



Dorothy Mercer

(1927 - 2009)

Dorothy Mercer was born on November 7, 1927 to David and Albina. Although born in the city, she spent most of her childhood at a logging camp in Loughboro Inlet. At the age of fifteen she and her family moved to Hatzic Prairie, settling on a dairy farm, where her dedication to and promotion of agriculture began.

Homeschooled by her mother, Dorothy graduated when she was seventeen and took over the operation of the farm when her father's job called him away. With a little assistance, she "daily cared for 70 head of Jersey cows and milked 35 head" as well as "did the tractor work, haying, and showed her prize cattle at Mission, the PNE and Chilliwack."¹ She also got involved with the BC Jersey Breeders, Canadian Jersey Cattle Club, and the Mission Agricultural Association. She became one of the first women in Canada to own and manage her own herd of registered Jersey cattle.

An active member of local 4-H clubs since 1945, Dorothy became the leader of the Mission 4-H Jersey Club at the age of twenty-three while still managing the family dairy farm. Over the next 4 decades, she dedicated herself to promoting agriculture through 4-H, fairs and exhibitions guided by her philosophy that "children are our greatest natural resource." She served on the district, regional and provincial 4-H councils, with terms as president and secretary; was the 4-H superintendent at the PNE for 23 years, and was involved with the Future Farmers Program for 15 years. She organized 4-H judging rallies, awards night presentations, exchange applications, and was the 4-H Advisor and Resource Convenor for the Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Agricultural Association. Dorothy was credited with having "an uncanny ability to resolve problems in a calm fashion using diplomacy and common sense which made everybody feel like a winner."²

During her years of service, Dorothy was honoured many times for her outstanding contributions and "insurmountable knowledge of agriculture and the 4-H Program."³ In 1977 she was among a very select group of 4-H organizers in Canada to receive a medal commemorating the Silver Jubilee of the Queen and in 2001, she was presented a Distinguished Service Award at the annual BC Association of Agriculture Fairs and Exhibitions convention. Dorothy passed away in 2009, at eighty-one years of age, leaving an indelible mark on the development of agriculture.

¹. *Mission City Record*, December 13, 2001; ². *Ibid*; ³. *Ibid*.

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