

Beverly Branton interviewing Mrs. Young on April 16, 1985. The interview is being held at 3801 Farr Ave., which is Ridgewood Manor, in Ridgeway, Ontario.

B.B.: Hello, Mrs. Young.

F.Y.: Hello, Miss Branton.

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

F.Y.: April the 19th, 1901.

B.B.: 1901. And where was your place of birth?

F.Y.: My place of birth was at my grandfather's farm just off what is now the Thunder Bay Road in east of Ridgeway.

B.B.: What type of farming was your family involved in?

F.Y.: In general farming. And there were several sections, like, at the farm; one part going over as far as the Dominion Road, being bush land; the central part being farming, general farming land; and then the lakefront property which grandfather considered as practically of no value because it was swampy. I lived there until I was two years old when my father and mother moved to Buffalo and then when I was about eight we moved back to Ridgeway. The farm was sold, I think, about 1913 to an American man who had camped on it in the summer months near the lake and he could see, foresee, the future use of that and bought the farm, the whole thing, later selling the bush land as one section, and the general farm as another section, and he kept the lakefront which he later developed and sold lots, and we figured, have figured, that now the price of a lot there would be about the price that grandfather got for the whole farm.

B.B.: What type of farming was your grandfather involved in?

F.Y.: Just general farming. You know, the ordinary farm where there's apple orchards and there's grazing for the cattle and...

B.B.: What do you remember of the farm? Do you remember what the material it was built out of?

F.Y.: Oh, their house was a clapboard house. And I remember gramma always had a row of sweet peas along the fence there. Now, of course my later memories were when we spent our summer holidays there, always spent most of the summer there.

B.B.: How was the farm heated?

F.Y.: By woodstoves. And there was one room in the home that I remember, that I was just fascinated with, at the rear of the home and with no heat in it, and in there grampa kept his hams hanging there, and

the currying of meat, and there was also a smokehouse outside where they did this smoking of meat.

B.B.: How did they light the farm?

F.Y.: Coal oil lamps were the method of lighting.

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

F.Y.: Well, when we moved back to Ridgeway when I was about eight I went to the Ridgeway Public School, finding it difficult to adjust to the classes because the American system which I had gone to school for three years was way ahead in spelling and literature but way behind in the other subjects such as geography, and arithmetic and so on.

B.B.: How else did you find the education system different between the States and Canada?

F.Y.: Well, I really don't remember too much because I was too young, I was only eight when we came over.

B.B.: What grade did you go to in school?

F.Y.: Well, I went into Senior Second, as they use to call it, which would now be grade 4 because I could spell and I could read and that but I had to have help with the arithmetic and so on.

B.B.: And you graduated then at what age?

F.Y.: Age 11 from public school.

B.B.: And there was no high school at that point?

F.Y.: Yes, there was not a high school, it was called a continuation school, and the school was in the old brick building now standing, public school taking a section of it and the high school had a wing, the continuation school I should say. It only consisted of two rooms; the two lower forms were in the lower room, and the upper form was in the upper room with the chemistry lab and that all contained in the same room.

B.B.: How many years was the continuation school for?

F.Y.: It was continuation school, let me see, when the new public school was opened, two rooms up there were reserved for the continuation school and they were in the same building as the present school in now, until, I'm not sure, I think, about 1925 or so, but Mr. Discher could really tell you that.

B.B.: What was the size of the classrooms?

F.Y.: Oh, my goodness, well in some rooms there were three grades in it, and that school included Ridgeway and Crystal Beach people.

There was no school at Crystal Beach at all.

B.B.: How many teachers were employed?

F.Y.: I think, I think only three in the public school. Of course, it didn't begin 'til grade one, there was no kindergarden in those days. And in the high school, the continuation school, there was just two teachers.

B.B.: Now you told me your occupation was teaching.

F.Y.: Yes.

B.B.: How did you get involved in teaching?

F.Y.: Well, I just always wanted to teach. I knew I was going to be a teacher from childhood up.

B.B.: Did you have to take further education like they do now?

F.Y.: Oh, yes, but we went to normal school, what we call normal school, in, I went to Hamilton.

B.B.: How long?

F.Y.: Just a year. And then I taught four years in the country, back of, north of Sherkston, and the four years in Ridgeway, grade five.

B.B.: What grades did you teach?

F.Y.: In the country, a one room school, which was quite a change for me! And in Ridgeway, grade five.

B.B.: Could you describe the one-room school?

F.Y.: Well, the seats and their desks were long. Two children sat on one bench, and the desk, the long desk, served for the two of them. And I found that discipline there was much easier than discipline in the village school at Ridgeway.

B.B.: Why?

F.Y.: Well, I suppose, they, you, would think that two children sitting together there'd be a lot of giggling and whispering but they seemed to apply themselves to their work more, and maybe there was a little sibling rivalry, too -which will get finished first and which will have the better. I don't know what it was. But nineteen pupils were all you had but eight grades.

B.B.: Did most people attend school?

F.Y.: Oh, yes, yes. And some after the entrance, as we called it, grade eight, most of the boys from the country schools stayed around on the farms but then in the winter months, occasionally they would come and back to the school, for three or four weeks, and maybe a little longer, depending on the winter work of that farm, and they would, I would be able to help them a bit with what now would be called first form, grade nine, as we called it first form, high school.

B.B.: What about transportation? How did you get to school?

F.Y.: Well, in Ridgeway at that time we had four daily train services and I went up on the morning train at, it left at 7:17, as I remember, in the morning, and we'd get off at the next station, Sherkston. And there I'd be met and go back to the school, about two miles north, where I boarded all week at a farm home. And then I would come back home on Friday night to Ridgeway on, we use to call it the evening train that got into Ridgeway about 8:30. And then we also had a mail train at noon going east and another train at five and shortly after five o'clock going west. So we had four ferries, passenger trains a day.

B.B.: What other transportation was available?

F.Y.: Well, cars were just coming in, you know, they in maybe a year or two but they were not very plentiful in number.

B.B.: What year would that have been?

F.Y.: Well that would have been around 1917, 19.

B.B.: So not everyone owned a car?

F.Y.: Oh, no, no! We, we were quite, we felt it quite a privilege to be invited to ride in somebodies car.

B.B.: Could you describe one?

F.Y.: Well, one I remember particularly had, well now it seems it was a material like duck, like they make the awnings and things out of, for the the top and the windows when they had them closed were more, as I remember it you know, but to methey were, they had to, whether they were, so that they could be opened fully and you rode without a top maybe, I just don't know what, but I remember this lady with whom I rode quite often, she didn't drive, of course ladies didn't drive much then, cars were so new, but she always had a heavy scarf on or if she wore a hat it had a big veil on and I can remember this veil float out in the breezes as we drove along and twenty-five and thirty miles an hour was considered quite a speed.

B.B.: Why wouldn't women have driven more?

F.Y.: Well, I, they started afterwards you see but I think the fact that it was such a new piece of machinery to use and of course there was no automatic shift then either, you shifted gears and with the Fords and that you cranked her up to get the engine going and, too, you needed good muscle to do that.

B.B.: What were the roads like?

F.Y.: Oh, there were very few surface roads, very few.

B.B.: What is a surface road?

F.Y.: Well, I mean like the paved macadamized or tarveit[tarmac], I guess you call it now and there were a lot of gravel roads on which you had to drive carefully too, for fear of skidding and that.

B.B.: Just to go back to the school system, you being a teacher, can you see a difference between the school system of today, then when you went to school, and then when you taught as a teacher...a comparison between the three?

F.Y.: Oh, yes! When I went to school it was reading, writing and arithmetic and we had writing exercises practically everyday and we had little exercise book all with lines and we did our writing practice in that and I will say on the whole we turned out better writers then, then are turned out now, when youngsters are permitted to use ball point pens and hang on to them with all their might. We, we never could use anything, we use to have ink wells in the desk and then we had to have what we called a Spencerian pointed pen.

B.B.: When you reflect back on Ridgeway I had read where there was two major fires. Do you remember them?

F.Y.: U-hum. I remember the one, I think it was about 1913, I think, either 13 or 14, and it happened during the middle of the night and it started in what was use to be the Welland County Telephone Exchange Building and of course in those days there wasn't, there were no fire departments like there are now and it was practically bucket brigades that fought, the sparks and that and it went down, let me see, it took in several buildings on the main street there and I can remember how mother had us up and everything, anything, papers of any value or that she had all together so that she could, if we had to leave the home, even though we, we were a couple of blocks away, yet the sparks blew so.

B.B.: What is a bucket brigade?

F.Y.: Well, the men just, they got bucket, water from the various wells and they just formed a line and just kept passing it along in a steady stream.

B.B.: When did the Fire Hall come to Ridgeway?

F.Y.: The Fire Hall was built on Cutler Street but I really, I think I was teaching in the country when it was built but I'm not sure. I couldn't tell you.

B.B.: You had mentioned that the fire had started in the Welland County Telephone Exchange.

F.Y.: Well that's the building, yes. I don't know whether it started in the, in the, telephone equipment part of the building or whether it started, you see it was a combination home and telephone exchange and at that time we had what we called the Welland County Telephone and then we also had the Bell System, too.

B.B.: Would you describe the difference between the two or what the...?

F.Y.: Well, the Welland County Telephone System was local. It took in Fort Erie and Port Colborne and Ridgeway, I think Stevensville, too. And of course the Bell System was province wide, country wide. And when I graduated from continuation school I had to wait two years before I was of age to go to normal school so I worked in the Bell Telephone office for over two years.

B.B.: What was your...?

F.Y.: Mr. Brodie, the druggist, had the Bell Telephone Exchange in the rear of his store.

B.B.: What was your job?

F.Y.: A telephone operator.

B.B.: Would you describe that?

F.Y.: Well, it was a old fashioned, considered now an old fashioned switchboard but to us then it was pretty modern. And it had, like, little round discs which when a call came in they, what, the covering of that disc flat down and it appeared red and you plugged your cord with this plug on into the little hole beneath it and then you talked into it asked the question you wanted to know, "Number, please", and then a lot of it was long distance. And most of the merchants and the doctors had both phones in their homes.

B.B.: There was a difference between a long distance phone and a local phone?

F.Y.: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

B.B.: What was the difference?

F.Y.: Well, it was under different companies, you see, and the Bell rate, as I remember, was a little higher, too, and a lot of people didn't phone any further. If they did they came into the office and put their phone calls in. If they wanted to phone someone way, say in, Northern Ontario or somewhere that would have to go through the Bell System.

B.B.: How would someone, at that point, if they didn't use the telephone system, how would they contact...?

F.Y.: Oh, the mail service.

B.B.: What was the mail service?

F.Y.: Well, it was very good, really! And another thing that when I look back

on and think about it, if we didn't catch the mail we knew these four trains went out each day, on the times, if you didn't get your letter to the post office on time you could run to the station with it and you could hand it to the carrier who use to take the mail from the post office over to the trains on a little cart and you could hand it to him or even the mailman at the, in the baggage car, would reach out and take it from you so you knew your letter got on its way.

B.B.: What was the price of postage?

F.Y.: Three cents, as I remember and I don't remember it being anymore to send a letter to the States, but I'm not just positive about that, but I don't think so, I think they were all the same and it was three cents then.

B.B.: Back to the telephone; did most people own a telephone?

F.Y.: No, not like now a days, no. You often, if you had a phone, you often took calls to someone to call and ask you if you would give a message to your neighbour who didn't have a phone. There was a feeling of, more or less, sharing of things in those days.

B.B.: Was the telephone service opened twenty-four hours a day?

F.Y.: Yes, there was a night operator.

B.B.: What about radio...when did radio come into Ridgeway?

F.Y.: I don't know, we didn't, my family didn't have a radio until about the early twenties but I just can't tell you when, I think about 1924 or maybe 23.

B.B.: What about the television?

F.Y.: Oh, my! No, television, well we got our first television in 1955 but there were others before that.

B.B.: How many stations could we get in this area?

F.Y.: In the television? Well, when we first got, when we got the first one, really the Buffalo stations were about the only ones that came in very clearly and Hamilton.

B.B.: How many Buffalo stations were there?

F.Y.: There were three.

B.B.: What did you do for your social life and recreation as you reflect back?

F.Y.: That question makes me laugh because people use to say, "Oh, what do you do around here in the winter time?" Why we had wonderful times in the winter time. When we went to school we use to haul our sleds at night, in the nice moonlight night, and come up to what we call Lindsay's Hill, up here, which is just across from this Lion's Complex building here...and coasting...and then to somebody's house for hot chocolate and cookies afterwards. That was childish enjoyment...and little dance

around at the different homes. And then as we got older the Oddfellows had built the Oddfellows building and they, Oddfellows themselves helped pay for the building. We use to hold monthly dances with live orchestras then, and there were card parties, and the visiting back and forth, and usually a sleigh ride party aat least once during the winter months. We were never at a loss for things to do.

B.B.: As you look back, do you, ...you went through two World Wars.

F.Y.: Yes.

B.B.: What do you recall of the changes in Ridgeway during these times?

F.Y.: Well, I was in high school, in continuation school, I keep saying high school, continuation school during the 1 World War and during the 2nd World War it was a busy time of the knitting needles clicking all the time, we sort of turned out a lot of knitting materials for the Red Cross Society.

B.B.: What type of materials?

F.Y.: Oh, we knit sweaters, we knit socks galore and pull over sweaters and the balaclava caps for the navy, scarves for the navy, and each church in the area had a group who knitted but all the main materials came from the main branch which was at one time in the up of the town hall in the upper area of the town hall and they would come there and get their supplies of wool and everything was accounted foras it came in we had to write down and keep track of how many skeins of so much yarn, the navy and the brown, and then it was doled out and that was reported and then we were expected to get so much back out, and everybody was really knitting and working there and there were concerts held, proceeds to go to the Red Cross and so on.

B.B.: Was this all volunteer work?

F.Y.: This was all volunteer work, yes.

B.B.: Was there a lot of volunteer involvement?

F.Y.: Yes, there was a lot of volunteer involvement.

B.B.: What about the 2 World War...?

F.Y.: Well, that's the one I'm speaking about. I don't remember too much about the 1st World War, well I remember the end of it and how, you know, the cars went through shouting ~~out~~ at that time there weren't too many cars but the few that were got around letting everybody know that the war was over, in November but the 2nd World War, yes...My jusband served in the 1st World War but the 2nd World War I really had no one in the family, the immediate family, and ...Ihad nephews...but not immediate family.

B.B.: How long was your husband away for?

F.Y.: He went in 1916 to start, well I don't think he came over 'til after Christmas, after the Amnestos.

B.B.: What are your recollections of the Depression?

F.Y.: Well we were in business, had been, at that time it was Young Brothers then, my husband and his brother, Harrison. And the Depression Years most people heated by coal and people out of work just found it very, very hard to get money enough together to buy fuel and you couldn't, you couldn't see people go cold and it was hard to hold a business together. And we use to, they had quite a business in making cement blocks and they were down in what was called the gravel pit below what's now the public school in Ridgeway...and of course building was, there just wasn't much ... and I remember too, there was a number of transients walking down the railroad tracks and we would have, oh many during the winter months coming to your door asking for a meal or for warm clothing.

B.B.: Could you describe a bit about how Youngs Lumber got started?

F.Y.: Well, it was in 1912. My father-in-law was a tailor by trade and then he had a position as custom officer at Crystal Beach during the summer months. Well, when the government changed he lost his job.

B.B.: Why?

F.Y.: Well, apparently, in those days, temporary positions like that were what according to the politics, as I understand it. Anyway, so he started up this business. It was first the making of blocks and then it just kept on developing. And when my husband came back from overseas he joined his father, it was called John Young and Son, and then when his father was not too well the brother who was in St. Catharines at the time with the Imperial Bank came and then it was called Young Brothers. And then in 1930 they purchased what was Mathewson's Planing Mill and then they added lumber to the building supplies and then they've added more lines since and its become now it's, Young Lumber and Supplies because back farther there was my husband, his brother and then the brothers son, ^{came into the business,} and then later our son and now there's just my son running the business.

B.B.: What changes do you see on the main...the business street of Ridgeway?

F.Y.: Oh, that has changed a lot. Of course, fires brought changes and

and where the Breweries Warehouse is now on Ridge Street it is set back from the main street a ways, the parking lot is in front, but that was the Queen's Hotel, a three storey, brick building...well the teachers used to board there and room, and at that time that I remember it was run by a Mr. and Mrs. White and she was renowned as an excellent cook. And then across the railroad track from it was a store, grocery store, with a bakery behind it, and it was first run, as I remember it, by a Mr. R.T. Hardison and then it later became Brown's, S.C. Brown and now I think it's, I think a real estate office in one half of it and a cleaning establishment in the other half... but it use to have a big veranda, wooden veranda across the front of it, and always the men were gathered there, chatting away their morning chats and business began in those days at a much earlier time in the morning then it is now.

B.B.: What time?

F.Y.: Well, the mail went out on that 7:17 train so there were always people around soon after that because the morning papers came up on that train from Buffalo, you see.

And then too, to go back, it was interesting, we also had a Sunday service of trains see, a train, so many Americans had moved along the lakefront and that had summer homes and there was a train that came up Sunday morning and landed in Ridgeway shortly before 10 o'clock in the morning and went back down at night about 7 o'clock and that was quite an exciting time, we all got there to see the train come in and go out, you see. And my father use to commute from Buffalo and go back on that on the weekends.

B.B.: So the trains were one of the major...?

F.Y.: Oh, yes and freight trains went through you know, and the whistling, I really missed it when the trains stopped running, there used to be, you know, the whistles were heard distinctly and the bell ringing and now it seems queer that you don't have to stop and wait for a train.

B.B.: When did the trains stop?

F.Y.: I can't remember. I really don't remember. It was too long ago, but I just don't remember, really, not to place it accurately.

B.B.: Would you tell me a bit about the doctor's offices, their businesses?

F.Y.: As I remember it there were two doctors in town, living side by side; one on the corner of what is now Elm Street and Ridge Street

and one right next to it. In my early childhood there was Dr. Snider and his brother-in-law Dr. Thompson and there was no hospital, babies were born at home, unless some folks went to Buffalo to the hospitals there, then those children had what we call, now call, dual citizenship because they were born in the States but of Canadian parents but they had that dual citizenship.

B.B.: Was anyone allowed to do that?

F.Y.: Yes, if their doctor thought it was going to be a complicated case or anything, well they were sent to the hospital in Buffalo. And there was a hospital at Welland in the early days and then came the Port Colborne and in 1931, I think the Fort Erie Hospital opened, 31.

B.B.: Did the doctors make home visitations?

F.Y.: The doctors made home visitations and use to go 'round...I can remember riding with Dr. Sider and he was very kind and we'd pick up youngsters and take them a ride because a ride was quite a thing the horse and buggy days, even, and go out into the country riding with him when he made a call, you see. House calls were very, very, frequent then. And then Dr. Sider sold out to his nephew, Dr. Stuart who was here for a good many years and then was Dr. Macey who took his place and Dr. Thompson, no relation to the former Dr. Thompson.

B.B.: What about pharmacies...?

F.Y.: Well, when I was a child we had two drug stores and there was and they always called him Dr. Brewster, I think he was a medical doctor, as well as a pharmacist. And then Mr. Brodie had the other drug store.

B.B.: Was there a difference between a pharmacist today then yesterday?

F.Y.: Well, I think there was more patent medicines in the old days. You went in and you said, "Well, my child has a bad cough, what would you recommend?", you see. And I know that there were not the drug that there are now and prescriptions, the doctors, some of the doctors, carried their own medicines and you would get your cough medicine right at the doctors when you went to see him.

B.B.: Was there health insurance?

F.Y.: No, there was no health insurance and you paid your doctor bills right out of your pocket not into a health plan first, which takes care of things as it does now.

And then another, the drug stores were quite a gathering place

for the young people because they sold ice cream and they had the nice little chair, round tables with what they call, now call ice cream chairs, which are quite popular today. And Brodie's store was quite famous for its chocolate sodas. Always a gathering in there and the Americans when as they came over in the summer months were always very fond of Brodie's chocolate sodas. I don't know whether there was a special chocolate syrup or what but anyway that was the gathering place.

B.B.: A lot of the students from the continuation school, would they go there...after school?

F.Y.: Oh, yes but in those days we didn't have the pocket money that children have now because for one thing a great many of our parents were not employed during the winter months.

B.B.: Why was that?

F.Y.: Well there just wasn't the employment around here. There was no Fleet Manufacturing Company to work at and a lot of the men went fishing in the winter months, ice fishing. And it was common to hear dogs barking in the winter months because so many kept dogs in the village. In fact, many people kept chickens in the village. Of course, after awhile that was forbidden but our neighbours next door had a chicken pen and chicken house.

B.B.: What was the type of employment that caused it just to be seasonal?

F.Y.: Well, carpentry for one thing and my father was a brick layer and of course winter employment in either of those lines unless it was indoor such as fireplaces or in the carpentry, doing inside carpentry and then a great many people worked at the Crystal Beach Park and there were very, some people worked out of town like my father worked in Buffalo and then came home on weekends for a great many years until about 20, 19, in the 20's that came and stayed here regularly and worked out of here.

B.B.: How would people financially handle themselves during the winter months if there was no unemployment or...?

F.Y.: I can remember one of the business men, grocery businessmen, saying that he having carried people over the winter months, then it took them nearly all summer long to pay back what they owed in the winter but of course there was a lot of, well people did their home sewing, they did their home baking, you didn't run to the store and get everything packaged, pre-packaged stuff and everything, you

know and people would buy a quarter of beef and kind of plan ahead for the winter months but of course wages were low then too when you compare. I can remember, definitely my mother giving me ten cents and me going to the butcher shop and getting calves liver, enough to feed four of us, so that's a long while ago but,...and a loaf of bread was only a nickel you see.

B.B.: What other prices...?

F.Y.: Well, a quart of milk was only a nickel from when we use to have a little milk pail that just held a quart with a cover on it and I don't know whether there was a dairy, I don't remember anybody coming around but I know milk wasn't pasteurized and but we went to a friend, a neighbour up the street a ways who kept a cow and we got our milk there, every night went for the milk. There was several places in town where people kept a cow and you could go and get the milk. And then when Mr. Doan started the dairy, up outside of Ridgeway it was not pasteurized at first then, the milk, later pasteurization came in you see.

B.B.: Were there any medical problems from...?

F.Y.: Not that I ever remember as a youngster, I don't remember.

And of course, now green goods were not available then like they are now. We were considered quite lucky because my father would come, as I said, home on the weekend, in the bottom of his clubbag, as he called it, not a suitcase, different shape, were always oranges, and some lemons for mother for pies and some bananas and usually some candies for the youngsters, we were four in the family. Then an Italian family by the name of Cammarata came into town and started handling vegetables and was it ever wonderful to be able to get green goods through the winter months and they started out first in the place that is now the United Church manse or parsonage and that's where they first located. Then they moved up into the central part of the town, had a nice big brick store there.

B.B.: Where did they receive their green vegetables?

F.Y.: From Buffalo. They had been, I think during the summer seasons, associated with a family at the Beach who were related to them and they use to have, carried groceries and green goods and Crystal Beach oranges and that in the summer months when Crystal Beach was opened.

And of course, Crystal Beach was a wonderful place to go and

not at all like it is now. It's more of a family gathering place. Picnic tables were much in use and there were a few amusements, the merry-go-round, I can always remember being there. But there wasn't the great big roller coasters, there was what they use to call the figure eight which was very - what- less da^ring than the big, roller coaster.

B.B.: Would you describe that?

F.Y.: Well, it was on the same plan like and then it was exactly as I said, it went like a figure eight only it went up, it elevated itself on the height of the eight you see and around. We considered it quite a ride but of course it was so tame compared to the roller coaster.

And the Crystal Beach boat that use to come across and then before the cars were so prevalent and the buses ran, there use to be a launch go from the Crystal Beach dock taking passengers up to the Pr. Abino area. It was run by a man by the name of Mr. Charles Adams.

B.B.: What was in the Pt. Abino area?

F.Y.: Well, summer homes that the Americans had built up there.

B.B.: Do you recall when the American population started coming in?

F.Y.: No, I really don't. I think, I know down in the Thunder Bay area it wasn't until around the 1910's or so when they started coming - no, it would be earlier than that. But there were a few summer homes below that, there was that they called a Curtis family from Buffalo, they had a home up on the top of the hill side by Six Mile Creek which I remember as a small child.

Most of our Sunday School picnics were held at Crystal Beach and often we would take our Sunday supper out there and there were always swings in the park and the youngsters had good swing and a good romp and you could go wading a bit. It wasn't all restricted you see as it later became when it became the Crystal Beach Company.

B.B.: Where did you go swimming?

F.Y.: Well, we use to walk places in those days. We use to walk down to the Thunder Bay area, like on the road allowance and that an I never swam, I was too afraid. I didn't let my feet off the surface and I was always cautioned by mother never to go in above your knees. We use to walk out, when we were teenagers, walk out to the front of Clause, what is now the Clause property and have bonfires and roast our corn roasts and weiner roasts and lug our stuff out and walk out there and walk back into town. Didn't think anything

of it, and we walked to Crystal Beach all the time, we didn't think anything of it.

B.B.: How many miles would that be?

F.Y.: Oh, I don't think it would be more than mile, maybe a mile and a half. There were no bus services, kids all walked to school you see, of course they came in from Crystal Beach into school and they were seldom absent when I was teaching. The youngsters knew how to use their feet in those days.

B.B.: When did the bus service come in for the schools?

F.Y.: It was after I stopped teaching, I don't really know.

B.B.: Oh, the bus service helped the rural children, a lot, yes! And I can remember youngsters walking in from the beach yousee because the public school served Crystal Beach, at first, as well as Ridgeway before the Crystal Beach school was built and they would come in on a rainy day, soaking wet you know and you would just let them stand by the radiators and some of their shoes have to be taken off and get dried out. Oh, yes. It certainly helped the rural youngsters. And continuation school, there were pupils who were so anxious for an education who lived east of Ridgeway that would walk up the railroad track to Ridgeway and there were pupils west of Ridgeway who would walk down the railroad track in the mornings and then the Sherkston folks from up that way they would walk down that five or six miles straight down the railroad track in the morning and back on that 5 o'clock train at night, you see. I think, I really think an education was more appreciated then, then what it is now.

B.B.: Was there colleges? You had mentioned you...?

F.Y.: Well, we only went to grade 12 in continuation school, so therefore if you wanted to go on to be a teacher you could go to normal school with that but you could only teach public school, you see. If you wanted to go on for university you had to go to Welland for grade 13, which meant you had to board over there and and which most of us couldn't afford to do. A few went on mind you but not too many.

And people from Stevensville, they use to come over. Now some of them, two girls who were sisters had a pony and use to drive over to continuation school and stay from Stevensville.

B.B.: With a wagon...pony and a wagon?

F.Y.: No, pony and a nice little cart, like. And they use to tether it in

right beside the old school in the, well there was a Free Methodist Church there at that time and it had stables like at the back like shed, like for tying up your horses and they would keep it in there during the day while they were in school.

B.B.: How long was your school day?

F.Y.: We went in at 9:00 and we were out at 4:00.

B.B.: I'm interested, Mrs. Young, also...you had mentioned about canning in the winter months...to can to prepare for the winter months... where would you get your fruit from?

F.Y.: Well outside, just outside of Ridgeway, in fact in this very spot, here was a Mr. Lindsay who grew berries and vegetable produce and things. And as a child I remember coming up and picking raspberries and then we would be able to buy our raspberries. I canned, we always canned, made strawberry jam, all the various things and it really was a delight to go down into the basement, after I started housekeeping, and see these shelves upon shelves of canned goods ready for the winter months and everybody did it! And we, well to start with, most of us had our own gardens and of course there were no freezers in those days, either. There were refrigerators and the freezing compartment in the refrigerator in those days was a little, small area, well it had two shelves, no one shelf, dividing it into two compartments, like, and very narrow just down the side and so it didn't hold very much and you didn't freeze much.

And then Mr. Discher started a freezing plant and we could rent lockers in it and that was quite a help because we froze our strawberries and we froze our raspberries and we froze peas and we froze corn and we could buy meat and put it in there and that ran for quite awhile until the manufacturing of home freezers came out, you see. And as the refrigerators improved then they had the freezing compartment on top and that. But before we use to, well we still, I made my own jams and jellies until I came up here, until I retired as you say.

B.B.: How much did it cost to rent a freezer?

F.Y.: A locker, I forget, but now, I think, it was twelve dollars for a year but they varied on the size of the freezer and he had quite a big amount of space, freezer space there.

B.B.: Where was this located?

F.Y.: It was located down on the corner of Prospect Pt. Road and Hibbard Street. It now has been torn down and I don't know what it's used for now.

I think there use to be a mill there, too which he ran and it had been there, apparently it had been a town landmark, it had been there for years, and a regular grist mill.

B.B.: What is a grist mill?

F.Y.: Well, it would grind up the grains, the various grains, you see there. It was quite a thriving business.

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

F.Y.: Well, as I reflect back there were two men, a Mr. Millington and a Mr. Skerret who were related and who started a bus service from Crystal Beach down to Fort Erie before the Peace Bridge was built and they would take you to the ferry dock and then they would go across on the ferry to Buffalo and up the hill, you see. And that was the only way we had of getting over to Buffalo except by the train service. And cars went on the ferry, too. And I remember when the ice would start down the river, the ferry, you would get down there waiting to get back on the ferry and they would say, "Well, as soon as this ice flow gets by, well we'll stop , we'll start over", but it was an indefinite schedule. And one time my husband and I about 1927, just before, the winter before the Peace Bridge opened anyway we went over to see a Shakespearian play at night, this was just before we were married that winter. And we got down to the ferry dock on the American side to come home and the ferry wasn't running. Well there was several cars waiting for the ferry. Well the ice was coming down so fast the ferry couldn't attempt it. Well we waited there, and we waited there as did so many others, until finally we drove and hit, there's no other way to get across but to drive down to Niagara Falls and we drove the American side down to Niagara Falls, across the bridge there and back up home... the wee small hours by that time

But then when the Peace Bridge opened in 1927, yes 1927 that made all the difference in the world to getting over to Buffalo. Then a regular bus service began and took us right over, across the Peace Bridge and over you see and for a good many years we had good bus service between Crystal Beach. And then it developed from Welland to Port Colborne, Crystal Beach to Ridgeway and over to Buffalo. Well you went about once a week to browse, go to a show, Laube's Old Spain to have lunch and so on.

But the opening of the Peach Bridge was a wonderful thing for

here and my grandmother was alive then and neighbours took her across for her first drive across the Peace Bridge and she had them stop in the middle of the bridge and she said, "You know I never thought I'd see this day because in my day there was always dreams of a bridge going across but oh, it couldn't be done on account of the current! And I really think that was one of the biggest thrills of her life, was to drive down, across on that Peace Bridge.

B.B.: Well, thank you Mrs. Young.