

Beverly Branton interviewing Mrs. Carver, on April 21st, 1985.

The interview is being held at 3801 Farr Ave., which is Ridgewood Manor, in Ridgeway, Ontario.

B.B.: Hello, Mrs. Carver.

R.C.: Hello.

B.B.: Could you tell me the date of your birth, please?

R.C.: 1903, April 9th.

B.B.: And where was the place of your birth?

R.C.: Cleveland, Ohio.

B.B.: How did you come to this area?

R.C.: Well, my mother came over, come across the border in December of ...I was three years old, I was three in April, and this was December...

B.B.: 1906?

R.C.: Yes, that would be...and we went to Toronto and then out to Richmond Hill. My grandfather had a farm out there and we stayed there for the winter . And then my mother came back into this locality again where she had all her relatives. Grandfather Climenhage was born just east of Stevensville a little ways and he married a lady from over Gormley way and they went on a farm over there after he was married to her, it was my mother's stepmother.

B.B.: So you moved onto a farm?

R.C.: Yes, grandfather had a farm but we didn't. We came back over here, my mother's uncle, Daniel Climenhage rented a place for her. My dad was in the States and ...

B.B.: Could you describe the farm to me...do you remember what it looked like...?

R.C.: In Gormley, it was a big farm, I think probably a hundred acres. And he did mixed farming, he had cows and of course some horses. He did all his farming with the horses. And then they retired, that fall after, no that's not right...my brother Alfred was born, 1912 after my father died. My father died, was killed on the railroad, in March 1912, and my brother, my youngest brother, was born in July of 1912. And then in 1913, my grandfather sold his farm and moved into Gormley, retired.

B.B.: Where is Gormley?

R.C.: Oh, it's right on number 40, 48 on Don Mills Rd., that runs north out of Toronto. It's out of Toronto, 26, 27 miles, I think.

B.B.: How did you come to this area?

R.C.: Well, because my mother's relatives were over here. My mother's brother was over here and she had a sister that was over here and her uncles were all over here. There was Uncle Peter Climenhage who lived just east of Stevensville on a farm and Uncle Daniel Climenhage that lived east of Stevensville over by the Michigan Central it was then, Michigan Central Railroad. And most of my mother's relatives were over here so that's why she came back over here to stay here. And when my dad came back well they moved into the place that the golf links have got it now. It was Albee Winger's farm but I don't know the golf links, east of Stevensville there. They've taken up a lot of farms...Josiah Winger's farm and Albee Winger's farm, there's different ones, I just can't remember them all, but the golf links has taken them all up. And the place that we lived that's included. And then in 1910 we moved up to Stevensville, in town, where Spike Lake lived.

B.B.: Was that right in the village of Stevensville?

R.C.: Yes, right next door to the library there.

B.B.: What was your home like? Can you describe how it was lighted, how it was heated?

R.C.: Oh, coal oil lamps. Heated with a woodstove. At night it would get mighty cold when the woodstove went out.

B.B.: What was the population of Stevensville, approximately?

R.C.: Oh, I don't know but it was only east and west main streets that ran through. The only other street there was, was where the schools are, the old school, not where it is now, on Airline. On Airline is where there were a couple of houses on but outside of that...Where Sam House's house, it, that was a side street but I, when we moved there and after we got acquainted, I, we knew everyone that lived in Stevensville but it's grown so much that I've lost track of most of the people now.

B.B.: Why do you think it's grown so much?

R.C.: Well, during the war times, the 2nd World War, when the Fleet was running, there was so many people came in, and it's cheaper to live in Stevensville then it was in Fort Erie, and besides the housing in Fort Erie, they did put up a lot of war time houses down there, but there were a lot of people came up to Stevensville and settled down there. There's some of them still there. It made the town grow. Of course now they have the color plant there, and they have iron

foundry of some sort and the unit rig is down there. That is right down by Uncle Daniel Climenhage...that was Jim Baker's farm where they are on.

B.B.: Before these factories were in Stevensville what type of employment did the people have?

R.C.: There wasn't any right in Stevensville, outside of Llyod Wales...he's a plumber. His father before him, Levi Wale had a tinsmith tify called it. He was a tinsmith and he had a store. That store is still standing on east Main Street, just east of the corner store there.

B.B.: What is a tinsmith?

R.C.: Well, they, I think they did, dealt in tin a lot more then, they didn't have the aluminum like they have now. People had tin pails, you had tin dishes that you cooked in, your kettles, things that you cooked in. If they weren't iron, they were tin mostly and they'd get holes in them and I think he was kept busy between eavestroughing, he dealt in that, and mending almost kept him busy, because he'd do the saudering, he'd sauder the holes shut. Milk pails, oh, numerous things, they were tin and they weren't as substantial as the stainless steele and the aluminum that they have now. Then a little later they got granite but granite you would knock off, you would chip off, and you'd get holes in your kettles and things, and life was a lot different than it is now.

B.B.: Explain more how life was different as you reflect back.

R.C.: Well, I think children were more contented in those days. We didn't have toys like children have now.

B.B.: What type of toys did you have?

R.C.: Well, we girls had rag dolls.

B.B.: Could you describe a rag doll?

R.C.: Well, it's something like these raggedy-annes only they were printed. I don't know if any were embroidered. Some of these raggedy-annes that you make at home, the features are all embroidered. I have one. But those that we had, you know those that you buy in the stores that are printed, you buy animals such as duck that are printed and that's how our rag dolls were. Some of them were a good size almost as big as a small child. I had some of my dresses from when I was a couple years oldthat I played with on my dolls.

B.B.: What other social activities like that did you do,...in the Stevensville area?

R.C.: Well, I was pretty small when we lived there. I don't remember there was any other social activities . We went to church on Sunday and prayer meeting night but we kids were mostly contented to play at home or if

we had other kids to play with of course. I don't remember any other activities that went on for children, not like they have now, nothing like it is now!

B.B.: Did you move somewhere else?

R.C.: Oh, yes we moved out to the Bowen Road, the Willick's live in that spot; it's a different house because we had lived in burned down later. That's where we lived in 1912 when my father was killed. He was a cook by trade so he was all over the place and he was cooking for the bridge gang on the railroad.

B.B.: The bridge gang...?

R.C.: They mended bridges. Now they don't go and mend bridges. The bridges were all made of wood before, outside the rails. They drove in great big posts, like pileing they called it, like great big telephone poles, that they drove down in the ground and this was the braces they had to put the bridge on.

B.B.: Was that done in this area, also?

R.C.: Yes there's a bridge down, you know where Sider Road is, up Bowen Road the Sider Road, well it's down below there and then there's one up by, we always called it by Ben Deans, that's Winger Road.

B.B.: Why did you call it Ben Deans?

R.C.: Well, Ben Dean lived on the corner and he had a saw mill. That was one activity, he had a saw mill, way back, well we lived in town in 1910. And there was another bridge, I guess right above, no right there by our place, where I lived; just west of Stevensville there was another bridge; and there was another one up above the church, the Brethern in Christ Church, up by Burger Road. And then my father's cars, boarding cars had moved from Stevensville up to Dain City and dad had ordered some things from Bon's, LYN Bon's father was a baker and he had a bakeshop there on the corner where LYN Bon lived. Later on then it was the Post Office, that was LYN Bon and his wife had the post office. And Pat Robinson, he owned the store, down on the corner where the restaurant is now and one or the other hadn't sent the order to him. And he came down at night on the little one man hand car to look after it. And my mother wasn't home she was down at her brothers, at Emerson Climenhages and so he had to go back that night. And it was terribly foggy and he didn't see the light of the train, it was a passenger train, he had been warned but he had 40 minutes and he thought he could make it ~~from~~ Dain City by that

time but it was foggy and it was March and the rails were slippery with frosty, and he didn't make it. He only made it about two miles west of where the church is, Brethren in Christ Church, when the train hit him, so...

B.B.: It was just after that you moved to Bowen Road?

R.C.: We lived on Bowen Road then. Then my mother's health broke down, the next spring, after my youngest brother was born and so some of her uncles took some of the family. Sally Climenhage's had my other sister and my sister and Uncle Sim Siders, had her twin brother Emerson and my brother John that lives here now was at Uncle Peter Climenhages and she took me with her to Markham she went over to grandfathers in Markham, and took me over there, and she had an Aunt Katie Laymen, that I had never saw before and she was deaf, and I went to her place, and I got so homesick I thought I was going to die. That was a bad summer for me.

B.B.: When did you move back?

R.C.: We came back in the fall, time for school, again and my mother's uncle rented the house where I lived in, where I came from, just west of Stevensville.

B.B.: Where did you go to school?

R.C.: Oh, I went numerous places because I went and stayed with different people and worked. And my brother John, was went to a cousin of my mother's on a farm, he was at Warren Wingers for quite a few years. And I worked. I washed baby diapers and washed dishes and went to school. So that way I was around different schools. I started school down at Number 7 and then of course we moved upto Stevensville and I went to Stevensville school and I went to Number 8 school in Bertie and I went down along the boulevard, I don't know what number that was, I forget but it was down along the boulevard. I worked for Charlie Wales when they had a small baby and then they had another small child, she was maybe two or so.

B.B.: Why were the schools called by numbers?

R.C.: Well they were all in Bertie Township. You see we don't have the townships now. Now we have regional schools, regional...it's all Fort Erie, regional. But then it, we went in the township schools, Bertie and Wainfleet, Crowland and Willoughby and then...those are all the eastern ...Humberston. I didn't get that far though. I didn't get up that far though. I went to these eastern schools more.

B.B.: What do you remember of your school days?

R.C.: Well, they were all one room schools, all but the Stevensville school. Stevensville had two floors. The junior grades were down below and the upper grades upstairs but they went by classes then - primer class, then junior 1st and senior 1st and all the way up to junior 4 and senior 4. Then they tried entrance. I never got that far. I got as far as Junior 4th. But I wasn't a good student to start with and then moving from school to school.

B.B.: How would you get to school?

R.C.: Walk.

B.B.: Was it a distance?

R.C.: Sometimes it was. Well when we went to Stevensville school we walked from Bowen Road in. I suppose that's maybe a mile or a mile and a quarter or something. And when we went up to Number 8 we had a mile or so. We never had, I don't think we ever had any more than a mile and a half or so to go to school at any place.

B.B.: What were the roads like?

R.C.: Snow up to your...up to your hips just about sometimes. The north and south roads always drifted in badly. And we didn't have snowsuits and overshoes. We had whole knit stockings; they'd get packed all in with snow; of course they were wool, they'd absorb the moisture. When we got to school you'd brush it off as the best you could and the wool would absorb the moisture, more or less, you wouldn't sit with wet legs like you would with cotton stockings. And heavier shoes, we wore the heavier shoes then what anyone wears now, outside of the men's workshoe. They were more on that order, not quite as big but they were heavier shoes. And they kept them greased so that they would shed the water.

B.B.: What did you grease them with?

R.C.: Well, just depended. Some people I guess, could afford to buy something from the store that, they had a lot of harness grease and things that the men treated their harness with, to keep the moisture off and keep it from rotting and falling apart. The harness was made of leather but oh, the shoes were all leather then too. They were real leather, they weren't artificial like it is now.

B.B.: Where would you buy your shoes?

R.C.: Well, Pat Robinson had shoes there. He had a general store, now it's pretty well partitioned off, I guess. The restaurant in one part and there's a hair dresser in the south part. But he had the south part

with dry goods and shoes and you could buy almost anything there. And then 'round to the part that the door that faces west, that was the grocery store.

B.B.: What could you buy in the grocery store in comparison to what you can buy in them today?

R.C.: Well, not any greens. Not any produce like you buy now. Everything was canned...oh, they use to buy things in big barrels then, you bought in bulk. Sugar was in bulk, brown sugar was in bulk, soap flakes came in bulk later on.

B.B.: Soap flakes...what...?

R.C.: Well, like our dried soap now, it's crumbled now, it's more in a powdered nowbut then it was in flakes.

B.B.: You mean to wash clothing with?

R.C.: Yes. And soda bisquits came in big barrels, cheese was in great big...I don't know how much they would have weighed...great big blocks and they had a big, look like almost a meat cleaver, the big knife that it was cut with. You'd fasten it on its side so you, you could lever it to cut big chunks of cheese. Oh, stores were a lot different then they are now! You didn't go around and help yourselves like you do at the self-serves now. A clerk waited on you.

B.B.: A clerk would take you to the food?

R.C.: Well they'd get it. They had to cut the cheese, they had to...and as far as meat, I don't remember any meat. You had to go to a butcher shop to get meat.

B.B.: Where was the butcher shop located?

R.C.: I don't remember that we had a butcher shop in town then. There' butchers outside of town. Charlie Burger was a butcher and had a butcher route, a meat route that he went twice a week in the summer time . And then, after he quit Hart Fretz was a butcher for years.

B.B.: The meat route...how would he deliver his meat?

R.C.: Well, he had a route all the way from Stevensville to Fort Erie. He pedalled in Fort Erie. And Alvin Lapp, later on, later years with a truck but these men had horses.

B.B.: How would he carry the meat?

R.C.: Well, they had a big covered wagon and it had sort of racks on the sides where he kept his tools, his knives, his cleavers and meat saw, and paper to wrap it in. They didn't really wrap it they just give you paper to carry it in the house in. And he cut the meat, cut

what you wanted.

B.B.: Would he go house to house or would he just...?

R.C.: Yes, usually when he came down through he'd stop, Charlie Burger had a whistle and he'd stop and blow his whistle. Oh, and Rub Noyes did too, he went on the meat route too, for quite a long time. My brother John did too, he pedalled meat to Fort Erie and on down through Cresent Park and all down through there for quite a few years until he had his own meat market in town, in this town.

B.B.: Do you remember the Cresent Park area...what it looked like?

R.C.: There was only a few houses along the lake I think, in Cresent Park area years ago and Erie Beach, you see they had a beach with a lot of rides and things there, Erie Beach.

B.B.: Do you recall that?

R.C.: Not very much. I very seldom got to anything like that. We didn't have any convenience to get anywhere. We never owned a car, we never owned a ...that's my parents I'm talking about not...after I was married, my husband had a car when we got married. He had a Model T, Ford. I learned how to drive on a Model T. Ford.

B.B.: What was that like? Describe that?

R.C.: Well, you operated it with your feet. It was almost like a gear shift car now only you didn't have any gear shift, you had a hand lever for brake but you also had a foot pedal for brake too but you operated the reverse and the go ahead with one pedal, the clutch pedal.

B.B.: Did it take you a long time to learn how to drive it...was it difficult?

R.C.: No, no.

B.B.: What was your husbands occupation?

R.C.: He worked on the railroad. He was a railroad man for 40 years, section labourer.

B.B.: What is that?

R.C.: Well they packed the ties all by hand, and they put in new ties by hand, and they put in, they didn't have any derrick to lift it, nothing. Two men took a hold of them with tongs and they had to use a , I can't even remember what it was, to pick the stones up in between to get it clear so they could slide a tie underneath the rails. Where they'd have to have new ties they'd have to put them in by hand.

B.B.: What railroad did he work for?

R.C.: He worked for New York Central. He worked for, it was Michigan Central first and then I don't know, they went bankrupt or something and New York Central took it over.

B.B.: What route did they have?

R.C.: Well it runs from Fort Erie on, all the way to Windsor but of course he had, first long they had a section, a section house up by House Road and he went back up there to go to work. And there section ran east a ways and then west but later they lengthened the sections out and went all the way to Fort Erie and he had to drive to Fort Erie to go to work. But now they do everything by machines. They pull the spikes out of the ties, you know that hold the rails, they'd pull them up and they'd take the ties all up from underneath all by machine....[*someone at door]...excuse me...groups now and they'd boarding cars there in Stevensville on the siding and they'd come through in big groups, the men, and just work in big groups, and the machinery they have now is amazing, and the men did that all by hand when my husband worked on the railroad.

B.B.: Do you remember approximately what year the machinery came in?

R.C.: That came in, pretty well, most of it, of course they had some. They had the air packer, arid compresion to pack ties with but I don't think he ever used that. It was only the extra gangs that had things like that then. But he got off the railroad, retired in '61 and it was after that that they, well they still come in big gangs both they don't have section men, in sections anymore like they use to. Because they don't do it by hand anymore. They do it by all, these big gangs, they do it all over, and they just come through in spasms. But there's an inspector that goes over the railroad every day or so, they have a motorcar.

B.B.: Did the depression affect the work of the railroad ?

R.C.: Oh, it sure did!

B.B.: In what way?

R.C.: My husband, well they only worked three days a week. I don't know if they split the gang up, I don't remember that, if they split the gang up and three men worked three days and the others worked three days, I don't know if they did it that way or not, or if they only worked the three days. But he only worked three days a week for a whole year and we had a big lot. And we raised our own vegetables

and things and I canned everything, everything that was cannable. And we had our own pigs, we had a cow and my husband kept the calf 'till fall and butchered the calf, the cow would have a calf in the spring and then in the fall he'd butcher the calf and we had some chickens and we had some ducks, couple of years there when the depression was so bad and we lived pretty well. I made my own butter.

B.B.: How did you make your butter?

R.C.: Well, I had a churn. An old dash-churns. And I'd bake my own bread mostly during the depression and we had two children during the depression. And those two children, wasn't able to pay the doctor until after the depression was over.

B.B.: Did you have your children at home?

R.C.: Yes. I had them all at home except the youngest one. I couldn't get a nurse to come to the house anymore so..a practical nurse.

B.B.: Why?

R.C.: Well, the lady I had that came for most of the other children, her mother had cancer and she was sick and she couldn't come. She had to nurse her mother but...

B.B.: What is a practical nurse?

R.C.: Well, she's not a trained nurse, she's just a practical nurse. She got her training through practice and not schooling. And I went to Mrs. Pages there in town she a sort of nursing home then. She took quite a few maternity cases at that time.

B.B.: Oh, describe that home. Where was it located?

R.C.: Right there in Stevensville, the Edgar Page house. Do you know where the United Church is there in Stevensville...oh just second house I guess from south of the church of the United Church. And she had a big room, I think they might have taken a partition out. She had four beds in there.

B.B.: You'd go there as soon as you went into labour...and she was...?

R.C.: U-hum, I had my youngest child there and then I was there for ten days, you stayed in bed for ten days in those days. So I was in bed for ten days and then I went home.

B.B.: Did the doctor come there?

R.C.: Oh, yes. Doctor ~~Buell~~ was sick that time so he couldn't deliver. He delivered all the rest of my children, my twins too. My twins were born at home. One weighed 8 and a half and the other 6 pounds. They are now 53 years old.

B.B.: Did it cost to go to a home, to have your children?

R.C.: Well, a little bit more than I had at home. I don't think they paid anymore than \$15 for a single delivery at home. Then of course we'd have the practical nurse for ten days but she only charged a dollar a day.

B.B.: What was her job?

R.C.: Well everything, not just nursing. She kept house. She had everything to do, same as the mother was up and going.

B.B.: She would be there twenty-four hours a day?

R.C.: Oh, yeah. Of course, I don't think I ever got the nurse up. I usually looked after my own babies at night. Oh, I suppose if they cried too much but I don't remember any of them crying much in the night. I'd always have them in the bed with me and I'd nurse them and looked after my own.

B.B.: We'd been talking about the Depression a little earlier. If a Depression ever did come again how do you see people being able to survive?

R.C.: That, I just can't even foresee. I, there's too many of the young people that wouldn't have a clue to going about doing things. For instance, Carol, my daughter Carol was there in '77 when that bad blizzard was. My water was all froze up. So I melted snow. I melted snow because, then I had a bathroom for years I didn't have a bathroom, we had the outside toilet. And it was after Dave was gone the boys built, put a piece on and I had a bathroom. Well the first winter I had it, it froze up, everything froze up and so I got a little snow to flush the toilet and for, not for drinking or anything like that, but had to carry the water for that. But anyway my daughter was down from Toronto and she had her friend with her, but her friend was a city boy, and she said if anything happened, she said he wouldn't have a clue what to do and then she called him by name and said, "Would ya", and he said, "No, he wouldn't even think of melting snow." And this is just a for instance. I mean there's an awful lot that would never even think of doing something like that. They never had to. We've had an area of, of a lots of money and kids never wanted for anything from there on and oh, well they didn't see any reason for economizing or making things do, or patching clothes or canning fruit or any of the rest of it. We did all our canning. I canned about 75, 80 quarts of tomatoes in the summertime. I had a family of nine children and people gave me clothes. I made everything from moccasins for the little folks on the floor to, I took my husbands

wool underwear, it use to be a ribbed underwear...course sort of... they don't wear things like that now either, but then they did, he was an outside man, he worked in all types of weather and I dyed them. The first winter when my twin boy was on the floor, the one that could walk, I dyed them, I dyed ibe suit blue and the other one red, and I made him short pants and a like a T-shirt, a jersey, and I embroidered a blanket stitch around the collar and that's whata he wore the first winter to keep him warm while he was on the floor.

B.B.: How did you dye it?

R.C.: Well, we bought dye that you boiled, not Rit it was the other, I can't think of the name of it...when I want to think of things I can't...my mind sits down on me.

B.B.: You made moccasins. How?

R.C.: Somebody gave my husband a sheep-lined vest, the wool, sheep wool. So I took that apart, he didn't wear it, so I took that apart and made moccasins out of it. The first pair I made the child couldn't get his foot in it, the sheeps wool was too thick, so I took it apart again and took the wool, just left some on it, sewed them together again, fit fine.

B.B.: Did you sew them by hand?

R.C.: U-uhm. I made coats and hats and...I made about everything there was to be made.

B.B.: Did you sew them all by hand?

R.C.: No, I had a sewing machine, a peddle machine, I didn't have one electric. We didn't have electric then, we had gas. Gas lights and the trains would shake our mantles off when the trains, we lived right by the railroad, and the trains would shake our mantles off, we would buy a new mantle and have beautiful lights and in a day or so they'd drop off the side and hang there again, a light would be so poor.

B.B.: What is a mantle?

R.C.: That was what we'd have to put on, on the gas, oh, it look like knit, I don't know what it was made of, something that didn't burn up. But the shaking of the train would, it would break off there at the top, it would hang.

B.B.: What about the...you went through two World Wars...?

R.C.: I was just young yet, the 1st World War. I don't remember things getting as bad, things weren't rationed 1st World War like it was the 2nd World War. Things weren't quite as bad as it was the second time.

B.B.: How were they bad in the 2nd World War?

R.C.: Well, things were rationed, butter was rationed, sugar was rationed, gas was rationed.

B.B.: How much was it rationed?

R.C.: Well, you had to have tickets, you had books of tickets and you were just allowed so much each week, you couldn't go and get what you wanted, you were just allowed so much. I didn't have any trouble with the butter because we had our own cow, and she was only seasonal, you know she'd go dry, so I just didn't. Of course, I'd save my ration tickets from when I had butter until when she was dry and I didn't have butter so that they I could manage.

B.B.: Could you describe the process of making the butter?

R.C.: Well, we had separator, which separated the cream from the milk. You turned the handle, we had that to wash everyday too, the separator, and then you let your cream sour, you don't leave it long enough to get ransid you just leave it long enough to sour and then we'd put in in the churn, this dash-churn, you'd have to...when the cow was first fresh the butter would come quickly, it didn't take much, but when she got old milking, just before she'd go dry and have another calf you could hardly get the butter to come. You'd churn and churn for maybe an hour and a half before you'd get it. It got to be pretty monotonize. But it was good butter. We had a jersey cow and it was really good butter! And of course we had the buttermilk. Some of the children liked the buttermilk to drink and some of our neighbours liked the butter milk to drink, too. What we didn't drink or use up we gave to the pigs, the milk, the separated milk we gave to the pigs. Always kept fresh milk out for the children, I never gave them the separated milk. Now they buy skim milk. It's not even as good as that milk was, that was just separated but now they add water to it. That's awful stuff that skim milk! If I hadn't had my own one day I guess I wouldn't know the difference. People don't know the difference. What they don't know don't hurt them.

B.B.: We don't know what we are missing.

R.C.: But when you had your own it kind of spoils you.

B.B.: What about refrigeration...?

R.C.: Oh, I didn't have any refig...not even an ice box when I had my children. I had to boil formula twice a day. I had to raise them the hard way.

B.B.: How did you keep your meat?

R.C.: Oh, we didn't buy meat. Our pigs, you see we'd butcher pigs in the fall Oh, it wouldn't be in the fall, sometimes he butchered on New Years

Day. It depended on the weather. If the weather set in, was really cold why we butchered earlier but if we had warmer weather, because we didn't have any refrigeration...but he salted all his meat down, put it in the barrel with salt. Salt brine, so it would hold an egg.

B.B.: What do you mean?

R.C.: Well, you put an egg in and if it came up to the top and showed, you know it wouldn't sink, it would float on top and show the egg about the size of that, that was strong enough and he'd have his meat packed in a barrel and he'd pour that brine on it, fill the barrel up with brine.

B.B.: How long would that keep the meat?

R.C.: About six weeks he would leave it in and then he would take it out and we would smoke it. He'd take it out and hang it for about a week and then it would be dry, good and dry and then we'd smoke it. We had a smoke house and that was usually my job.

B.B.: Describe your job and the smoke house?

R.C.: Well the smoke house looked almost like the toilet, it wasn't much bigger, a bit, not as tall and wider. And it had a bar across, sometimes two bars depends on how much meat you had. And we had meat hooks, steel meat hooks that we hung it up with and then I usually used an old tub, a big tub and I didn't let it burn, the wood burn you had to keep sawdust or shavings or something on it that would smoulder. Or you usually had a bag of sawdust and if did burn up through I'd have the sawdust on and that would sort of smother it your know. You'd have the fire underneath so you'd put something on top so it wouldn't blaze but it would smoke. The more smoke you could make the better it was. I forget how many days we would smoke, five or six days I guess.

B.B.: What did that do to the meat?

R.C.: That saves it. And I had bags, feed bags that I bought, not the big course ones but cotton ones and put the bags over it and tied it shut so the flies wouldn't get at it after it smoked and hang it in the cellar.

B.B.: How did you do your washing?

R.C.: Well, when I had four girls I washed by hand, washboard. And then when I had, just before I had the twins, I got a washing machine, a hand washing machine that I...you washed more clothes with the strength you used you know, that took a lot of strength. Sometimes I thought I would rather do it by hand but then you'd get along faster and then I had the hand wringer too so I could wring them out. I didn't have to wring them by hand. And when did I get my gasoline one...I guess I got the gasoline one in between the twins and when Kim came. When I had the twins

I had six children and when I had Ken and I had Ken and John during the Depression. They were just sixteen months apart. And then I got the machine with the gasoline holder, it was like a electric machine except it had gasoline holder underneath, it was fastened to the frame underneath and I had a foot crank to crank it, you had to crank it like a Model A Ford or the Model T's rather. Well we cranked our Model T or Model A Ford too, the first one we had. We had to crank that. And it use to backfire and I was sure I had to get my foot over the bumper so that I could reach it to crank it, 'cause I was too short to pull it up if I didn't get close by and yet it would backfire and I'd have to get away in a hurry or I'd get my leg broke. Quite a few people got wrists broke and then their leg broken, you know get wacked with that...oh, it'd come back with an awful force when it backfired if you didn't get your cranked pulled out far enough. And then the second Model A that they got, it was a self starter. That I appreciated very much, that and the washing machine. And then when we got the electric in I sure was happy over that! No more having to crank that over.

B.B.: Were there many people who had cars?

R.C.: Yes, by that time there were.

B.B.: Where did...did they run by gas?

R.C.: Yes, they ran by gas but they had carbide lights, the first ones. Never any that Dave had. They were before that yet.

B.B.: What are carbide lights?

R.C.: Oh, I can't tell ya, I can't explain it. Carbide is something, I think they use in batteries if I'm not mistaken, I might be wrong but I think that's what the carbide is.

B.B.: Where would you get your gas?

R.C.: Well, there were gas stations where you'd get your gas. Not numerous like they are now.

B.B.: Where were they located in Stevensville?

R.C.: Right there by the railroad, right there by the creek there where Keith Winger is now. I think that was the first and only one, that was around for years.

B.B.: Where they in pumps like we see now?

R.C.: Not the automatic ones like they are now. Stevensville didn't have any electric either, it was years before, but I can't tell you what year they got electric in Stevensville.

B.B.: Why were they so late in getting electric?

R.C.: Well, they would have had to bring the electric up from the Falls.

They had to put all those poles in and string all that wire. Ridgeway was on Niagara, Canadian Niagara, and I don't know which way that came, I don't know if it came on up Stevensville...we had hydro in Stevensville at that time. Their on Canadian Niagara, too, now.

B.B.: Do you remember what year the hydro came in?

R.C.: No, I don't remember the year that it came to Stevensville. Of course we didn't get it up there wahere we until my John was two years old, he was born in 1936 so it was 1938 when we got it, up through the country there where we were. There were quite a few that run through the different places in the country that were getting it but you had to get so many subscribers before you'd get it, so many that would take electric before they'd bring it up. Sure was a happy day when it came! I think I appreciated the electric more than anything.

B.B.: The township was Bertie Township, do you remember anything of where that was located, where they had council meetings or anything in that way.

R.C.: I think they had council meetings mostly in Fort Erie if I'm not mistaken. They could have had some here in Ridgeway but I think, I think Fort Erie was the, where the council meetings were. Fort Erie was in Bertie Township, all this area. The townline which now is Netherby Road that was between...and Bertie, that was the town...and then up farther it was between Humberstone, no Humberston run the other way, it was between Crowland and Bertie. And then of course Humberston was divided, I can't tell you where that road is, I can't explain it to you if you don't know the area, I can't very well explain it to you. But Bertie was a big township, 'cause it took in the three big corner here. And Wainfleet was a big township. Willouby, some of them weren't quite so big.

B.B.: Did you notice a change when it switched from the township.

R.C.: Not personally, no. I, maybe the businessmen or some of the others might have noticed but I didn't. Personally I didn't notice the difference. Only I didn't want them to change Stevensville and name it Fort Erie. Now they have Stevensville, and Fort Erie on the signs. They wanted to make it all Fort Erie 'cause they call it Greater Fort Erie, you see, and they wanted to change it, they wanted to abolish all these names, Ridgeway, Stevensville but the businessmen wouldn't hold still for that and I'm happy they didn't. I said as long as Llyod Wale lives I don't think they'll change it. So, I don't know if there's anything else...Fort Erie

was, or Bridgeburg was a railroad town, that was the most of the, there was no Fleet and a lot of those businesses weren't there then. And there was a big round house there in Fort Erie just off of Phipp Street, where you go in on Phipp was the west end there.

B.B.: A round house...?

R.C.: Where they mended the engines, where they were repaired and they had a turn table, they put the engine, drive the engine on there and turn it around so it'd go back the other way. I think that was run by hand, the first long before they got electric. When my aunt lived in Fort Erie I don't think they had electric yet and that was oh way back quite awhile ago...I can't remember what year that would be, I was a small girl yet, anyway. That left a big hole there. I think, which factory is built there where the long house was...the one there on Phipp Street, the west end of Phipp...I can't remember what it is? Do you live in Fort Erie? Do you? Well you should know what plant it is on the west end of Phipp Street.

B.B.: I know the plant you are speaking of but my...

R.C.: I can't remember what the name of it is. Over on Jarvis is the pharmaceutical my son works there, one of my sons Ken. But oh, Fort Erie has grown immensely since those days back there! We use to drive to Fort Erie the road came down and it 'cross , came cattleyways across the railroads and it was the Bowen Road that's where the old Bowen Road, that street is, Bowen, that ran straight up through and ...

B.B.: Straight up through where...?

R.C.: Up where the golf links is now. It went straight up through there. And do you know where Pettit Road is, up the Bowen Road and over when you're going down, over to the right, or to the left, there was a school house. I guess it's gone there now...and that's where the Bowen Road went down past that school house and cut straight down through and met an Bowen Street, they call it Bowen Road don't they, they call it the Old Bowen Road, ya. It joined on to that. And I was scared to death to go over the railroad there because it was on a slant and there were two railroads there right together, Canadian National that was the Grand Trunk ^{then} and the Michigan Central and there was lots of trains in them days! Didn't have any buses, didn't have any trucks, you know these big transport trucks, wasn't any of them on the roads.

B.B.: Do you remember the opening of the Peace Bridge?

R.C.: Oh, yes! I was married then and my husband bought his grandfather's

house and that was the one we moved into in 1913, when we came back, you know when I said my mother was in Markam, we moved into that house and then we were there for a year or so and then we moved to another place and ended up by the church where the parsonage is now. We lived up there for eight years. That was the longest we lived in any place. Any way, what was I saying...?

B.B.: About the Peace Bridge?

R.C.: Oh, yes I think that was in 1924 it was opened wasn't it?

B.B.: '27 I believe.

R.C.: '27? I thought it was when my old or second child was just a baby. I might be wrong on that but I thought that's when it was, when the Prince of Wales came over, he cut the ribbon.

B.B.: Were you there?

R.C.: No. I wanted to go so bad, I just couldn't stand it to think I couldn't go. My husband wasn't as enthusiastic about it as I was. Said you wouldn't get anywhere near it, you wouldn't see it anyway.

B.B.: Do you remember your first time driving over the bridge once it opened?

R.C.: No I don't remember that but it was years before I got a chance to go across on the Peace Bridge. I don't know if I'd been over on the car before 1945 when I took treatment over in Buffalo for cancer, I had a cancer operation and took treatment in Buffalo. And I'd drive to Fort Erie myself, that's why I didn't go to Hamilton. We had the Model A Ford at that time and I just thought it was too big of an undertaking to drive to Hamilton myself and Dave would have to take a day off, and we could hardly afford that so I drove to Fort Erie and go across on the bus. And take a street car to General Hospital.

B.B.: What type of treatment?

R.C.: They called it X-ray treatment.

B.B.: Can you see between the village of Stevensville, and Bridgeburg, Fort Erie was there a big difference between them as you compare the way life may be in the village...?

R.C.: Yes, they had facilities that Stevensville didn't have, for years. I don't know. Aunt Esther had a bathroom. They became a electric. 'Cause Aunt Esther had a bathroom. Those old bathrooms were something too they were so different from what they have now.

B.B.: Describe them.

R.C.: Well the tank that you have behind your toilet hung up on the wall up here. I think you might find some of them in Toronto yet if you get into some of them old, old places. Because when Evelyn lived on Church

Street they had that sort of a bathroom there, they were something. Aunt Esther may have had electric I'm not sure about that. She did have a bathroom so they must have had electric and I don't know they may have had septic tanks, I can't tell you that. But they had water, they had water to flush so they must have had electric. Anyway they were clumsy looking things but it was better than going outside. In the winter time it'd get so cold you'd forget what you went for. And then the electric lights, when I first went to Aunt Esther's in 1918 to work in Welland they only just had a pull cord light they didn't have things the way it is now. They just had you switched it on you know and the bulb, the bulbs were nothing like they are now, they were so you could see the wires inside of them and they were well they weren't big bulbs like they are, they didn't have the watts that they have now. So they couldn't have had the power or something, I really don't know, about that. But I remember ^{that} old light she had there in the kitchen in Welland and they just had the pull cords in the bedrooms and everything too. And that's all, well we didn't have any in the kitchen but we had in the bedrooms upstairs, we just had the lights in the ceiling, to turn them on separately. We didn't have any outlets. When we got the electric I was satisfied to have that much. I didn't insist on a lot of outlets. I had one in the kitchen and for the washing machine and that was it.

B.B.: What about the telephone...when did that come to Stevensville?

R.C.: They had telephones, they had telephones back in 1912. I remember Emerson phoned over to my grandfather to say my father was gone. They had telephones back in 1907 when my twin brother and sister were born. 'Cause granddad sent my mother over here on the train and she called from Stevensville to her brother to come and get her so we had phones then, so I don't know, I don't remember when they got the phones.

B.B.: Did you have a phone in your home?

R.C.: No. We didn't have a phone in our home until we moved up across the road from the church there, which is the parsonage now. They thought we were so far from the town, so far from the doctor and everything that they put the phone in. That was mother's relatives that did that too.

B.B.: Where was the phone located before you had one in your home that you would go use?

R.C.: There was many close by up there.

B.B.: When they contacted you about your dad what phone did they use then?

R.C.: Well it was called Welland County, it was Welland County System; it wasn't Bell. It was years later that Bell bought out Welland County.

B.B.: Where was the office located in Stevensville?

R.C.: Well, the central office was ... I don't know where it was before Uncle Andrew Saylor had it. My mothers aunt and uncle had the central office and at the first over, when you go to Stevensville, Alvin Siders live there now, the first house over the railroad, the Canadian National Railroad, to your right. There was a big window in the front and that room was the telephone office. Alvin has taken the hall out, you came into the front door and there was a hall and you came into the front office and on into the rest part of the house. But Alvin took that hall out of there and the door opens out doors now from the living room. He made the living room bigger. That's their living room or their, ya their living room. That's where the telephone office was for years, I can't tell you how many years. And where did it go from there, then? I can't think where it went from there or whether when Uncle Andrews quit, I guess then when it went up to Wades then and they had it in the part that Coleman-Wades Tailor Shop. He made suits, men suits and he was gone then by that time and so they used that front part for a telephone office. And it was there until we went dial and they built the, they've got a building out north of Stevensville, brick building now. But the telephone office was at Wades until they went dial.

B.B.: Is there anything else that you...has you reflect back?

R.C.: Not that I can think of. Unless there was some questions you had to ask.

B.B.: You've done fine.

R.C.: They use to have what they call the Dummy which they ran across the bridge to go to Buffalo. I think that ran before the ferry ran maybe I don't know for sure.

B.B.: Oh, tell me about the Dummy.

R.C.: Well, it was all in one, like a street car, only it was run by battery I suppose...what did they use to, what did they call it, I can't say what it is...generator, it may of been, I don't know. In early days they even had I don't think that was ever run by steam though, I can't vision that being run by steam so I think that was generator, that generated their own power, the wheels ran, and the generator.

B.B.: Where did you pick the Dummy up? Where did it run from?

R.C.: Right there at Fort Erie where the station is, and it just went to Black Rock and back again, it ran back and forth ever so often. Was it used

B.B.: Was it used quite ...?

R.C.: Oh, yes.

B.B.: How much did it cost?

R.C.: Oh, I wouldn't have any idea anymore. I suppose maybe 10 cents to go across the river. But money was worth a lot more in those days than it is now. A dime don't amount to much now anymore. Yes, I drove back and forth on the Dummy quite a bit. I don't know why it got its name Dummy unless because it wasn't steam engine, you know it wasn't pulled by an engine, it generated its own power. Then they got the ferry, I don't remember when the ferry started, I don't remember when that service started, but then they carried cars across, the ferry. But I think maybe the ferry was in operation even before cars began to come around I don't know for sure. Uncle Emerson...they drove the horse and team, the horses and the surrey, you know the two seater with the top and it had side curtains so if it rained you put those side curtains down, they drove to Ohio. My Uncle Emerson, my mother's brother was married to a lady from Ohio, Aunt Franny, and they'd drive there maybe once a year for a reunion. And they went across with the ferry so it's back quite a ways, I don't know. But I think the Dummy was first if I'm not mistaken, I think the Dummy was first. BBut whether they maybe ran, maybe the ferry ran a bigger boat before the even built the International Bridge, I don't have any idea when that was built.

B.B.: Well, Mrs. Carver thank you. You've given some very interesting information.

R.C.: Well, there's lots of things I guess I missed but...

B.B.: Can you think of anything out there...?

R.C.: No, I can't think of anything. I can just see Fort Erie when it was Bridgeburg and it was so much smaller than it is now. It has really, really grown now!

B.B.: Thank you.