Mrs. Stephenson: Murillo (exactly as transcribed in handwritten form)

Interviewer: Karen Dubinsky and Helen Lovekin

(Children count to 5--fore run)

K: We're taling today to Mrs. Stephenson, from Murillo. Could you tell me what year you were born in?

Mrs. S: Oh, 1904.

K: Yah, and how long have you lived here?

Mrs. S: And I have lived in Murillo since I came here in 1924.

K: Where from?

Mrs. S: From England.

K: Really? Did you come straight here?

Mrs. S: And I came right to Murillo.

K: Yah?

Mrs. S: Well I came, yiu know, I landed in Montreal, and came to Fort William and came here.

K: Did you come with your family?

Mrs. S: No, I came on my own. Well, my mother brought me to Montreal and then I came up here alone, and I came to my Uncle (Lance)? And I came up to that farm. That's the picture of the farm that I came to. Out on the mining road. And I lived there from then until I moved to Murillo, here in this little house, in about 9 years, about 9 years when I moved out here to live when I lost my husband. I couldn't live on the farm. I had to sell it and I moved to this little house.

this should perhaps be capitalized, but I'm not sure. It was on the original manuscript)

H: What did you arise on the farm?

Mrs. S: Who me, I was orignially raised in England.

H: No, raise on the farm.

Mrs. S: Oh yes, I was raised in England on a farm.

H: No, I mean your livestock.

Mrs. S: Oh yes, we had a dairy farm and sold milk to the Co-op Dairy.

K: What dinds of work did you do on the farm?

Mrs. S: Oh, outdoors. Well, I had to work outdoors and in, but my, I came to my uncle when my uncle was sick. He had asthma. You know what that is. Some days you can work, some days you can't. So I had to practically do his work and let the easy work for him to do because when you have asthma, on a muggy day, you're just like a wind-broken horse. You know, you can't breathe so I did the heavy work and he had to do what he could of the lighter jobs. So that's the way we managed.

K: Is that unusual, then, for the woman to be doing the heavy work on a farm?

Mrs. S: Well, I was raised in England in the war so in England in the war everybody worked. Kids and all--that's how I lost my thumb. And there I worked on the farm at home. England home. I worked on the farm there. We all worked. Everybody worked. And you did everything. You didn't know what you were going to do next. You was fighting for life. That's all.

H: You didn't go into the cities at all to work?

Mrs. S: No. No. No, it was practically, where I was raised,

a farming district, and it was, it was, it was a little seaside resort and the biggest town was only four miles from where I lived and it was... People came there in the summer for their holidays.

H: In (Borden?)

Mrs. S: No, it was called (Gould)? but it was, like (Bordnu-f)? It was a place like that. where they have people from London and oh the bigger cities come there for their holidays.

H: So you lived on a dairy farm in England and you came here to work on your uncles's dairy farm as well?

Mrs. S: Yah.

H: And when you were married?

Mrs. S: I was married to...

H: A dairy farmer?

Mrs. S: No. He wasn't a farmer. He used to work in the bush. You know. Everyone worked in the bush here. Well, that's why werwere. His parentskkept, what is the Murillo Hotel now. His mother kept that as a boarding house and it was a big family and she did all the cooking, and a daughter, her grown-up, daughter, they, each had their jobs and they kept their roomers and they kept the schoolteacher and in those days, in those days, they dispatched the trains from Murillo Station instead of Fort William and they had two operators, day operator and night operator and they had....There was about five men that stayed at Mrs. Stephenson's boarding house

that worked at the station. And take different shifts, you know, and that went on for years and years, and they dispatched the trains from up here and in those days--when I came here, there was no--in the winter, you couldn't go to town with cars, you see, the roads weren't open. The roads weren't kept open then.

H: How did you go to town?

Mrs. S: With a team and sleigh. And the farmers would all grow potatoes to sell in winter and when it got cold, they would have to make loads. They would start off in the morning with a load of sixty bags of potatoes on and they would build the sleigh so that they would have a lantern or something in the centre to keep the potatoes from freezing, and they would cover them with a tarpolin and they would drive like that from here to town all winter long. Maybe three days a week, they'd do like that and, uh, take fruit and vegetables--fruit! --vegetables rather, potatoes mostly, into town.

H: Was that ever one of your duties?

Mrs. S: No. No. I never did that. That was a day's work for a man. It'd start about six in the morning and it would take till about twelve to get there, you know, with a team, and a load of potatoes, sixty bags of potatoes on a load. You see, and it was all heavy horses. They'd have to take their time. And then they would put their horses in. They'd

always have a sale on potatoes. They would take them all to one place, to a store or somewhere, and they would put away, they would take their horses to rest and feed and they could unload their load while the horses were feeding and resting. You worked for your money then, you know. I suppose they got about 90 cents for the bag of potatoes, after they'd got them in there.

K: We have a question about the climate and the environment of Northwestern Ontario. How did you feel that that that made your life particularly different. I guess the fact that you couldn't travel into town.

Mrs. S: Well, we never knew the difference. I mean, as you got, as times in, as times got a little better, well, you got some kind of a car, or you got a truck, and you, the only thing. You did the same work on the farm, only you could get tinto town every day of the week with your stuff with a car instead of having to go in with horses.

K: Did you feel that farming in Northwestern Ontario was comparable to that in England?

Mrs. S: Oh no. There was no comparing. We didn't have to sell things like that over there. Over there, you---farming, you sold the one item and you grew the feed and everything to produce it. You know, you didn't have to buy.....Here.....You didn't have the winters to contend with over there, you see, you had winter, but it wasn't like the

Canaidan. You didn't have snow or ice or that over there. We were too near the sea. The sea helped keep you warm and you could grow something year round there. And your -rops are much better, you know.

H: Did you find the winters a shock?

Mrs. S: No. The funny thing was I ;didn't notice the winter. I was here. For quite a long time in that winter I never even wore rubbers. I wore leather boots the first winter I was here.. And I wore leather boots all winter the first winter I was here. I didn't notice the cold. But the longer you live here, yougget aclimatized totthis weather and you get so used to doing like the rest do I su suppose. Wear the clothes and the things that you wear here. But the first winter you come you don't notice the cold. You can stand the cold better than a Canddian the first winter.

H: I notice it.

Mrs. S: Hard to believe but that's the way it was with me anyhow.

H: And so because you didn't notice the cold, it wasn't as difficult to do your daily chores?

Mrs. S: No. No.

H: You just lived your life.

Mrs. S: You just....Well I remember the first winter that I wore slacks, which I never did in England. I wore a pair of breeches the first winter, which in

England we never wore slacks. It wasn't got to that when I left England. You wore dresses. But the first winter here, I don't know why, but it was about the time when people was going into wearing breeches and that for winter. And of course I can knit because all English people can knit. So I could knit stockings for myself and mitts and things like that which help too , you know, help keep you warm.

H: So it was first the effect of the climate on your farming that you found different.

Mrs. S: No. Not too much different. No.

H: Not much.

Mrs. S: Because farming is farming. Only thing you notice here. Over there you don't turn the cattle out. You don't have to take them and break the ice and wait for them to drink. and see they don't fall and drown. You first turn them out and they can drink you see. You don't have to have--you don't have to have running water in the barns, and things like that over there. Here, you get up for that you see, because you have to keep the water from freezing.

H: Didn't you find that made your household work very difficult? Because the water would freeze?

Mrs. S: Oh no. You'd get so used to it that you don't notice it. You know you have to do it and it didn't seem to bother.

H: What did you do--have a large barrell of water and cut a hole in it every day?

Mrs. S: Every day yes. We'd have to go to the cattle. We had to go to the bush and we had--there was running water in the bush and then in the winter you'd have to go and chop the ice up and make holes so the cows could drink. And stay there and see one didn't push the other in, you know, cause there's always a bah in a herd of cows. There's always some--like kids-- some gonna be there before the others, you know. And then after a while, if we get a serious winter, you might have to haul water for them or then it got that we used to try and dig a well in the bush and then we had to go and put a pump in or dip it up for them, you see. And you had to stay with them to see that they all drank and came home again. Or they maybe get frightened and one would push the other in. Something like that. So you was busy all the time. And, I don't know. You got used to it. And that was the thing to do and you did it, I guess.

H: Was Murillo a farm community when you came here?

Mrs. S: Well yes. There were mostly farmers here dear. Yes. All around, everywhere,-the farms were all around the township you see and Oliver Township was eight miles square or something, quite a big township, you see, and most of the farms was a hundred and sixty acres.

H: That's quite large. They would have to clear that wouldn't they?

Mrs. S: Oh yes. They'd have to clear that and when my uncle came, which was before I did, he said they used to clear land. They'd burn over a peice of land, cut the wood, and burn it over to kill the stump and then, the next thing you know, they had another pice of land then, the next thing you know, they had another piece of land ready for the plough.

K: I want to talk about the social life. What dind of stuff did you do? Maybe acitve community things with your church?_____?

Mrs. S: Yes, ah, they seemed to have had a lot of fun. When I came here their pass-time, they had a lot of dancing. Ah, you know, going from place to place and going to somebody's house Saturday night or something and have a bash. And they would load up a whole load and go somewhere to a dance. That was the thing to do. And they didn't mind staying up all night to dance.

K: Did you go into town?

Mrs. S: You couldn't go into town in the winter, dear. You--if you went to town--but there was trains--there were locals, they called them locals and there was a train went west to--where did they go?--Ignace--up the line somewhere. From Fort William to...

H: Silver Mine?

Mrs. S: Oh no. No. The train would take them to a station way up the line. Was it Ignace? Somewhere like that--that was the division point--division point, you see. And then it would go up today--there was a local that would go up today and then it would come back tomorrow and there was an operator at the station that you could buy a ticket, and get on the train and it used to go up in the morning one day and come back around noon or two o'clock or something and go down to town. So you could go into town like that. And then I think there was a train at night, about eleven o'clock, that if you got into town, you could catch that train in town and it would let you off at a little station. So I can remember if the men wanted to go to a hockey game, they would get into town somehow and they could come home on that eleven o'clock train to the station, you see, and they could get off, and they'd have to get home from there the best way they could.

H: So the women stayed on the farms.

Mrs. S: Well the women didn't go so much then as they do now. But the men went chiefly because the women didn't seem to want to go in the wintertime.

H: Why do you think they didn't want to go?

Mrs. S: Well I think it was too cold, for one thing, dear, and they wasn't that interested in sport as they are today.

H: Did the women do much socializing between themselves,

co-operation on the farm and that?

Mrs. S: Well the farm women helped on the farm of course, and of course a lot of them had growing families and the younger ones, as they grew up, they went to town to work. But I can remember when I came they didn't go to highschool like they do today. You went to such a grade here, to about grade seven, was it? Here. And if you wanted to go to high-school, you went downtown and somebody would take you and keep you and you'd help in the house, help do the work, and help look after the children for your board and you went to highschool. But that's what they did when I came here. It wasn't like they go to school today. But I think they learned more that way because that was the thing to do and that was the only way they could get that much more of an education, you see. They had to work for it.

H: That helps.

Mrs. S: That helps, you see. And I think they were better for it because they knew if they wanted to get ahead, that's what they had to do. But today, this is my opinion, that the kids get it pretty easy today. You know. Then some of them did really well because they wanted to, you see. They wanted to go ahead.

H: Because of the effort.

Mrs. S: Yes. They put the effort into it?

K: Was it common for girls to go on to highschool?

Mrs. S: Pardon?

K: Was it common for girls to go on to high school?

Mrs. S: Oh, the girls used to go too. I think there was just as many girls used to go to highschool as boys. And they did very well. Some of them did real well. But that was the way they had to do it, you see. There's one thing for sure, you didn't have the money to do it dear, and then after I came, then we had what we call "The Hungry Thirties". You didn't have very much then. Only what you worked for.

K: How did the depression affect you?

Mrs. S: Well, I didn't know then, you see. We was used to it. We was used to doing without for so long. How can I explain it? You see, we had gone through the war and things were hard. There was alot of things you couldn't get. You did with what you could and you made made a lot of things for yourself. You know. Everybody seemed to be able to sew or knit so that you clothed yourself and....But there was a lot of things that you didn't have that you have today and nobody seemed to mind. You just had to make your life around what you could afford.

K: Do you think the depression made people more generous in sharing what little they had?

Mrs. S: Oh I think people were very good. The way I had figured it out, everybody was good. They got along well. It was like a community, you see, and every-

body got along just fine with each other because that's all they had. Their pleasures...they make their own pleasures and their little get-togethers and that were kind of home-made. But they enjoyed themselves, I think.

K: If a family was suffering more than another, would there be cases where people would donate things?

Mrs. S: Well they would get help. Or somebody...If there was a case of sickness or something had happened, a disaster or something...Well everybody would dig in and help. Oh yes, people were good to each other, I think. That's the way I saw them. You belonged to the community so, of course, you helped each other.

K: How about the Wars, how did they affect the community? Was there a big affect?

Mrs. S: The war?

K: Either the first or the second World War.

Mrs. S: Well, the first....I always told them I didn't know what war was. I mean, here. I didn't know what war was.

H: Because they had been in Europe?

Mrs. S: They were that far away from it that they didn't know what was was. The men that went to war, volunteered. It was something new. They didn't know what they was going into.

H: Did you ever try to talk any of the men out of going to war?

Mrs. S: No. No. It was no use to talk them ou of it. If they wanted to go they had to...They had to learn what war was. Because you couldn't talk them out of it. Because it got to be in the second War they had to go whether they wanted to go or not. But at first, youssee, it was the volunteers. And in war time one volunteer is worth, at the time that that we thought to make go. So the first war was practically volunteers. They didn't know what they was going into. They didn't know what it was all about. They had to learn that when they got there.

H: Did your husband go?

Mrs. S: No. Yes. He joined when he was seventeen years old. And he was in the first war. And he was in France and he came home and he came back. But then thank goodness, he wasn't my husband then. In the second war he was and he was too old to go. But in the first war the youngsters that did join at seventeen, they didn't know anything about war. They didn't know what they were getting into.

K: What were some of the women's activities during the war as volunteer?

Mrs. S: Well, they begun to take women intthe services in the war and they worked chiefly as cooks and things like that. They were in the Women's Army and they would chiefly do women's jobs and that. Theyy didn't go to the front. Not...but there was alot of things to do.

H: How did the women manage to keep the farms with the men

gone?

Mrs. S: Well the way I did I guess. You just did it.

H: You just did it.

Mrs. S: But, of course, on the farms around here, there was the grandparents. There was grandfathers and there was children in the clan that could help, you see. That was one thing,--that people did here--they were great to--like at threshing time--they go from one to the other and help each other. They didn't have to hire help. You would come and help me and I would come and help you. That kind of a thing you know. They did a lot of that. And saving wood and things like that. They helped each other. And got along like that. They didn't have to hire somebody to do the work. They did it themselves between themselves. No the people were good to work with each other and helped each other out quite a bit and it wasn't like it is today, dear. You wouldn't. Life is a different thing altogether now from then. Then everybody helped each other.

H: Now everybody's for themselves.

Mrs. S: Now everybody's for themselves. It's a different idea altogether now. And I don't know. People got along good together. If you belonged to Murillo or you belonged to Stanley or which ever place you belonged to you were that group. You got along together.

H: So it was like a family.

Mrs. S: Yah, like...

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Mrs. S: I forget how many years before I had enough money to go home. Back home.

H: Oh yes to visit.

Mrs. S: But _____?

H: But you had to come here from such a veautiful clean part of the world into the bush.

Mrs. S: Oh yes. It was quite a difference you know. I can remember coming up here on the CN and I had to stop overnight at Capriole and I didn't know anybody but there's one hotel at Capriole and the hotel manager was used to letting people having them stay overnight, and catch a train the next morning at eight or something like that. And then I can remember catching the train and coming on and I suppose it was North Bay that I had to change trains and that was in the middle of the night. And I can remember as long as I live--I was only young you know. I suppose about nineteen. And I had to get off the train that I was on and go across the bridge, the river, and get on to another train to take the train to Fort William. You travel all day and all night and the next morning I got into Fort William about eight o'clock in the morning. Then I had to phone my incle that I was in Fort William and had to wait at the station 'til he drove into the station to get me. But you see

by the time I came from the time they came, he had got a car and...But when they came they had to come right on to Murillo and then the train didn't put them off at Murillo and they put them off at a Kaministiqua. And they walked back, they walked the track, my uncle and I walked the track from Kam to Murillo. And you know what walking the track is. I walked the track lots but it was no fun.

H: With all your bags and everything?

Mrs. S: Oh they left their luggage. They just walked back. They just left their luggage in the station and told the man at the station to send their luggage back to Murillo, on a train that would come down.

K: Was that quite an adventure for you, travelling here by yourself when you were...?

Mrs. S: Well, it was, yes, dear, because you didn't know the country and you didn't know the people. But I'm one of these...I'm the one that should go to Canada because I mix with everybody. I didn't mind it. It was quite an adventure but then it wasn't like it is today. You had bunks--bunk up here to sleep on--You didn't mind it, though. It was something new--something you'd never done before.

K: We mentioned the Suffragist England. Do you know anything about the Suffrage movement in Canada?

Mrs. S: No dear, I don't know very much about the Suffrage movement at all. I wasn't used to it at all.

K: How did you think about it then? Did women discuss it, do you remember??

Mrs. S: We never seemed to. I can't remember in my raising we had nothing to do with the Suffrage. Only thing I used to...the men used to tease the women about being Suffragettes, but they never were. Not where I came from, they weren't.

H: From the country rather than the city?

Mrs. S: From the country...they...no. They might have been in the city or in the bigger cities because, you see, in England--England is a small country, but their cities are big and its cities. It isn't Fort William and Port Arthur. It's cities like Birmingham and places like that where you're really crowded.

K: Do you think that, maybe the women in the country, in rural areas had almost an equality with men, then, since they were doing similar work?

Mrs. S: There wasn't, as near as I can remember to Murillo, there was nobody that really...they were just farm people...They weren't business people--you know what I mean--I'm not slighting them or anything--they were just farm people.

H: Everyone was valuable.

Mrs. S: Yes. Yes. They weren't...

H: Yes, I understand.

Mrs. S: They weren't better than somebody else or anything. They were a nicely closely-knit

community. You know, everybody was friends with everybody else. And they grew up together and I think it was an awful nice way to live. So they seemed to get along good together and the kids went to school together and they did everything.

H; Together.

Mrs. S: Together. It was quite a togetherness. Yes. That's the way I figured it anyhow. I thought it was nice what they used to do.

K: So women were happy with their lives.

Mrs. S: Yes. They were quite happy dear. They were quite happy to live the life that they were living. And they seemed to have a good time together, and nobody suffered I don't think. Nobody suffered. If they didn't work for it, they didn't have it, that's all.

H: And that would be a whole family's fault. And not just one member of the family.

Mrs. S: No I don't think so. I think they got along quite well.

K: You think a life of a woman on a farm has changed alot?

Mrs. S: Oh yes.

K: In what ways?

Mrs. S: It's different altogether dear. The women don't know nothing, you see. They got machinery and most of the women don't have to go out to work. And then they got milking machines. Some women that really want to get along, well of course they help

outside. But it isn't like it used to be where everybody had their jobs to do. Whether you wanted to or not. If you didn't do it, you didn't have it. That's all. But now, you see, they all have machinery to work with, and they have cars. Now, instead of the women staying home and raising the family, the women are out to work and they've got somebody to babysit.

K: How do you feel about that?

Mrs. S: I don't like it. I think that I wouldn't do it if I had to start out tomorrow. I would want to raise my own family. But now I know there's young people like you girls who get married and they're in town doing a job and they've got a hired girl to look after the house and raise the kids. Well that's not right. That's not making a home. A mother has to be home. If you want a home it's got to be mother at the head of it.

H: The mother's the head of the family?

Mrs. S: The mother is the one that keeps the thing together. That's my opinion. That's what I would do if I was young tomorrow. If I was young, no matter. If my husband was working, I would be home, looking after the house, and his meals would be ready for him when he got home from work. If he didn't get home to have his meal when it was ready, that would be his fault. Yes because the trouble today--I'm not slighting anybody--but the trouble today with them

all, you see, if they go. The trouble is alot of them work in town, come in, and instead of coming home, they have to go and have beer before coming home. A beer gets to two or three and they might come to supper at six o'clock or they might not get home 'til all hours of the night. Well that would be their fault. If I was keeping house, they'd come home to supper at six o'clock, and the supper would be put away and if he come after, well, that would be...

H: Too bad.

Mrs. S: Too bad. They'd have to eat wherever they was visiting, or...because I don't hold to that. I don't hold to these....There's kids here in the villages...I've seen them raised from little. I've seen them raised from this high. Well, now they're old enough that they're married and they're working in town. Well they've got a hired girl to run the house and they're working a computer in town, and the maid is raising the children and getting the supper and all this crap. Well that's not being a mother, I don't think.

H: One thing that always interested me, was that when you live onaa farm, you have a lot of jobs to do.

Mrs. S: You have a lot of jobs.

H: You have a lot of chores and, how do you manage the children and do your chores at the same time?

Mrs. S: Well, of course, I haven't got any kids, but the

ones that had them--they take the kids with them--well of course they'll...And now they don't do like they used to because, you see, they have machinery to milk the cows. The men can do the milking and that. And the mother can stay in and get the breakfast and get the kids ready for school and things like that--Where the mother used to go out and help some too, you see. But now with the machinery to work with and that, the men could do that without the mother helping. But in days gone by, they used to go out. I can remember when I came, my aunt and my uncle went to out to milk. Then I got that I could go out and...When I got used to the cows, in a few days, well I could go and milk. And she could take a little longer to get up and have the breakfast ready when we came in from milking and I took over her place in that business but when I came here it was a little different than I was used to but I was used to working on a farm in the old country for wages, for working for somebody else and being paid for it. But all that I had to do outside was help milk and feed the cows. And usually the boss's wife she would help too and she would look after the chickens and pick up the eggs and all that.

H: So on your own farm though, if there was just you and your husband?

Mrs. S: You helped each other, yes.

H: You split up the work...

Mrs. S: Yes. We each had our chores to do and helped each other, you see. And when it was like planting potatoes or digging potatoes, well I was out helping with him. We helped each other. The more you helped each other, the more you got for your--you know--you got more of a something together for yourself. You did that. I mean that is life. That's the way you live. Isn't it? Helping each other. When you get married, well, you help each other and that's the way it was with us on the farm. And I used to love to go to the bush and get wood together. He would cut it down and I could help him bring it up and put it in piles and I'd go and help haul it home with him and things like that. Well it was something to do you see, because you didn't want to be sitting in the house and your husband out working alone all day long. You could go and help him.

K: Do you think that made for a happier marriage?

Mrs. S: I think so, Yes. You were helping each other. You was doing it for your own good and the more you did the more you got for yourself. That was the way we used to do. And then your friends and neighbours, you'd get up a big pile of wood, and you'd go...I wouldn't go but the man would go and help your neighbours haul wood and three or four neighbours together, they would be, say at our

place this morning, and one or the other neighbours this afternoon or maybe two or three places in a day. It all depended on the size of the piles of wood. And they get their wood all cut upaand then the woman would stay home. If she wanted tojshe could split a little wood or do something just to pass the time. Or you could sit in the house and read if you wanted to. You didn't have to do all the work. So that's the way we got along in those days.

H: You were happy you were doing it.

Mrs. S: We were happy, yes and then you'd go to a neighbours and visit or have a game of cards. It was great. In my younger days here, cards played a big thing. You know, everybody played cards. So you never was lonesome.

H: Most people around (to see)?

Mrs. S: Yes, say I lived here and you could have lived two or three miles from here--we had a car--and you dould go there and you'd sit and talk for a few minutes, and out would come the cards and you'd play cards, and have a good time together and tease each other and have a lunch and come home. And that's what we used to do for pass-time, and they used to have lots of dances and always they'd go somewhere every Saturday night and danced all night. I used to have a good time years ago. I think far better than they do now. The young

people now--You don't see them! Of course, the young people, now, they get on the bus in the morning here at seven thirty, they go into town and some go to this school, and some go to that, wherever they go to school, and then they're in town all day. You don't know whether they're at school or where they are. Half of them aren't at school. They're sunning the street.

H: You talked about every winter, your water being frozen, How did you manage your wash?

Mrs. S: Oh, we used to melt snow many years ago and sometimes it would snow and maybe it would pour and you'd save the soft water, and wash that day. I still do it. I can't get over saving myself water.

K: It sounds like...

Mrs. S: And is it ever beautiful to have a bath...

H: In soft water.

Mrs. S: In soft water. And does it feel different. And I know. It's beautiful dear. There's so much difference in soft water. I always...and even in the winter when I wash my hair, if I haven't got soft water, I melt snow. I melt snow for to wash my hair and things like that. I still do it.

H: It's good for her hair.

Mrs. S: Oh yes, beautiful. But, on the whole, I suppose we've had our hard times but it was hard in the

hungry thirties. It was hard in the thirties.

H: In what way?

Mrs. S: Well, in the thirties, you see, my uncle had died and my aunt and I was alone. I think for about eight years my aunt and I farmed alone and I got somebody to--I got a neighbour to help to do my ploughing and the seeding in the spring and I did... I could cut the hay and everything and I used to cut hay and coil it and then I would get two or three of the neighbours would come one day and help haul it. I had a thing to unload it with and I could build my own stack. I got all kinds of pictures --I don't know where they are now but I always had pictures of everything I did. And I used to build my stack. Now I can't put up a lightbulb myself. But then I used to finish up the stack and ride down...come down the hayfork.

H: That's a bit of hard work. It takes time to do that.

Mrs. S: Well, it's talent, yes, you have to know how. But I used to do that and I could build my own haystack better than...I could build it. But, you see, I got the knack. You know, you, unload a bale of hay. You build your load so that you can take off a big forkfull here and you take off a big forkfull there, and so on and then when the hay gets up on the stack, whenever you're driving out the team, you say, woe, and you stick your fork in that hay and the stack

might be from here to over there. If I want to put it over there, I push it there and then I say "Trip up." ~~(parkaps xxhis xshould xbe x"Gid up")~~

H: I see.

Mrs. S: And they trip it. And you trip it you see, and you don;t fork lift trip it, you just buildiit.=

H: Oh, yah.

Mrs. S: And the next forful comes up and you putiit over there. If you want to make your corners, you just push your big forkful. It was up in the air. You could do anything with it. There wasn't that much hard work. You just pushed it. And then you yelled to them to trip.

H: That's a good idea.

Mrs. S: That's how you did it. It was nothing to build a stack of hay. It was as easy to make it in a stack as it was to put it in the barn.

H: That's a good idea.

Mrs. S: And then, she bails it, you brought it right up to the last forkful and then I'd have to ride the fork down. I didn't mind. I was sojused to it. I was young then. I don't suppose I could unloose the .....? That's the kids you know. I.....

H: Did you find that....did you feel freer in Canada than in England?

Mrs. S: Oh no. I don't know that I was freer than In England. We were free there. But I was free in

Canada. You were free in Canada. If you get along with the crowd, you're okay. You're one of the gang.

H: You didn't have to fit in anywhere?

Mrs.S: No. And if...Well people weren't stuck up then, like they are now. They got...you see--going to town to school--going to town--and they've got to go to town--and they've got to dress. They've got to go to town to go to the show or to go to dinner or something or they have to dress for the evening. Where--when you would go out together you only had one dress.

H: For going out?

Mrs. S: So that didn't make me different. That's all you had so you didn't have to be better than Mrs. Jones. I think years ago, they was much happier than they are today. That's what I notice. It's got to be a little too above themselves. You see in England, you have the different classes. There's the upper class people, the wealthy people and they treat the people that work for them real well. You are treated real well if you work for somebody else because they're born to the gentry. If you're not born in that class, you're not in that class, in England, you know. I don't know dear, but this is one thing I will always be proud of--that--when the Queen came to Old Fort William, I had a friend of mine, he used to teach school. You might--What school did you go to?

H: I didn't go to highschool here.

Mrs. S: Oh.

H: But Karen did.

Mrs. S: Did you go to Fort William?

Mrs. S: Mr. Love--he's a highschool teacher. Do you know him? Well he's a great friend of mine. We're friends. We've been friends for over twenty years. He used to come to our place out on the farm. He loved to come there. And I used to walk the tracks with him. I said I don't know how he ever wanted to be a schoolteacher, because he loved trains. And I walked miles and miles of tracks with Bob. He hated bricks and mortar. Hef came from--he wassborn in the States and New York and Philadelphia and Boston and all those places and _____and he was quite happy here--out on the farm--he used to be--I used to--whenever he wanted to go up the tarack I'd go with him--and Lazzy used...I'd say to Laz, do you want to go with us? No. He used to work on the track. Laz. My husband. No, he didn't want to go on the track. He'd walked all the track he'd wanted to. So I used to go with Bob and we used to go on the track and he comes here yet. He comes here for his holidays and he comes here for Christmas. And everything. We're just likeoone of the family, you know. And he has house down in Vickers Heights.

H: Were you able to meet the queen? Did he manage

something so you could go and see her when she came to Old Fort William?

Mrs. S. Who, Bot?

H: Yah.

Mrs. S: Oh, well, he comes. He comes here and stays if he wants to. John, next door, I didn't know John. He was from Nottingham and his mother wanted me to come over and visit her because I was so good to John so I went to Nottingham--you know Nottingham forest--it's like it was in Robin Hood's day.

H: Smaller maybe, but it's still there.

Mrs. S: Yes, and another day I had a birthday and the first phone call. I answered the phone and that was John, from home. And he said, what was it now? He said something and then he said, could I talk to Mr. Brown? And I said, John, where are you? I knew his voice. Oh, he said, I'm home. I thought maybe he'd come back to Canada (should be England) and he was ringing for to come here. So I said, well wait a minute. I'll get Charlie see if he knows your voice. So I got the cat from sleeping and put him up to the phone and I said this is your pa. And he couldn't understand. He couldn't think that that was John on the phone, you know. He couldn't realize it was John. He couldn't realize it was his voice over the phone, you see. But I knew his voice right away. He said that

he wanted to talk to Mr. Brown. It was John's voice. He didn't say it was John. He said could I talk to Mr. Brown and I said, John, where are you? I was hoping he was back in Canada.

H: Do you feel that England is still your home, or have you be.....

Mrs. S: Oh, England is home. England will always be home, dear.

H: That's your home?

Mrs. S: Oh, yes. Because when you was raised there for twenty years that's home. I mean you went through a lot with England.

H: Well you did the first world war.

Mrs. S: Yes. Oh, yes. And, oh, I don't know. English people are...they're a wonderful gang too. They're wonderful. And what they went through. Nobody knows what they went through. I mean, we lived right on the coast, you see. We looked out, from where I lived, we looked out onto the Atlantic Ocean like looking out over Lake Superior here. And you see, we wasn't a bit afraid of the Germans. We wasn't afraid. We wasn't afraid of anything because there was the naby--so far apart. We were surrounded with ships out as far as you co could--you saw them and we as cocky as heck. We wasn't afraid of anything because the Royal Navy was guarding us. And sometimes you'd be in bed at night and you're bed would shake under you and

you'd hear the guns. Well, that's all right. The Ger....we, where I lived there was small ships brought food into _____and the Germans you see, they wanted all the supplies. They didn't want the people. They didn't want to kill us. They wanted the supplies and they would catch our little ships coming in with a load of flour or whatever they was coming with and they put...there was about three men on a motor ship, you know, and they put them in their guns and take their supplies and they didn't want the men, nor the ship. They wanted them to keep bringing supplies to England so they could steal them.

H: Do you think that experience of being not afraid and a little cocky, because that was a dangerous place to be....

Mrs. S. It was but we weren't afraid.

H: I know. Do you think that helped you when you came up here?

Mrs. S: I think so.

H: Not being afraid?

Mrs. S: Because. But you see. We got that in us, too. We got that. It's born in us. We can't help it. You're fighting for. It's yours and you're not going to giveiit up. That's the way we're made.

H: So you took athat attitude to Canada and made a good life.

Tape two

Mrs. S: And there was an Englishman, a teacher that he

taught with--a teacher that was English born.

H: (question inaudible)
Do you think that you grew anymore, spiritually, after you came to Canada?

Mrs. S: Oh, I don't know, dear. I think by the time you're twenty years old, you have grown to what you're going to be. Don't you?

H: Personally I agree with you.

Mrs. S: I mean, we will always be English because we were English. We were born English. There's something. You're English and that's it. You see, if somebody says something about England...I don't know about you...But to me, if anybody says something about England, I'm right up there. Right away. England comes first.

H: So you always kept that with you, here?

Mrs. S: Oh, yes. Well I was born an Englishman. I was raised an Englishman, and I'm still English. I'll always be English. English people, there's s something in them that's there. It's there. Yes. You can't help it...I don't know. There's something about them. We went through so much in the war. I can remember when I was only going to school in the first war, when Germany, when they really butchered the Belgians. And one of the head--the head men of Belgiam was shipped out to where we lived, _____, he was sent there

for him to be safe. And us kids, we put on a program, you know, put on a real concert, and the money we made was for the Belgians. And I remember--I was thinking about that poor old man last night--I forget his name--but he was only a little man. He still wore his badg--honours, you know, and...but he was dressed as a gentleman. And he thanked us kids...we were only kids and he thanked us for doing it for his country. And he cried like a baby, and I never forgot him. He was an oldish man, but you see, he was just as true to his country as we were to ours. And he was so proud of us kids. We were only kids doing this for his country. I'll never forget him.

H: Well, you came down here, shortly, ahy, not too many years after the war ended. There's people from all different countries here, that might have been fighting each other in Europe. Was there tension between these different groups?

Mrs. S: No, I still, I got very good friends that are German. And I treat them as friends. I mean I wasn't fighting <u>them</u>--they weren't fighting me. They couldn't help it.

H: So people find themselves caught in these situations.

Mrs. S: Yah, but you don't let it bother you. Just be friends. They didn't want to fight any more than we wanted to fight. The just had to do as they were told, you know. I still got lots of German

friends. And some of them are real good, you know, well raised people, too. They're well raised some of them.

H: So, in Murillo itself, there wasn't any conflict between people from different nationalities?

Mrs. S: No. The only thing, if you said something to them, you know, oh, you bloody Englishman or something like that, well, you just let that slide by. You know. You never let that upset you. You're still English. I remember there was an English boy out here. He married a girl from overseas. He married her and they came over here and they had some kids and then she went home and she took the kids home and then she shipped two back here and she kept two at home. Well, now the one come back here from London when he was a young man and he when he come in the door one day and he didn't even talk like himself. Oh, I said, oh, for gosh sake, we got a cockney! And he looked at me and he had a good grin and we've been friends ever since. I said, oh, gosh, we've got a cockney and, you know, he talked like a cockney.

H: ?

K: We've been learning about something called Women's Institutes that were big in the rural areas. Were you involved...was there a Murillo Women's Institute?

Mrs. S: No, dear, I wasn't. The Institute was about done when I came. I can remember when I came there

was an Institute but it was about dying out.

K: Do you remember what kind of things they did?

Mrs. S: Oh, yes. They did a lot of work for...you know, they did a lot of sewing and things like when the war was on and they had--one thing they did have--they had a nice library and Mrs. Merkly kept it--up where our store is now. She had a rooming house there and one little place about like that; she had for a library for the Women's Institute and you could go there and borrow books. She used to keep account of the books you got and then she put them in and kept track of who had what, you know. But the Institute died out about the time I came. Well, it's like everything else, the old ones got too old and the younger ones wouldn't carry on. Not like it is in our church; I'm an Anglican. And we had a WA, and a WA did the--the WA in the church, they do all the work that the men won't do.

H: Yes, basically.

Mrs. S: And you see, we used to put on big meals,--dinners and things like that and make the money and I was the secretary--I was the treasurer. I handled the money. They used to say we give her the money and boy she hangs on to it. She knows how to handle money. So they would put me in the treasurer. There was the president and the secretary and the treasurer. But the money all come to me, you see. I was the treasurer. And I knew how to put it away

in the bank and keep it.

H: Keep hold of it.

Mrs. S: Yah. Keep hold of it. I didn't...and make them earn more, you see. Not because you had a few dollars in the bank that you would make. You had to keep on making more.

H: You ran your household that way as well?

Mrs. S: Yah. I ran the household that way too.

K: Was it special for you to have the opportunity to work with other women in associations like that?

Mrs. S: Well, I can get along with people, you see. I don't care what I say. I think this is where I get along and if I want to swear, I swear. Now we've got a minister and I think we're going to like him. He said to me the other day--he came to the church, they had the special service when he came. He has four or five churches under him you see. He isn't a minister yet. He has to be ordained. But he said to me--I think we're going to like him because he's one of these mixers. He says, "I'll be out as soon as I can. Have you got lots of children?" On our street, you've got everything. There are kids and cats and dogs and bicycles and I said you name it and we've got it. So he's going to get along all right with us. So the kids they all come here. They all come here, you know. All the neighbours' kids come here and I trust them. I buy candies for them. I go to town and I get them, and they can

have two each. And they help themselves. They know where the can is. They go and get the can and they bring it up and put it on the table and "I want that one" and "I want that one". I'll say "two each". And they take the two each, however many there is there, and they put the can back and put it away. I don't give them to them, they help themselves and I trust them. I trust them to take two each. And sometimes I go to town with them. I got a bus to go to town, too. It's a school bus that takes the kids to school and then it picks us up at twenty minutes to ten. It goes into town to the bus stop outside of Eaton's, and Eaton's are very good to us. We're allowed , if we are tired, we can sit on those chairs where they try on shoes and that, they let us do that. And I said, "Well that's very nice of you. You're doing that for us. I said, we will eat up at the dining room. So we go there, and we have a meal in town. We go away, you see, about twenty to ten and they pick us up again. The bus picks us up again at two in the afternoon. So she come there to the bus stop. And of course, everybody laughs at us. You see, and they'll say, "Oh, here comes Murillo bus", you know, " There's lots of them, there's about seven of them come all one after the other. And we'll be in between sometimes. "Oh, here comes the Murillo bus". We don't care.

We answer them back, that's all.

H: As a woman, you never thought of yourself as a specific interest group. You never set yourself apart from what the men were doing. _____You talked about how you helped each other _____

Mrs. S: Oh, we helped each other, yes. And we always--when the boys played ball, it was always as long as I can remember, you know, you went to the ballgame. And the Kakabeka ladies would be behind their team and we would be behind ours and we used to fight like tom cats. Don't you remember going to ballgames?

H&K: Yes.

Mrs. S: Oh, my god. But you know I've lost interest in the younger generation. They don't play ball like the old ones usedxto. But we had a hockey team and we had a ball team. Every village had a ball team, and of course theirs was the best, you know that. That's how wefgot along with each other. And then we always had a dinner or something at the end of the year, the _____ and everybody turned out to that, and everybody gave to it and cooked for the dinner, you know, and you bought your dinner just the same. That was the community as a whole. It was much better then than it is now.

H: You think it's gone down.

Mrs. S: It's gone down. The younger people, you see,

they get on the bus and go to town to school. They mix with city kids. In high school they mix them with a different type of individual and it got to be that our kids have left us. You know, they're marrying people from away where they used to marry, into the families here, and now they've gone to town and they're marrying into people that we don't know and we don't know none of the-- There was one of the boys that--Tommy--that of the woman that keeps the post office. One of her boys was married Saturday night. Well he's married to somebody from town that we don't know. We've got to get to know her. You know. And the boy next door, he's going to marry a girl from town. Well she was out cutting the grass for him yesterday, and she's going to be all right. So I said...I seen her working. I knew who she was. So I'm out and I said, "Well, you know, this is a funny thing", I said, "When I'm cutting my lawn, there's never nobody that comes to help". But I said, "Allan, he's got a girl to help him". And she just laughed. I knew who she was, you know. But I said that never happens to me.

H: You think she'll fit in better because she's...

Mrs. S: Oh, she'll fit in because she's a good worker.

H: She's a good worker.

Mrs. S: Yes. She was out and they cut all the grass yesterday. So they're not going to look any

worse than the rest of us. Oh, no. And over there, in that house, the boy that lives over there--he drives one of these tractor-trailers. And in the winter, there was only once in the winter, that it snowed and then it rained and it was all frozen and I couldn't do a thing with the snow, you know. And I thought I heard a tractor closer to me than over on the other side--or there--and I went out to see what he was doing and he got me ploughed out. And I said, "are you Danny?", and he said "no, I'm David". So I said "well, that's good of you to plough me out". I said, "let my pay you for doing it." He said "no. The pleasure is mine". He wouldn't let me pay him for doing it.

H: ?

Mrs. S: So, you know. This is young people. The young people are good. They're still good. But there...

H: They're changing.

Mrs. S: His wife is from town. Her name is Margo. Then the lady down there is Sandra. You know, you're all friends. And the kids up here is our kids. The kids on our street is our kids. They all belong to us. The don't belong to Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Brown. They belong to us. They're our kids.

H: When they were growing up, before Murillo had more transportation, ah, people weren't living on their farms and just making what they could from it. Were all

the kids able to go from farmhouse to farmhouse?

Mrs. S: Oh, yes. They used to be friends just the same. And skate. And they walked miles to get from one place to the other. They had to walk then. They wouldn't do it now, but they did then because that was the only way they could get there you see.

H: So if the family was busy--if a baby was being born--or something...

Mrs. S: Oh yes, well somebody would look after them.

H: The kids.

Mrs. S: Oh sure, yes. It didn't make no difference if there was six in the bed, as long as they got that sleep. Oh, no--the people in the village--you were a community. I noticed that if you belonged to Murillo, you belonged to Murillo.

H: And Murillo belongs to you.

Mrs. S: Yah, but if you go to town, you don't know your next-door-neighbour. Well here you know everybody. And you expect to be friends with everybody. And when people come here to live I get a whole bunch of new neighbours. Well, I'm not one to go snooping around to know what their name is, you know, just to be friends with them. I don't want to bore into their house or anything, but well, I let them know to come on up sometime and have a cup of tea, and that's it, and then you're friends. That's what we do in these communities like this. We're all friends and it used to be the same at

home, and where I lived at home, we had three churches, and each church, if one church was having something special, the other two churches closed their doors so that everybody could go to the church that was having the--that's what we used to do and there was Anglican and United Methodist and Weslian Methodist. And when there was something special like there was in war time, there was always something special, it was nothing for all three ministers to be in the pulp8t together. That's the way we got along.

H: This is the best way to live.

Mrs. S: Well I think that's the way to live. Because one is just as good as another. It's the same--just--you know, you're all going to the same place one way or the other, aren't you?

H: ?

Mrs. S: That's what I think. Oh, you girls, would you like a cup of tea?

K: Yes please. I meant to ask you a question, your opinion on something that recently happened. You may have read about it in the newspapers, where a woman and man had a farm--a married woman, you know, a couple, had a farm together and they both worked it but I believe he had another job where he put the money down for the farm so it was in his name and then they divorced and they decided that, because even though the woman had worked , probably just as hard as the man on

it, that she wasn't entitled to it because she didn't put the money in. Did you feel, when you and your husband had the farm, that it was eqally yours together?

Mrs. S: Well, I never knowed about it dear, because I came here to live with my uncle and my aunt and I worked, you see, because I had to do a lot of outside work because when he was really sick--you know what asthma is like--you can't breathe and so he had to do the running around jobs that he could drive a car to do, and I used to do his work. But we worked together and we got along together, you see. And then of course when he died, my aunt and I stayed on the farm and we run it, for, I guess, eight or nine years. Then I got married after all that time, you know.

K: And it was your farm.

Mrs. S: And it more or less fell back to me. I never--it just feel back to me. There was no, well, done by law--it just came to me.

K: You think, in general though, that if a man and woman purchase a farm together or the man happens to pay for it, that it is theirs, do you think?

Mrs. S: Well, yes, if the man and the woman wasn't related. If they weren't of the same relatives, relations, I think they should have some agreement, yes. We always got along because you see I was young and they were old. I was young enough to do the work

and I mean I didn't grow up with the young people of my age here. So it wasn't the same as I went to school with them. Was it? We were friends but... It wasn't as if it was people that was born and we were raised together.

(end of tape)