

This is Charlotte Nielsen interviewing Mrs. Carrie Wallace at nineteen High Street on April sixteenth, nineteen eighty-five.

C.N. What is your full name?

C.W. Carrie Louise Wallace

C.N. When were you born?

C.W. Eighteen ninety-five.

C.N. You just had a birthday a little while ago. Your picture was in the paper. How old are you now?

C.W. Ninety years old.

C.N. Did you have a big birthday celebration?

C.W. There were what I call two large parties at the Duplicate Bridge Club entertained at a dinner bridge and my son entertained at a dinner party for twenty six family members at Leo's restaurant.

C.N. Did you enjoy yourself?

C.W. I did but it was quite nerve wracking. It took quite a lot out of me. You know what I mean. It was ...

C.N. Did everyone make a big fuss of you?

C.W. Oh yes. They gave me beautiful presents.

C.N. You've lived a long time. Do you have a secret to long life?

C.W. No. I think not. I have been a very busy person most of my life. I grew up on a farm and I used to milk cows, clean out stables.

C.N. Where was this farm?

C.W. On the corner of Ridge and Bertie road, two miles from Ridgeway.

C.N. Did you get into Ridgeway very often?

C.W. You surely went to town a couple of times a week in a horse and buggy.

C.N. Now, were you born on this farm?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. Did your parents call a doctor when you were born?

C.W. No it was a midwife, two women who did that sort of thing.

C.N. Did you have any brothers and sisters?

C.W. Yes, I was one of ten.

C.N. Were you the youngest, the oldest?

C.W. There were five younger than I was.

C.N. Did you help raise your younger brothers and sisters?

C.W. I always had to rock the cradle.

C.N. And how many girls and how many boys were in your family?

C.W. There were five girls and five boys.

C.N. That must have made life confusing. How did your mother cope with having that many children?

C.W. When we were very young mother had a woman who helped and lived at our house and worked at that time and my father had a hired man on the farm. It was at that time my grandmother's farm. We lived with her.

C.N. Did your father and the hired man run the farm?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. You mentioned cows. What else did they do besides raise cows?

C.W. We always had at least three horses, one team for farm work and one driving horse, one kind of fancy stepper.

C.N. Did you know how to ... I don't know how to ask this question because I'm not familiar with horses. Did you know how to handle that horse?

C.W. Oh yes. I used to drive that horse. I used to ride that horse bareback.

C.N. Is that difficult to ride bareback?

C.W. Well, I thought I was doing something when I did that.

C.N. I imagine it would hurt. Does it?

C.W. Well, it's scary, you know, but we were youngsters and full of life.

C.W. Did your brother and sisters all ride?

C.W. Not all of them. Some did.

C.N. Did your father use a lot of the food he grew or produced to feed the family?

C.W. Oh yes. We always had a large garden. We had wonderful fruit trees. My grandfather had planted them and we had everything, all kinds of plums, different types, Crawford peaches: Early Crawford and Late Crawford. I believe those are about the only two people grew then. We had all kinds of pears and apples, a large apple orchard.

C.N. Did your mother do a lot of canning?

C.W. Oh, yes.

C.N. Did you help with this?

C.W. Sometimes.

C.N. The cows you had ... Were they raised for milk or for meat?

C.W. To sell the milk and mother also churned, made wonderful butter.  
It had so much flavour that the store butter doesn't have now.

C.N. Did you churn the butter at all?

C.W. I helped. We'd all get sometimes tired churning.

C.N. What things did you buy from the store in the way of food?

C.W. Sugar and tea and coffee.

C.N. So you did produce a lot of your own groceries?

C.W. Yes, they didn't have green grocer stores in Ridgeway at that time  
or even Fort Erie.

C.N. Did you ever go into Fort Erie at that time?

C.W. Yes, we used to drive to Fort Erie: Bridgeburg.

C.N. What did you do that for?

C.W. My father used to go down to the Bridgeburg market to sell cucumbers.  
They used to grow many cucumbers and we children used to pick  
them. And cucumber season he went down to the market nearly  
every day: the Bridgeburg market.

C.N. What was your father's name?

C.W. Athoe, A.T.H.O.E.

C.N. Did he inherit his farm?

C.W. Yes, from his parents: his mother.

C.N. They would have the same name.

C.W. Yes.

C.N. And what was your mother's name?

C.W. Heatherington.

C.W. Where did you go to school?

C.N. Where did you go to school?

C.W. The Garrison Road number ten Bertie.

C.N. What kind of school was it?

C.W. A one room red brick school house.

C.N. Do you remember your teacher?

C.W. Yes, I remember some of my teachers. I remember Miss Murphey  
very well who later became Mrs. Oscar Teal of Fort Erie.

C.N. What was she like? The teacher.

C.W. She was very energetic, Irish background, very active. We really  
had to work.

C.N. Did you like school?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. What subjects did you study?

C.W. We took most of the usual studies in public school that they have today.

C.N. Did you have a lot of homework?

C.W. Yes we had homework.

C.N. How much time would you spend doing homework as a child?

C.W. Usually, an hour every night.

C.N. Did you do well in school?

C.W. Fairly well.

C.N. Did you go to high school?

C.W. I went to Ridgeway High School for two years and that's all you could get in Ridgeway at that time. Those who got more had to go Welland but most of us didn't have ways to get to Welland.

C.N. I imagine it would have been expensive and inconvenient to go to Welland.

C.W. Yes.

C.N. What did you do when you finished high school?

C.W. I went to Buffalo and lived with my aunt and uncle in Buffalo.

C.N. What did your aunt and uncle do in Buffalo?

C.W. He was, my uncle was a railroad man. He was the division passenger agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad.

C.N. What does that mean?

C.W. He was in charge of all passenger going trains between Buffalo and Philadelphia.

C.N. What did you do while you were living with your aunt and uncle?

C.W. I worked in a gift shop and later for the Western Union.

C.N. What did you do for the Western Union?

C.W. I used to receive telegrams at the old Exchange Street Station and code them into the main office.

C.N. Did you know how to read morse code?

C.W. It was a telephone code, tela, a telegraph company. It was their special code. We telephoned the messages in from the station. Most of them would be from salesmen who had been, who would be calling their main office. It was at night to let them know what kind of a day they had had in the business world and they ...

C.N. Were these messages interesting to you?

J.H. Mostly business messages. They weren't really interesting to me.  
It was telling what kind of a day they had had.

C.N. Was this a difficult job?

C.W. No it was ... I enjoyed it. But it was on Exchange Street in Buffalo.  
I guess I wouldn't dare go down there now alone.

C.N. Did you go down there then alone?

C.W. Yes. I didn't think anything of it.

C.N. Did you walk there at night?

C.W. Sometimes.

C.N. You weren't afraid then?

C.W. No.

C.N. Was there any violence happening at that time in Buffalo?

C.W. Not that I remember of ...

C.N. How long did you live in Buffalo?

C.W. Until I was married in nineteen twenty-nine.

C.N. It seems to me that's the year of the depression.

C.W. I'm sorry. It was ... I was married in nineteen twenty-four.

C.N. Oh! Who did you marry?

C.W. My husband's name was Wilfred William Wallace.

C.N. And how old were you when you got married?

C.W. Twenty-nine.

C.N. Did you stop working or did you find a job here?

C.W. No I didn't work.

C.N. What did you do?

C.W. I just lived at home, kept house.

C.N. Did you have children?

C.W. I have one son.

C.N. Was he born soon after you were married?

C.W. No he wasn't. We were married six years before he was born. He  
was born in nineteen thirty-one.

C.N. So you had six years of keeping house before you had children.

C.W. Yes.

C.N. What did you do with your time?

C.W. I used to sew and I used to garden and grow flowers. I had many  
flowers. I belonged to the Horticulture Society at that time.

C.N. That sounds lovely. Did you have a big garden?

C.W. No it wasn't large but I managed to grow quite a few things in it.

C.N. Did you and your husband have your own house?

C.W. Yes we bought our house when we were married.

C.N. And what kind of things did you sew?

C.W. I used to make my clothes.

C.N. How did you go about this? Did you have patterns?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. What kind of clothes did you used to make?

C.W. Just dresses.

C.N. Where did you get your patterns?

C.W. There's a question. I can't remember. I think mostly Buffalo.

C.N. Did you keep up with the latest fashions?

C.W. Quite well.

C.N. What kind of sewing machine did you use?

C.W. A singer.

C.N. Was it electric?

C.W. No.

C.N. Was it a treadle machine?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. When did you ... Sorry. Did you have electricity at that time?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. But not for your sewing machine?

C.W. No.

C.N. Tell me about your son. What was his name?

C.W. Donald James Wallace.

C.N. Was he an easy child to raise?

C.W. He was ... I guess he was normal.

C.N. Did he do well in school?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. What kind of things did he like doing?

C.W. He was ... wasn't very active, athletic boy. He wasn't very well when he was born and he had several illnesses and so he wasn't athletic but he was a good student. He became a lawyer and he is now a judge.

**C.N.** And where is he working as a judge?

**C.W.** At Niagara Falls Ontario.

**C.N.** He's had a good career then. Did you encourage him to go into law?

**C.W.** No. He always wanted that. He used to listen to a programme all about law and lawyers and court cases on tele ... and I believe it was radio before we had television and he used to have a certain programme that he listened to every week when it came on because he was so interested in it.

**C.N.** And did he work hard at school so he could become a lawyer?

**C.W.** Yes he did.

**C.N.** And did he finance his own education or did you help him?

**C.W.** He mostly financed it himself. He used to work, at first, as a guide at the old fort for some years and as he was growing up he decided he would like to be a grass cutter and then he used to cut grass, sometimes with a hand mower, sometimes riding on a larger mower along the boulevards cutting the grass, sometimes pushing a hand mower or riding, walking behind a power mower.

**C.N.** Did he do this in the summers?

**C.W.** Yes.

**C.N.** What university did he go to?

**C.W.** He had an Honour B.A. from McMaster University, Hamilton in history and political economy and then he went to Osgood Law School.

**C.N.** Did he get married?

**C.W.** Yes.

**C.N.** Who did he marry?

**C.W.** He married Glenda Tennysson who is now a high school teacher at Niagara Falls.

**C.N.** How old was he when he got married? Approximately. Did he finish law school first?

**C.W.** Oh yes. I think he was thirty-two when he got married.

**C.N.** Do they have any children?

**C.W.** They have two children. They have a son Bill Wallace and they have an adopted daughter Kim Wallace: Kimberly.

**C.N.** Do you know why they decided to adopt?



C.W. Yes, because the doctor didn't advise his wife to have any more children.

C.N. And how old are your son's children now?

C.W. Nineteen and fourteen.

C.N. What are their career plans?

C.W. Bill didn't graduate from high school. He is working at the boys club.

C.N. What does he do there?

C.W. He instructs the young boys who come in. He teaches them ...

C.N. And you have another child, a daughter did you say?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. What does she want to do?

C.W. I'm not sure just what she's ... She's in her first year high school.

C.N. Now you must have seen alot of changes. How many monarchs have you lived under: British monarchs.

C.W. I remember very well when Queen Victoria died because my grandmother who came from Wales had seen Queen Victoria and I remembered seeing my grandmother cry when Queen Victoria died in 1901 and my grandmother died in 1903.

C.N. And do you remember any of the other monarchs you've lived under?

C.W. I remember King George very well and King Edward the seventh and Queen Elizabeth of course our queen now.

C.N. What about the prime ministers? Did you follow politics at all?

C.W. No I ... We were mostly not republicans but conservatives and I've usually been most interested in the conservative party.

C.N. Do you remember when you first heard a radio?

C.W. I couldn't tell you what year. I certainly remember it.

C.N. Could you describe the experience?

C.W. It was really ... especially when we had the radio where we could hear, sit in the room and listen to it without earphones. It was very wonderful we thought.

C.N. What did you listen to?

C.W. Oh, we liked ... My husband had a nice singing voice and he liked music and I never could sing but I liked it and we used to like having Shumen Heinz and the Caruso records. I remember giving them to one of our church rummage sales and I wish I had them now because they're really good records.



C.N. They would be antiques now.

C.W. Yes.

C.N. What did you play the records on?

C.W. On a Victrola, a Victor Victrola later ...

C.N. That was a turntable of some sort?

C.W. It was a regular ... Victor Victrola. It was a square mahogany.

C.N. Would you call it a record player?

C.W. I think we called it a Victrola in those days.

C.N. Oh. And do you remember when you first saw television?

C.W. Yes, we had a television in my home. My husband was ill. He was a war veteran in the first world war and he was wounded very badly. One wound was an injury to the spinal cord: a shrapnel wound, on the side of the spinal cord and he went to the old Christy Street Hospital in Toronto and they gave him a spinal anaesthetic and he never walked the same after that. They don't even use spinal anaesthetics now, I don't believe. But at that time they apparently were using them at Christy Street Hospital. And it was an old factory turned into a hospital for the men who returned from war.

C.N. Do you feel the spinal anaesthetic harmed your husband?

C.W. Oh yes. He never walked the same afterwards.

C.N. How long was your husband in the war?

C.W. From early nineteen fifteen until nineteen seventeen, I don't remember ... I guess he was hospitalized for nine months at Guys Hospital England before he could come home.

C.N. Did you know this?

C.W. No. I didn't know him then.

C.N. Oh you didn't know him at this time!

C.W. No, we weren't married then.

C.N. How old was he when he went off to war, approximately?

C.W. I can't tell you the exact age that he went but he had had two years of study in engineering, civil engineering, at Toronto University before going to war. But when he came back he was shell shocked and not able to go back to university.

C.N. How soon after coming back did he meet you?

C.W. Possibly a year.

C.N. Did you help him get over his shock?

C.W. I hope I did.

C.N. Did he tell you about his war experiences?

C.W. He didn't talk about it very much. I have heard about some of them but he didn't like to talk about it.

C.N. How did the war affect you personally?

C.W. My husband's last illness. He could have gone to a veteran's hospital but he said he wouldn't go and our good doctor, Dr. O'Mulliveny said if I know Wally and if I send him against his wishes he won't try to get better to live. He ... When he became quite crippled, he said he won't try to live he'll just quit if he has to leave home so I said I would take care of him as long as I could. I took care of him flat on his back with paralysis for six years.

C.N. When was this?

C.W. He died in nineteen fifty ... November nineteen fifty-seven.

C.N. So it was some time ago.

C.W. Yes.

C.N. Did you feel that this spinal anaesthetic had something to do with his death?

C.W. Our doctor insisted it did hurry it. It was sort of inactive, it had been for awhile, you know, but this paralysis became worse soon after that, right after that.

C.N. Was he ever able to claim any compensation?

C.W. Yes. He got a pension, war pension, at first very small. It kept increasing and now I receive a widow's war pension.

C.N. How did the second world war affect your lives?

C.W. Not much really.

C.N. He didn't have to go to that one then.

C.W. Oh no he couldn't go.

C.N. Did you know anyone who did go?

C.W. Yes I knew people who were in the second world war.

C.N. Did they come back?

C.W. Some did and some didn't.

C.W. [I used to] walk in Fort Erieat Rung's Store on Jarvis Street and that was about a half mile walk from where I lived. I carried groceries home.

C.N. Was this when you were married?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. What did you buy besides groceries in Fort Erie?

C.W. We used to buy ice and buy clothes in Fort Erie My husband had had his suits made at ... Mr. Cohen used to make his suits, a tailor on Jarvis Street.

C.N. Were they custom made?

C.W. Yes. No ... he used to make them. Is that custom made? I guess it is. He was a tailor, Mr. Cohen.

C.N. Did he do a good job of making suits?

C.W. Yes, we liked him very much.

C.N. Did he ever make anything for you?

C.W. Yes, one coat.

C.N. What kind of coat was it?

C.W. A woolen tailored coat.

C.N. Were you pleased with the kind of clothes you were able to buy in Fort Erie ?

C.W. Yes, but we used to take the train to Toronto a couple of times a year to shop.

C.N. What did you buy in Toronto?

C.W. Clothes, furniture.

C.N. How did Toronto compare to Fort Erie in your mind?

C.W. Toronto was a large city then and Fort Erie was a small town.

C.N. Did you enjoy being in Toronto? Would you have liked to live there?

C.W. No, I don't think so. I've enjoyed living in Fort Erie very much.

C.N. Why?

C.W. Nice people, friendly people and I prefer a smaller place.

C.N. Is there anything else you would like to talk about or say?

C.W. We used to like to go to Buffalo.

C.N. Why?

C.W. Good shows. They had some wonderful theatres: The Teck Theatre, the old Star Theatre, wonderful plays and wonderful ... vaudeville, good vaudeville and ...

C.N. What was vaudeville?

C.W. It was on Court Street in Buffalo. They had good performers

C.N. What was it like?

C.W. A mixture of shows.

C.N. What kind of shows?

C.W. Some musical, some dancing, some ... a lot of music

C.N. Was there any entertainment for you in Fort Erie?

C.W. Later they had Ziff's. Mrs. Ziff ran the moving picture house.

It was on Dufferin Street. We used to like to go down to the movies.

C.N. Were these silent movies?

C.W. Yes.

C.N. Do you remember any of them?

C.W. I can't really think of them right now.

C.N. Do you remember when they first got the talking movies in Fort Erie?

C.W. No I wouldn't remember that change.

C.N. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

C.W. I can't really think of anything else.

C.N. On behalf of the Fort Erie Oral History Project I'd like to thank you for talking to me.

C.W. Thank you.

C.N. Thank you.