? Kerosene lantern and lamps.

How did you get back and forth to the mainland? There was a boat that ran from Hartstene Island every Monday or Saturday. That's how we got to town. One time we just rowed to Olympia, my grandfather, grandmother and my sister and I.

We would camp one night off of the point and then go to the town the next day.

When you were in town, were you picking up staples? Yes.

Why did you leave the Island? I don't really know. My dad was working on Hartstene Island.

Do you remember happy times out on Squaxin Island? Oh yes, we used to enjoy ourselves.

How many children are in your family? Eight girls and two boys.

Were you familiar with the people on the Island with tuberculosis? No.

Did you know anyone with the Small Pox? Not on the Island but we got the Small pox, the Chicken Pox and other illness.

How long were you at the boarding school in Tacoma? Four years. I left in the fourth or fifth grade to go to Lake Cushman.

Did you like the school on the lake? Yes. I never did graduate. My kids always asked me if I went to high school and I said, "yes I went in the back door and came our the front door".

Did your dad fish? Yes he would seine for smelt and small fish, we would go down and help pull the net in.

Did your parents tell you stories of their childhood? No. My grandfather would tell us stories but I can't remember them. It's been so long, I just can't remember.

Do you remember any of the native Salish language? No,

Did you and your sisters collect oysters or dig clams? Yes, we would dig clams for the family.

Do you remember the old shaker church on the Island? Oh yes, I remember the people gathering on my grandfather Scolpine's property on the Island. We would go the meeting to watch the people and how they rang the bell. After the bells had been rung we would cross ourselves and then we would shake. [raise right hand open palm to another's right hand open palm softly at an angle] Dance around the room. we used to get out of babysitting a neighbor kid [Frank Parker] in order to go to the meetings.

Were you comfortable at lake Cushman being a minority? Yes, we lived real good up there. We lived in real nice company houses.

Did that house have electricity? Yes.

So it was far different than living on the Island? Yes, I can't remember when we left but I met my husband when we were living on Hartstene Island.

How did you meet your husband? He and another friend were working on the Hartstene logging camp. His friend knew my family so they came over to Squaxin. They had to walk across when the tide was out. We used to have dances every Saturday and one time we asked them to a dance. My sister and I would make cakes for the dance.

When did you get married? March 1924.

Where did you go after you were married? Mud Bay.

What was your husband's name? Jamison Murphy Peters. but he was called "Dutch".
No one knew why he was called Dutch.

He was from what tribe? Squaxin and Quinalt.

Did he fish or log? He logged and then we moved to this property and he started to fish.

Was there a Shaker Church on the Island? Yes.

Did you ever feel slighted by being a Native American? No, I was always happy to be an American Indian. My dad was Irish-French, and my mother was full blooded Indian.

How many children do you have? Four Boys, and one girl that died when she was seven.

Do you fish off of your dock much? No, I can't get around much, [points to walker]

Did that house have electricity? yes.

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How many children do you have? Four Boys and one girl that died when she was seven.

Do you fish off of your dock much? No, I can't get around much, I have to use this thing [points to walker]. I have arthritis real bad in my knee.

Did you work? Yes, in the Oysters, I used to cull them and sell them.

How many cemeteries are on the Island? Three, quite a few people are buried there. One at Patricks Point, one by the Orchard and one above Scolpine home.