

Ruby Miller - Tape 1 (side 2)

This is a script of an interview with Ruby Miller. While the interviewer is not identified, the interview dialogue would suggest that it was Donald Gordon conducting the interview. Velma Miller (nee Charter) was present and sometimes offers comment (identified as 3rd party).

The Interviewer's commentary is presented in italics. Names are often difficult to distinguish. Where these are really unclear, a question mark appears in brackets.

And um, then next was the Anglican Church.

That's right. You mentioned that there was an old town hall before the present town hall.

Oh yes. It was ... Mr. Lavery was the last reeve of the township and when the new one was built. H bought the building and he builte house next, east of the bank and the barn that was behind it.

Well what happened to the old town hall, did they tear it or did it burn?

They tore it down and Mr. Lavery bought it and used the lumber for to build his house and barn behind it.

So the old town hall just wasn't big enough any more, is that what happened? A small building?

No. It was old and they needed something new. And then the Anglican Church, behind that and the lumber yard behind and Switzers lived next and then the school and then Dr. McDermott. That's Rosemary's (*Rosemary Lawrenson*) there.

Lawrensons? Is that right?

And there was nothing but that house there.

Mmmm

There wasn't any houses behind it or anything and Tom Glendenning lived in the next house.

Which is where Zelda Redding would have been?

Yes and then there was the driveway up to the little farm ... St.John(?) ... **STATIC** owned that. That was His family were eh ...oh Mrs. Shallon(?)and Mrs E.T. Williams and Dr. Oliver and Mrs. Rundle and um and um Phil ... Phil St.John and his family.

I've always wondered about that big house where Bill Yerema lives now. Do you know that house, Mrs. Miller?

(3rd party) The Fogs

(3rd party) He's talking about Edna Fogg's house.

Oh yes.

That's quite a lovely old house.

Yes, I can remember when that was built. Yes, well that eh... Danville St. John built that house .. next cross the lane and then in time....

Yes, the old Eades house, I'd know it as eh?

Then there was two other houses there and then the Fogg's house. Yes, that Fogg house is quite a nice house in town.

Yes, it is a lovely old house .

Ah hah and then the ..

(3rd party) Who built it ? Do you remember who built the Fogg house?

Tom (*Thomas Fogg*) built it himself.

(3rd party) Oh. I see.

They were going out of business.

(3rd party) I think. Weren't they in the hotel business?

Yes, they run the Nippissing.

Oh I see.

And Edna, that's where she was raised.

That's his daughter, Edna Fogg.

And then across the road from that was the old .. I think there's Flaglers live there now. That was the last house on that side of the road. It was built there by the Bakers. It was two main ladies - Susie and Thelma Baker and they built a house up on the corner of the farm for them.

(3rd party) And they were related to ..like Robert and Jean(?) and them. They were related to Robert Baker weren't they?

Yes, oh yes!

(3rd party) Who was it hat lived on the farm?

It was John Baker and Peter and Sam and Adam and they had farms, one after the other. They were small farms but ... well then down James Brethour lived on the corner - that was an old, a little old house and then MacIntyres, the blacksmith shop.

(3rd party) I remember that - that's were Bryan kept his trucks.

Oh yes.

(3rd party) That was it. That used to be a blacksmith shop.

And then I've told you the other things - the buildings down there and another thing of interest the house ...the house ... Dr. Woodman's (?) house you know...

Mmmm

That at one time was the Presbyterian manse. (*NW corner of Water & Pines Sts.*)

Was it?

And the Anglican rectory was across the road and the Methodist parsonage was down across from where Margaret Marquis used to live.

(3rd party) And half way down the hill, this way on the same side.

Who lives there now?

(3rd party) I don't know who lives there now but that's where Cecil Real used to live.

Next to Stan(?) Wills.

Oh yeah, down the hill, sure! Beside Dale? Dale St.John. Yeah.

(3rd party) Yeah, when I was a kid that's were - that's were the Duggins lived there. He was the Presbyterian, he wasn't the Anglican Church minister but he lived there.

Now you mentioned a house across from what I know as Doc Woodman's building - to the east of it I think you meant - across the street. What was that again?

The Anglican rectory.

That was the Anglican rectory. Is that right?

(3rd party) Yeah, well they just sold that - they just sold that you see.

Oh we haven't had it for quite some time.

(3rd party) But you've had it what? You've had it within the last ten, fifteen years. It isn't all that long.

Am I thinking of the right building then?

(3rd party) Yes. You know where your grandmother used to live. Well that was right there - the Anglican rectory.

Oh right there?

(3rd party) Yeah.

OK

(3rd party) Well she said across the road. Well it is across from the side.

I was thinking east.

Yes, OK.

And that little house wasn't there at all and there was the barn, and the barn was faced this way. They turned that barn into a dwelling - the Tochers did. And

(3rd party) What was on the corner then?

Yes., and another thing, going around the corner going back to the bank, there was the There was a place there that when I was small, it had a store front. It was a store at one time. It had a store front and Mrs. Brabson(?), that was Mrs. ... Abe Tocher's mother ... well eventually ... shopped there and above that was the Orange Hall, the Orange would have their meeting place above there and later they had it in the Dr. ...Dr. McDermitt's block. They had eh ...the library was up there. Oh I'd forgotten that. The library was in the Doctor's block... above... and you went up the stairs from the west and on this side on the corner, the doctor had two private offices and this side you went this way into a kind of a square place and the library was there and then you went on and there the 'Odds' (?) had a hall there and you went the other way and the Orangemen had it ... and then there was over the furniture store, the undertaker there was a He lived up there and then there was another dwelling at the east.

So that the library would have gone up in the fire, did it?

Oh yeah....Well, it wasn't a library - no, not then.

Not then.

It wasn't there then. They moved it up to the Town Hall.

Oh, so when the Town Hall was built, the library went there did it?

Well no, not right straight.

No?

The library went... I don't know when the library ... they made a little room and they had the library there for a long time and then they built the library.

No, I remember the little room in the town hall.

(3rd party) Oh that's where the library was?

Yeah

(3rd party) It was there for a long time because Laura St. John used to look after it and then Bessie (Oliver) looked after it and she looked after it until she died. So it was there in the hall for ages and ages.

Yes it was there for a while.

(3rd party) Before they built the new one

And then down east, down the front street, east, George Kay built a blacksmith's shop right at the house, right ... oh very close to the house there and

(There is a brief break in the recording at this point, but the conversation continues)

...later in years, he moved it down to the front of his lot and Robert (?) Doble lived in the house next and he had the farm that run back 100 acres or more. It run back and our house was the last one north of the bank and then it was all farmland.

Oh it was all farmland, eh?

It come right to our place. Doble Street wasn't there. I think Doble Street was opened , well in the early 1900's.

Do you remember when the United Church manse would have been built then?

Yes.

Was that built as a manse to begin with, do you know?

Yes.

Was it?

Yes that was a .. the manse was built the same year as Frank Doble's house and that was about 1901. And Mr. Peckover was the first Presbyterian minister to live in that house. And then, well before Doble Street was built there and all those houses.... it was only Albert Street and it went as far as ... I don't know who lives there now. I would say Durwards.

And that ..

(3rd party) That would have been MacInneneys, where over where Sam Miller lived?

Oh no, that's up this way, where Pearl Miller lived.

(3rd party) Well that's what I meant.

Oh, yeah, I know where you mean.

Well that farm gate was there. It was the last house.

Is that right?

And then, Albert Street ... that part of Albert Street was a little street. It was just a laneway, an opening for that farm.

Do you remember... where there any businesses down on the highway at that time- down near the co-op or where the service stations are ?

Yes, they had the mill, the grist mill down there and well then I think that was the only business ... Oh yes, right down there coming up the front street, on this side of ... that highway, the old highway was known as the Centre Road and it jogged down through Sunderland.

Yeah.

Then it turned and right there, there was a lumber business of some kind and umm..

So that would have been west of the railway station then I guess, moving up the hill.

The railway station was on this side.

Yeah.

And the mill was on this side and the what we called the power house, it was eh... I don't know what it was ... I guess it was in connection with the mill some way and then they put in... oh about .. in the early 1900's, they put in a power house... a plant that run the hydro and then we had street lights, we never had street lights before that and ...

Do you remember what year roughly that would have been in, when the first street lights were turned on?

Well along, well it was 1901 or '02.

Is that right?

And Dobles, Ray Doble moved down in 1902 and I think the lights were there then because before that it was always dark and we used to go out and play under the corner light in the evenings.

Where was that located? What corner would that have been at?

Which?

The corner light? Where was that located exactly? Which corner?

Oh, every corner. That was right at north of the bank.

Oh, I see, right at your house. So they didn't string lights right down the road then, they just had them at the corners, basically.

No they had them at intervals, not too close...

Not as many as they'd have now.

And I don't think they had any lights in the houses until later.

Right.

Maybe, then in the stores at that time. I forget. I remember most about the street lights and they were turned on oh, about 6:00 o'clock and they were turned off at 11:00 o'clock. You had to be in, all asleep by 11.00..

So was there a local police officer in those days that used to .. ?

Oh, a constable.

Yeah.

I forget ...

(3rd party) We had Gus Doyle.

Gus Doyle?

(3rd party) We had Gus Doyle when I was a kid, I don't know who before that.

Oh I forget about him. I didn't have much to do with him. (laughter) I was a good girl.

Do you remember going on any trips back in your childhood? Did you ever take the train to Toronto?

Oh yes. Not when I was small.... But we used to go ... the common thing was to hire a bus at the livery- they had big buses that would hold 14 or 15 and it was pulled by a team of course and we'd take a Sunday School and go back to Beaverton for a picnic.

Ummm, by the lake.

(3rd party) Was it horse drawn?

What's that?

(3rd party) Was it pulled by horses?

Oh yes.

A horse drawn bus.

Yes. That was ... Sunderland had a band, a brass band and a wonderful one. Layton had a band too and think Jack Tipp(?) was the leader of our band and a man by the name of Heatley, Oliver Heatley run the Layton band. We had wonderful bands then.

So they'd play on all the special occasions then?

Oh yes, at the fair, we'd have a band, any special occasion. And I remember too, when election time came. You know at one time, Sunderland was solid Conservative. There was only two or three youngsters, Liberals who went to school and believe me they didn't have the life of Riley when they were at school.

Is that right?

Not when the election was on. Well then, there was a man by the name of W.H.A. Toil who lived in Cannington and there was another, Sharp who lived in Uxbridge and they

were both Conservative and when they'd get in they generally came to Sunderland by train and they'd go down -- they'd take this ... well they'd get a ... they had carriages then with a place for the driver and a seat behind and they'd take one of those and ummm just put a long rope on it and they'd have a dozen or more tows(?) in twos and they'd carry torches and they'd meet the train and then the first year that the hotel was opened, I think that it was Mr. Sharp, got in from Uxbridge and he came in and he spoke from the little balcony..

At the hotel?

At the Brock House.

Is that right. So the election campaigns were pretty interesting were they?

You could call them hot (laughter). Much livelier than they are now!

Well so did the candidates come to the town hall to speak at public meetings and that did they?

Yes.

(3rd party) And did they have a parade afterwards - after they got in - all these men pulling them?

Well, just up from the station.

Do you remember when the first cars - motor cars came to Sunderland?

Oh yes. E.G. Williams owned the first car that was in Sunderland and when he took down the street the horns would beep and you'd be running in every direction.

Is that right? So who was Mr. Williams? Was he a fairly prominent chap in town?

Oh he was the veterinarian. Dr. Lavery... Dr. Williams and Dr. Lavery, they were vets and they worked together. Yes they were ... and he had the first then there was a Mr. Hamilton in the jewellery store, he had the first one with what do you call them.. he had the first with one seat in the back. Oh what do you call them?

(3rd party) Rumble seat?

Yes, a rumble seat and I had a ride in the rumble seat of that car, that was the first car ride I had.

I guess they wouldn't be able to travel very far though, the roads wouldn't have been that good were they or could they drive along the concession roads?

Oh yes, oh yes. But you had to be careful. The roads were high and the ditches were... and you didn't ... at first you just drove in the summertime. You put your car away and jacked it up for the winter because you couldn't get through. There was no snow plows.

Yeah.

You couldn't get through .. oh it was fun going for a cutter ride then. Not much fun for me but then you were on the road and you come to a bad place and go in the ditch and in the field, ride the field and then come out on the road again.

So you remember when they first started selling cars in Sunderland then?

Oh yeah.

Who was the first car dealer in Sunderland. Do you remember that? Probably one of the garage owners, was it?

Yes, um. J.C. Miller was one, he was Pearl Miller's brother. Oh I forget.

Do you remember when John L. Gordon (John Lesley Gordon) started selling cars?

Oh yes.

Was that quite a long time after, perhaps?

Yes. He was up the other end of town.

(3rd party) Did he come right from Vroomanton to Sunderland and had a garage?

Yeah.

(3rd party) Yeah, well I was born in Sunderland and your grandmother and grandfather lived next to my mom and dad in Vroomanton.

Oh is that right?

(3rd party) And Howard and the whole three of the kids (*Howard, Busy & Reta*) were born over there. And I can remember my mother saying that anytime she wanted to find my dad he was always in next door with the kids, playing with the kids ... so that would be ... I was born at the end of '17 and they came to town maybe in '16 probably so your mother and dad came right along at the same time - your grandmother and grandfather. So he would probably have started selling cars shortly after we came to town. First person I remember having a car was Dr. Bryant and he lived next to me, where Roberta Thomas lived and he was also a veterinarian.

Yeah

(3rd party) He was an old man sort of when the cars come along and he used to get my dad to drive him.

To his appointments?

(3rd party) To his appointments. My dad got so that he wasn't working. He wasn't in very good health and he used to drive Dr. Bryant's car for him.

Oh is that right?

(3rd party) And I can remember it was an old clipper, you know what I mean, it was a T like a model T.

Mmmm

(3rd party) But that's about the first person I can remember having a car like before we got a car.

Yeah.

And I'll tell you something else. Your grandmother, her mother was Cara Mackenzie (*Caroline McKenzie, 1855 – 1938*), I imagine her name was Caroline, but they called her Cara - that was Mackenzie and she was some relation ... Oh, I don't know how it was .. but she used to come to mother's and they used to come out to the farm and we had a good time..

(3rd party) How many churches? How many churches were in Sunderland?

Oh, four. There was the Baptist church, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Anglican Church and Vroomanton was the Catholic Church (*St, Malachy*).

Yes, the first Catholic Church was Vroomanton, it wasn't north of Sunderland?

Yes, where the cemetery is.

Yeah, Yeah.

(3rd party) How many times did you go to church in a day?

Me? Oh I never missed church much. We were brought up to go to church, to go to Sunday School and to church and while I was home they looked to me to do it and I used to enjoy that - everything I did. And after I went to the farm, I didn't get to church too often. Not as often as I'd like. And eh, as I came back I went to church, and I didn't miss too many Sundays. I enjoyed it. And I enjoyed my work there. And they built now onto the old church - they built a lovely new parish hall or a church hall and it's really a credit

to those - a little band of people who stood together and worked hard and they had got help but they worked for it.

And which church is that?

The Anglican Church.

Oh yeah.

A lovely hall behind, it's all finished.

Is it finished?

All finished. Oh, wonderful.

Sure it's finished. Mom was telling me about it. She was at the opening. Do you remember very much about the Sunderland Fair back in your childhood days?

Yes, that was a big affair. Yes. It was held in this agricultural hall and you came in the front door...it was, oh up high you know ...it was a board floor and then you went down a couple of steps into what was a dirt floor and it had ..it had tables and sorts along each side ... it was just ... they weren't tables, it was just built on like and eh ...

Now where was that agricultural hall located? Was that...

Right where the arena is now.

The arena is now