

Westman Oral History collection

Interview Date: 1981-12-03
Narrator (interviewee): Dorothy Broomhall
Interviewer: Isabelle Heeney
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Transcriber: John Ball
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00:00:08 Its beginning to run... now there's 70 that's what I was trying to get it started too.....(background noise)

00:00:35 **Q (IH)** This is December 3rd 1981 I am Isabelle Heeney and today I am interviewing Miss Dorothy Broomhall (DB) for the Westman Oral History Association project voices of yesteryear. Dorothy has lived in Brandon all of her life and has been involved in the activities of the Anglican Church of St. Mary the virgin and we will be discussing this. But first of all Dorothy I would like to get a few details about your life when did your parents come to Brandon and were where they born.

A (DB) My mother was born at Souris and attended St. Luke's Church there she came to Brandon in 1911 to attend business college and took a job as a business secretary at Wheat City Furs my father was born in Newcastle (background noise) Staffordshire England and came as a young immigrant in 1912 he trained to fit and sell shoes and worked for the Adam Shoe Company, my mother tells the story of their meeting it was at the WPA meetings at St. Mary's and one of the young boys in the group asked if he could bring some new immigrants that had moved into their boarding house to the WPA well the girls were delighted and the following week they were all dressed up and ready when the boys came in and short brown eyed young man came in and my mother said to her friend I'll have that one and she got him.

00:02:12 **Q (IH)** What schools did you attend and where did you work

A (DB) I attended King George school in the east end to grade 6 from there Alexander school to grade 9 and finally Brandon Collegiate I took a course at the Wheat City Business College then worked for the government with the War Time Prices and Trade Board and later with the Veterans Land Administration.

00:02:37 **Q (IH)** What was the purpose of the War Time Prices and Trade Board.

A (DB) The War Time Prices and Trade Board was set up at the end of world the beginning of World War Two to monitor trade and prices in the Brandon area one of the fields in which we were quite strong

was rentals and there was a rental control I worked for a lady who monitored that within the city of Brandon another feature as tyres I remember that tyres were rationed and um we looked after that wither you were buying a new tyre or a retread tyre was of our concern.

00:03:19 **Q** (IH) And have you been involved in St. Mary's church all of your life?

A (DB) Yes my mother took me and my twin brothers to St. Mary's when I was 4 years old which means I have a history of more than 50 years there. Mother taught Sunday school and was for a time superintendent in the primary department like her I have been in the choir since I was teenaged and began teaching Sunday school about the same time I resigned from Sunday school work in 1980 but still attend choir I belonged to the ACW and produced the weekly bulletin I have also worked with the Girl Guides at St. Mary's being Captain there from 1940 to 1972.

00:04:17 **Q** (IH) With a background with church work like that I'm sure your qualified to tell something of the history of the church of St. Mary the Virgin how did it begin.

A (DB) St. Mary's was a mission venture from St. Matthew's the building of the church was started in early 1907 and the basement was completed the first divine service was held there on April 21st at 4:30pm the service was delivered by the venerable Archdeacon Harding later Archbishop of Rupert's Land there was a congregation of 140 at this service of the even psalm the first vestry meeting was held August 21st of the same year Rev. A.U. Defauncie(?) presiding the honourable J.N. Kirkcougher(?) was elected as rector warden and Mr. J.P. Curran later Judge Curran was elected peoples warden the nave of the church was open December 29th 1907 the first rector C.E.F Radcliffe officiated the service of consecration was held on January 26th 1908 conducted by the most Reverend S.P. Matheson Archbishop of Rupert's Land St. Mary's was not recognized as a separate parish until April of 1908.

00:05:44 **Q** (IH) ah what about a rectory.

A (DB) A building was purchased from the fair board in May of 1912 to serve as a rectory and it seems there were sufficient funds in the building fund in that time to pay the full price of the rectory.

00:06:06 **Q** (IH) Now what are some of your memories of St. Mary's Sunday school.

A (DB) Concern for its youth has always been evident at St. Mary's as Sunday school was organized in 1907 with Mr. J.P. Kern (?) superintendent Mrs. P.R. Stimpson was one of the pupils and showed me a lovely leather bound book of poetry she received as a prize the book is dated 1907 Mrs. McGregor was the primary superintendent when I began she walked from the 800 block on Dennis street in all winds and weathers Percy Wanklin Luna Christ(?) Len Wheler(?) are some of the people I remember from my early days at Sunday school.

00:06:50 **Q** (IH) Well I'm sure that shows real dedication by those teachers I think we all remember picnics Sunday school picnics there often a very big highlight of our life and what do you remember did you have any such picnics

A (DB) The first picnics I remember were held at Lake Clementi we were transported by truck surely frowned upon in this day but we loaded on the back of the truck seated on benches and the return journey was more exciting because once we were all seated on the truck Len Wheler(?) came by with a huge bag of hard candy and gave each of us a great handful to chew on the way home.

00:07:36 **Q (IH)** You were involved for many years with the scouts and guides could you tell us something about those.

A (DB) Yes scouts and guides do have a long history at St. Mary's the first group in Brandon was started there by Mr. H.C.L Broadhurst (?) and had a continuous record until just a few years ago Percy and Gil Wanklin and Anthony Rogerson(?) were scouts in the early days the girls went over to St. Matthew's to guide meetings it was Mary Minutes (?) that was one of the leaders there who offered to open 3rd company at St. Mary's Irene McKenzie was one of the guides her daughters Donna and Elaine were guides of 3rd company well I was the Captain I had the company for 30 years resigning in 1972 and it's interesting that when I left the company the girls gave me a plaque prepared by Laurie Smith and his beautiful work something I treasure to this day. I might sat too that a cub pack and a brownie pack were also a very active part of the scout guide programme.

00:08:51 **(IH)** Well that certainly is quite a record in guiding I'm sure there aren't very many in Brandon today that can equal that sort of record do you think scouting and guiding is as strong today as in the past.

A (DB) oh I don't think so I think that children are attracted by other youth organizations now I also think that it's more difficult to get adult leadership it would seem that adults are not willing to be committed as they were in the past.

00:09:24 **Q (IH)** I suppose there were other activities in St. Mary's for the girls and boys and young people.

A (DB) St. Mary's also had a JA [Junior Auxiliary] and a Girls Auxiliary it was the Girls Auxiliary that became our present Carillon they had become too old for a Girls Auxiliary and felt that they were too young for the WA [Women's Auxiliary] so they asked permission to form their own group and they named the group the Carillon Mrs. W.H. Thornburg (?) was there first president and Reverend Ison wrote their prayer.

00:10:05 **Q (IH)** In most the women have played a very important part aside from being leaders in youth groups what were some of the organizations and in what special activities were the women involved

A (DB) life in the early days of St. Mary's showed great concern for one another um the young people who were new to Brandon found friends in the AYPAs. (loud click) Young people in those days continued to enjoy the AYPAs until they were married one Mrs. Wanklin known affectionately as granny Wanklin would regularly gather up those boarding house girls and boys and take them home after church on a Sunday evening songs and hymns around the piano and a cup of tea took away the loneliness of being away from home. During the depression of the 30's the same kind of concern cause the Reverend F.J.

Ison to create dug-out socials these were evening gatherings held once a month for men only Reverend Ison was encouraged Reverend Ison did encourage unemployed and poorly paid men to come along no one was to be dressed up but working clothes of any sort were acceptable Reverend Ison himself was dressed similar to his men they enjoyed an evening of fellowship and a simple tea before adjournment. The WA and Mothers Union were strong organizations Mrs. J. C. Donaldson was the first president of the WA they did a great deal towards the financial support of the church one money making venture that was there church suppers the church basement was full of tables which were in fact long boards balanced on trestles with benches for seating the tiny kitchen had neither running water nor sewer but they knew how to manage and served a good meal it was not until 1950 that sewer and water were laid into the church.

00:12:24 Q (IH) I can certainly remember those fall suppers so many churches had they were always a highlight to me of the fall programmes ehm when we were speaking earlier you mentioned a Mite Society could you tell us something about that.

A (DB) Yes the Mite society was an old time organization peculiar to St. Mary's were not sure who formed this group but Mrs. Edwin Daw was president for many years it would seem that the ladies simply met once a month and collected 10 cents to 25 cents from each lady many collected similar amounts from others in the parish many who didn't wish to attend the meetings the money raised was given to the vestry at the end of the year.) Another dedicated group was formed in 1926 when Reverend Barrett organized the alter guild ladies of the church have continued this work and we recall in particular Mrs. Weber and Mrs. Stimpson who made and embroidered many of our alter linens (loud clack).

00:13:38 Q (IH) We find that times have changed many things can you say the same of St. Mary's

A (DB) oh yes times have changed were as Sunday was once a full day of services Sunday school is now held in the morning instead of 3 o'clock in the afternoon and there is rarely an evening service I'm sure the days of Charlie McCarthy were the beginning of the dwindling evening congregation 140 people crowded into St. Mary's for the first service of worship in 1907 and present congregations I would estimate to be about half that number however many dedicated people do remain and carry on the life and work begin by the parish.

00:14:24 Q (IH) do any particular people in St. Mary's stand out in your memory.

A (DB) Yes I think it's interesting that throughout the years there have been outstanding contributions made by St. Mary's people in various fields for instance Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Thornborough their combined service as organists extend over a period of nearly 40 years Reverend Fred Ramsey, Reverend Burt Vines Reverend Bill Cross and Reverend George Young have all entered the ministry. Doris Nixon, Bruce Snugs trained and served as missionaries. Percy Wanklin served as lay read and was a scout master for many years and the Sunday school superintendent and of course Laurie Smith who served as a lay reader published the weekly bulletin organized special events and left us with a treasure of his beautiful illuminated work not only in St. Mary's but throughout Brandon and again I'm very pleased to possess a piece of this beautiful work.

00:15:35 Q (IH) that was most interesting and enlightening I am amazed that a small church like St. Mary's has made such a valuable contribution to the Anglian church at large it speaks well for the dedicated leadership over the years I hope the next 75 years will show a continuation of the influence of the church thank you Dorothy for giving us this most interesting interview.

00:16:04 Interview Ends.