

Westman Oral History Collection

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| Interview Date: | 1981-06-16 |
| Narrator (interviewee): | Ethel Hall |
| Interviewer: | Mary Thomas |
| Location: | Hartney, Manitoba |
| Transcriber: | Nathan Qumsieh |
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[Beginning of Tape/Side A]

[00:00:05]

Today is June 16th, 1981. The following is an interview with Ethel Hall, in her home in Hartney.

She was born and raised on the home farm, 14622. She will tell you her memories of threshing time. This interview will be conducted by Mary Thomas of Hartney, for the Westman Oral History Association project, "The Voices of Yesteryear."

Answer: [00:00:35]

We lived on section 14622, in Carmen Municipality, and...and mother and dad, Mr. and Mrs.

Bob Hall, brother Bill, sister Nellie and the man that...with. Been with us since he was 12 years old, Joel Clarke, and he's still with us.

Q: [00:01:00]

And what kind of, uh...farm did you have, a mixed farm?

A: [00:01:04]

Yes.

Q: [00:01:05]

And, uh...what kind of crops did you grow?

A: [00:01:09]

Wheat, oats, barley, rye and flax.

Q: [00:01:13]

And, in what year did you have the thrashers? Can-can you remember when they...do you first remember them.

A: [00:01:24]

Oh, I suppose I was around seven or eight years old.

Q: [00:01:30]

And how many men would you have for [unclear]?

A: [00:01:33]

[unclear], depends on what kind of a machine thrash. The steamers, you have around 20, and the gas would be around 12.

Q: [00:01:44]

And these were local men, or were they...men from...other places?

A: [00:01:52]

Some were local me and some came from down east, and, in the 30's, there were some came from Brandon, and one year, there's two of them came extra early for they didn't want the Saskatchewan men to...get their jobs.

Q: [00:02:11]

And where did they all sleep?

A: [00:02:13]

Oh, there were...some slept in the house, and there was a bunk, and...and threshing time they had a...caboozes, that they moved in...uncles over, and to our place, and then back to his place.

Q: [00:02:29]

Um, how long did you have the thrashers?

A: [00:02:32]

Um, depends a lot on the weather.

Q: [00:02:36]

They'd be there, even when they weren't threshing?

A: [00:02:39]

Yeah.

Q: [00:02:42]

And what would the menu be, say, for breakfast?

A: [00:02:45]

Porridge, and potatoes, and eggs, and meat. Syrup or jam.

Q: [00:02:54]

And for dinner and supper?

A: [00:02:59]

Oh, meat and potatoes, and [unclear], and biscuits, and pie. And supper time, we would get cake, baked biscuits and [unclear] put in there every day.

Q: [00:03:13]

And, uh, where would you get all this food?

A: [00:03:16]

Well, we had a...usually had a good garden, only in the 30's, and canned vegetables.

Q: [00:03:28]

And you had cows?

A: [00:03:30]

Yes, we had cows, and...had a...milk, and cream, and made butter. And we had hens, so we had lots of eggs. We'd have turkeys, and, uh...we raised pigs, so we had, uh... and had pork to...cure for the

winter and summer. And the fried pork, we'd...hard boil it with milk and water, and Nellie always said she'd like to have some now. And the hams, we'd cure them in brine. And we got beef, from the beef rings. And we'd get a roast, and [unclear] and steak once a week. Sometimes we'd get liver. And then, I think, [unclear] for beef every...once a year.

Q: [00:04:39]

And did you pick wild fruit?

A: [00:04:41]

Yes, we pick saskatoons by the pail full. That helped a lot, [unclear]. And, um...baked three or four pies a day, and usually a big pan of biscuits. Baked our own bread and, all the time that I can remember, we didn't do any baking on Sunday.

Q: [00:05:06]

And how were you able to keep your meat, etc., uh...milk, and, uh... butter, and things, without refrigeration.

A: [00:05:14]

Of course, we had...we always had fresh milk and cream, and the meat was...stored in the... barrels. And then they had...had a nice well, before we got, uh...electricity.

Q: [00:05:35]

You would probably have other work to do besides feeding the men.

A: [00:05:40]

Oh yeah. There was, uh...cows to look after, and calves, and hens, and turkeys. And turkeys. Geese and ducks, sometimes.

Q: [00:05:56]

And what kind of lights did you have at the time?

A: [00:06:00]

Some coal oil lamps most of the time, and later on we had, uh...an Aladdin lamp.

Q: [00:06:07]

And what kind of fuel did you use for cooking?

A: [00:06:11]

Coal and wood.

Q: [00:06:17]

And did you have a water system?

A: [00:06:21]

The pump house in the yard [chuckled]. We'd have to carry the...all the water in, and, for soft water, we have a big tank at the house.

Q: [00:06:30]

You must've had to get up bright and early in those times.

A: [00:06:33]

Around five o'clock.

Q: [00:06:37]

Uh, tell us about the time that you just got rid of the threshers and they came back again.

A: [00:06:45]

Oh, they just got the...they just went away for about a day and a half, and dad came home after dinner, and said they'd be back for supper, and mother said, "What will I do with all my pick up?" and dad said, "Throw it out." and mother would say, "Indeed I won't! I've worked all year for it."

Q: [00:07:06]

And did you dread harvest time, or was there something [unclear] enjoyable?

A: [00:07:12]

Well, it was...nice, when they were able to...work. But, when there's rainy weather, it wasn't so nice. Mother always said that she thought men eat more when there's rainy weather than when they were working.

[Talking stops at 00:07:25]

[Tape ends 00:07:35]