

Westman Oral History Collection

Interview Date: 1983-04-05
Narrator (Interviewee): Mrs. K. Cochrane
Interviewer: Jack and Jessie Blatchford
Location: Rivers, Manitoba
Transcriber: Michyla Turnbull
Date Transcribed: 2020-09-30
Recording Format: Digital mp3
Length of Recording: 00:13:25

TAPE 1 of 6 [00:00:00]

[00:00:04] Question:

[unclear] Bradwardine, I understand that you remember when the first school started in Bradwardine?

[00:00:11] Answer:

Well I don't remember when it started...because I wasn't uh, it was before my...before I started to...I think it was about...1911 when I started school...and that schoolground was all bush then (Interviewer – “Was it?”) Jack – Oh yeah! Sure they... decided before they built the new school that they were going to have it cleaned off and um the ol' Dick Cobbins [?] he was on the store then...he planted the school grounds to potatoes [laughs] so of course we just had a little place there to run around on the outside of the school because the edge of the schoolgrounds was all potatoes... and he gave us two bits a day...to plant them and help him to and we got two bits a day to help him to dig them... which uh was a lot of money then (Interviewer – “that would help quite a bit for spending money”) Jack- yeah and then they... after he he grew the potatoes one year and then they sewed grass

on [unclear] of course it was all broke up you see? There was um Gib Richardson and Bill Collins[?] they broke it with uh you know broke it up and worked it up just like a field and that whole school ground was potatoes...there was a lot of them there...two bits a day to [laughs] (interviewer "Had the school been – [interrupted by Jack) Not an hour, a day! (interviewer, "a day")

(00:02:01) Q:

"Had the school been out at anchor till then er?

(00:02:04) A:

Oh, that's where the old school [unclear] that wasn't the new school [mumbling] it wasn't on there then. ...yup...I don't know what ol' Collin[?] done with the potatoes I'm sure...'cause he would never, he sure wouldn't eat all that pile o' potatoes... (interviewer "well he sold them likely") Jack: Yea [unclear] well he run the store you see and to take 'em out of there (Interviewer: Oh, he'd sell them in the store) J: yup

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[00:02:42] A:

[unclear]Through the afternoon...Bill and Gibb was getting kind of tired and they'd come over to the edge of the school...and get on the rain barrel and get up and peeking in the window n' boy was that teacher ever mad about that whew! [laughs] that was E.K. Gardiner [pause]

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[00:03:11] Q:

I think...

[00:03:12] A:

Yea...

[00:03:14] Q:

What about the trick you played on the one teacher?

[00:03:17] A:

That was an old record...and he sold crow's feet and magpie's feet and eggs, I forget what the mag- I think the magpie's feet was two bit's a piece I don't remember about the crow's but the eggs was a nickel a piece. Well...Monday morning he probably had 200 crow's eggs there in the morning and he didn't know what to do with them so he took them over and put them across the railroad track on the edge of the bush there ya know and we seen him dump 'em there so we went as soon as next time we got a chance we was over there and picked out all the good ones and took them back to him Oh yeah! [laughs] And they never got wise to that we done that for long; feet! Crow's feet he took the same crow's feet and gopher tails...there was some guy's [unclear] wow made a lot of money then y'know for that was big money [laughs]

NEW TAPE 4 of 6 [00:04:23]

[00:04:25] This is an interview with Mrs. Jessie Blatchford of Bradwardine

[00:04:30] A:

And My parents came to Canada at an early age from England and after um residing and homesteading in different locations they finally made their permanent home on Section 8-11-22 in the Tribolton [?] district after my grandparents moved away and this is where I look back to my early [sigh] school days and I recall some of the problems that we had in obtaining our education...and one was commuting back and forth to school particularly during the winter months. The farm home...was about three miles plus from the schoolhouse and the school area was not consolidated so we had to drive the ol' pony and buggy...and the majority of the time we had to walk. Pack and our books on one hand and our lunch pail on the other and our lunch pail at that time was a down pail. During the summer, on the

very hot afternoons when we arrived home, we were very tired but after having several slices of mother's good old homemade bread fresh from the oven we revived and soon...uh got ready to do our chores. But during the winter there was very many storms and the roads was impassable even for the horses, so we had to miss many weeks of school. However, we studied at home and kept up with our class and was able to complete our grade each year. And I think of all the mornings that when we arrived at the schoolhouse how cold it would be, and we'd have to huddle around the old heater...while the classroom warmed up before we were able to go and begin our classes for the day.

NEW TAPE 5 of 6 [00:06:27]

My-my husband and I we were married during the dirty 30's. And during those depression years of the 30's, sickness and health was one of the much-neglected fields, especially in the rural areas, there were no hospital's in small towns, no municipal doctors, or Medicare or care homes and the resident doctors had a large area to cover. Experiencing many hardships in travel, with mostly the dirt roads and during the winter, travelling by horses. My memories are of the maternity field where the mothers remained in their homes for the blessed event and more often than not, the little one would choose to arrive on a real stormy night; usually before the doctor could get through. I recall one time when the mother had intended to go to Brandon Hospital, and at that time the train came from Brandon to Bradwardine, two days each week. The next day was train day and anyway in the early hours of the morning, father had driven to our place with the team and sleigh and asked if I could come back with him at once the baby was on its way. So, I quickly dressed, boarded the sleigh and asked if he'd phoned the doctor. Again, this was following blocked roads and a terrible heavy fog. And the doctor had to get to Bradwardine from Rivers. Anyway, it was just lucky that father was a section foreman on the CPR, so he took the jigger to Weedland,[?] met the doctor there who had travelled there by alivery [?] from Rivers. The team and sleigh then met the jigger at Bradwardine, and the doctor arrived safe and sound,

and likewise the new arrival, a lovely baby. The doctor returned to Rivers by the same mode of travel and of course the next day, father had to travel to Rivers with the jigger to weedland and then on to Br to uh Rivers to get the necessities from the drugstore for mother and the baby. And then I remember another incident following a very early spring break up. I had gone to a home north of Bradwardine to take care of a patient following major surgery which she had had [at home?] and of course at that time it was quite expensive to go to a hospital and that's why they chose to have surgery at home. Anyway, we travelled by the car, by car and the snow was mostly gone, and after we'd-l'd been there only a few days we had a most a real blizzard and an awfull heavy snowfall. The doctor was to call every day or so to see if the patient was doing nicely, and at this time, he drove from Kenton. And each day I was would have to walk across the fields to the neighbours and phone the doctor, and report on the progress of our patient. So following that big storm I had to walk through snow to my waist [paper turning in the background] and phone the doctor and he just said, "well there's no way that I can get there so you'll just have to carry on until we find some mode of getting through." Anyway, after several days, the doctor came part way by car and was pulled through the huge snowbanks by horses and he returned home the same way. And after the patient had made a good recovery it was time for me to return home so I had to come home by horse and cutter we couldn't even come down the main road we had to make a road through the fields. The reasons those times was for surgery and people remaining at home was the cost of the hospitals and then even if you went away you wouldn't have your family doctor. However, the warm hospitality that I received in their homes was um compensation for the many worried hours I put in. Always thankful that everything turned out well and it was a real experience! [emotional?]

[00:11:10] Q:

Had you had any nurses training before this?

[00:11:12] A:

Well I took um training at the uh Mental Hospital in Brandon. And uh I didn't uh go on to get my RN I decided that uh I'd get married instead (it just hadn't been a practical experience) so I'd had lots of practicum experience.

NEW TAPE 6 of 6 [00:11:35]

[Jessie in the background, "Oh, you're going?"]

[00:11:43] A:

During the early years roads and travel was a real hardship and I recall my eldest sister telling me that before the railway came through to Bradwardine the supplies for the stores were hauled from Griswold with horses. And during one trip when the road was just...nothing but mud and that was the road straight south of Bradwardine here that goes down through to over the Oak River and down to Halls Bridge. Anyway the drag wagon had been loaded too heavily and when they arrived at the big hill which is now at Gordon Hadden's [?] the wagon was bogged down in the mud and the horses couldn't pull it through. So the driver became quite angry and was ready to beat up on the horses. And by this time my dad had arrived on the scene and of course he was really a lover of horses so he just [inhales] said "Well I'll go and bring my own team of horses and you go to the house and get a good um drink of hot tea and some food and just leave me to take over." So anyway my dad unloaded part of the load onto another drag wagon of his own and by the time the driver came back after having some refreshments at the house the two of them went on to Bradwardine with the two teams of horses and they didn't have any more difficulties. [pause]

End of interview. [00:13:16]