

Transcript Summary: Lynn Wilkinson and Ada Thiessen
Prepared by Brian Vose

Lynn Wilkinson interviews Ada Thiessen, who lived at one time on a Langley farm which became part of TWU property. This interview is very patchy but at times tells a continuous story. Most of the interview is centred around a scrapbook that the interviewer and the interviewee are looking at. There are many long excerpts read by Lynn Wilkinson, the interviewer, from a diary written by Ada Thiessen's uncle, Adam Stoddart, as well as from the text accompanying the pictures in the scrapbook.

0-300*: The interview begins with Ada Thiessen talking briefly about her birthplace in Langley. They then talk about how Ada's father's family came to Langley from New Brunswick. Following this, they talk about how Ada's mother's family came to Langley from Lockerbie, Scotland, and how they came to know the Towles.

300-600: The first half of this period is mostly conversational, talking about the scrapbook and pointing out people in the pictures. The second half is a reading by Lynn of the diary of Adam Stoddart, which gives an account of how, when they came to Canada, they came through Montreal and eventually found their way to St. Paul, Minnesota.

600-900: Ada then recounts how her aunt married into the Jardine family in Minnesota, and how they had decided to come to Canada. Lynn then reads from the diary of Adam Stoddart again, giving us an extended look at the trip from Lockerbie, Scotland to Boston and eventually to Montreal.

900-1200: Ada talks about her six children, her brother, Addy, and her mother and father.

1200-1500: Lynn reads a funny account of Ada's father, Stanley Clayton Towle. They then talk a little about the family of Ada's first husband, Harry Smith. Lynn then begins to read about how the Towles came to know the Smiths.

1500-1800: The story continues of the Towles and the Smiths, and Ada and Lynn talk a little about Harry.

1800-2100: Lynn continues to read about the farm and how the area is now part of the "Trinity college." The story shifts to Ada and Harry and how they came together.

2100-2400: Lynn and Ada talk about how Harry proposed to Ada and how everyone prepared for the wedding. Lynn then reads a funny account of how the cows got loose on the day of the wedding.

2400-2700: They begin by talking about the wedding and who took part in it. They then move to a brief discussion about Ford cars and the house on Trinity's property referred to as "Hubbard House." Ada then recounts the days on the farm without electricity or running water.

2700-3000: Ada recounts how they would get their groceries from Vancouver, and how the Smiths and the Towles would work together to make apple cider to sell.

3000-3300: Ada tells about how she and Harry finally moved off the farm and into Vancouver.

3300-3600: Ada tells about Harry's job hauling milk between Glen Valley and Fraser Valley Dairy, and how he would work all day and study all night to become an industrial art teacher.

A = Ada Thiessen (interviewee)

L = Lynn Wilkinson (interviewer)

L: Uh, Mrs. Thiessen, can you tell me a little bit about, um, your birthplace?

A: I was born at, at, right in Langley but, but for now, I did afterwards call it Jardine Station, but it was Langley all, it was all Langley all around there, and our post office box was always Fort Langley in those days.

L: Fort Langley?

A: Uh hmm.

L: And then it became Jardine--

A: Uh--

L: --Station. (both talking at once)

A: When the B.C. Electric went through there was a station there and they called it Jardine where the road crosses the railway.

L: Can I ask you what your year born was?

A: How nice, well(??) ____ (??). (both laugh) Uh, 1900.

L: Oh, that's an easy one to remember, isn't it? (both laugh) Right at the turn of the century, how exciting too.

A: Uh hmm. So, uh--

L: Well what about your family now. Uh, you grew up in, in a farming community--

A: Well, my dad was, he came to Langley, he was only ten years old.

L: Hmm.

A: And their people came from New Brunswick and they had to, there was no CPR in those days and they had to come by Southern Pacific to, uh, San Francisco, and then they came up on a sailing ship, from San Francisco and landed there what was then, Gastown.

L: Oh yes.

A: And his father was a, uh, an axe man and he was sent to hew spars for sailing ships.

L: Hmm, yes, there was a lot of shipbuilding then.

A: Uh huh.

L: Uh huh.

A: New Brunswick people were known as good axe men, you know.

L: Uh hmm.

A: So that's what they came there for, and they lived at what they called Moodyville, then, for a short time, and then they moved to Fort Langley--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --and my dad and his sister, Ida Drummond (??) now, or was later Ida Drummond (??) and his brother Reid (??) or Reed (??) Towle (??). Their names are in the book, the, at, uh--

L: The one at Langley.

A: In the Langley--museum there--

L: Oh yes.

A: --and they have the school, uh, registered. And they went to school and old Mr. Holding (??) was their teacher. So, um--

L: And, um, so this was in the 1880s, I guess.

A: I guess it was, it must, if he was, um--

L: I can figure that out-- (unintelligible).

A: --nineteen, uh, came— (both talking at once)

L: He came when he was ten.

A: He was ten years old, so--

L: Uh hmm.

A: He was, uh, I think he was born about, uh, 1862.

L: Hmm, so about, um, seventy-two.

A: So it would be 1872, I suppose he went to school there.

L: That's so interesting. And, um, that's what--that's a little bit about your father. What was your mother, uh--

A: Her-- (talking simultaneously)

L: --like?

A: Her name was Agnes Stoddart (??).

L: Oh yes.

A: And they came from Scotland, from Lockerbie, Scotland, and they had stayed in, uh, Saint Paul, Minnesota for three years, but they came out and bought that land, which was after known--it's known as the Taylor ranch--

L: Uh hmm.

A: That was up above the station, where of course there was no station or anything there when they came, and they, uh--

L: I guess there wasn't even the railroad tracks or anything there.

A: No, the _____ (??), it didn't come till 1909.

L: Uh hmm.

A: But they, uh, there was just nothing, there were, well mother said there were only two white girls in Langley when they came. She had two or three other sisters, one, two were married, and--two single sisters, and a brother-in-law and another man, and they were carpenters so they built them a house (0300). And in the meantime, they had to live over on the hillside, where my Uncle Reid (??) had a little house and he shared it with them till their house was built.

L: This is Reid Towle (??)

A: Uh huh, that's a brother of my dad's.

L: Uh hmm.

A: So they--

L: So I see how the families were very--

A: Uh hmm.

L: --close.

A: But, uh, everybody had to help each other--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --in those days, I guess it was, and uh--my dad's, um, mother, but they, she was a great nurse, or kind of a midwife and that sort of thing in those early days, and then, she and my uncle, they had a hotel right, um, which was right out in the river now cause it had to be moved out, it became a sandbar in there.

L: Uh hmm. (creaking sounds)

A: And they, or the river came up, kept coming up, and they had to, their, their building had to be moved back, right where the, the, um, train, CNR went right through that little (laughs), later, oh I don't know what year about, fourteen maybe, and--

L: Uh hmm.

A: There was no train at the--

L: And did you have brothers and sisters that lived there--

A: Yes. Two brothers, uh, three brothers and, uh, no sisters--

L: No sisters. Hmm. We're looking at the lovely, um, scrapbook that your daughter made for you.

A: She really gets work done--

L: She's really done well (both speaking; unintelligible), hasn't she?

A: She made, like, a family tree for each one of--

L: Uh hmm, uh hmm. (clattering sounds—dishes?)

A: --and, uh, oh, the storybook, of each one. This--that was a brother. This--

L: I wonder, I wonder if we could start at the beginning then, and just kinda, uh, look through it, and maybe you can reminisce of a few things.

A: Oh, these were--

L: Uh hmm. (sound of pages turning)

A: The--history--

L: Uh hmm.

A: These were my dad's brothers, and then--

L: Oh yes.

A: --my mother's brothers, or sisters--

L: So you have Eliza Towle (??)--

A: That was--

L: --and her two sisters.

A: --her dad's mother.

L: Uh hmm.

A: His dad was gone before I came on the scene, so I never knew him.

L: I see. And who--here we have the Hudson's Bay Company. What's--

A: Well, that was a--

L: So-- (man enters conversation)

A: This is John--

L: This is your husband, John. How do you do? My name's Lynn Wilkinson--

John: Oh yeah.

L: From the college. We're on tape right now, so (laughs), doing a little history. That's okay. Um, isn't that interesting.

A: That, this was a little house that the family had lived in, in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and it's now made into a museum there. So my cousin had--I have a cousin still living in Saint Paul, and she sent me that picture there some time ago.

L: Yes, uh hmm.

A: But, I mentioned Dallas had gone to the museum, or I don't know where, libraries and everything and got a way back, I don't know how she did it, but--

L: She's really done an excellent job. And here she has an article--

A: This is, this is her picture.

L: Oh yes.

A: Herself, it was taken--

L: Dallas Friesen. And, uh, this is an article from the diary of Adam Stoddart (??).

A: That was mother's brother, and he had had a library too, around, di--, um di--, what do you call 'em, diary--

L: Uh hmm, a diary, uh hmm.

A: But, uh, and they'd left and got on the boat there and--

L: They left little Corby (??) en route for America, that's all the things that happened to them, uh hmm. Wow, that's very interesting. I'd like to take a copy of that maybe, sometime.

A: Uh hmm.

L: It's just nice to have things--Now it says here that, uh, "the farms, after we left Montreal, were very large, better cultivated, and better cleared, although there were very large forests yet to be cleared."

A: That--

L: "Many of the forests had been destroyed by fire, at Sarnis," he went across the Saint Clair--

A: It's Sarnia.

L: Sarnia. Oh, it should be Sarnia.

A: Would it be, I guess so?

L: He went across the Saint Clair River by boat, which carried cars, et cetera, to Port Huron--

A: That wouldn't be *cars* as we know it. It would likely be train cars.

L: Yes, probably was. "To Port Huron, where we changed carriages, and went on to Chicago, where we landed at 4:30 A.M. on Sunday morning the twentieth of February, 1881. We stayed in Chicago until nine P.M. and then resumed our journey westward till we came to Saint Paul, on the twenty-first of February, 1881, at 2:35 P.M. There we got a buggy (**0600**), and proceeded to the corner of Summit and Walnut avenues, the Jardine (??) home." I see, so that fam--that family named Jardine (??)--

A: Uh hmm.

L: Um, okay--

A: One--this--my aunt, her name was, they had got married to Uncle John Jardine (??), and so my grandmother thought, they sh--she'd send them out to Canada and see what the country was like, er, and they called it America in those days--

L: Uh hmm.

A: And they, she sent them out to see what it was like, and of course she had read books, that it was nothing but, uh, wonderful country to live up, and he, grandfather had asthma so badly, and I, asthma was something unknown in this, in America, so of course they didn't know anything about this thing.

L: That's right, they didn't know what to do.

A: And it was just, uh, the land of milk and honey, so they--she was quite an enterprising lady, and she decided the women, the family would just have to be ready and go.

L: So they, uh--

A: She got everything in order, and uh, got them all— (truck/car noises)

L: Uh hmm. Maybe I could read this whole section here because it's really very interesting.

A: So you could have it on tape.

L: Yes. This is from the diary of Adam Stoddart (??), brother of Agnes Stoddart (??), who was your mother--

A: Uh hmm.

L: "In 1881, January the twenty-fourth, left little Corby (??) enroute for America, went to--Lockerbie." Lockerbie? [verifying pronunciation]

A: That's right.

L: "To rest for a day and then on to Glasgow. Stayed there a few days, the ship not sailing for another week on account of the density of the fog. Went to Edinburgh and—Penicuik?" Penicuik? [verifying pronunciation]

A: Penicuik.

L: "Penicuik," or something like that, "and then back to Glasgow. Set sail next day about two P.M. on February the third, 1881. We sailed to, tail of banks, where we got 114 shipbuilders who were going to Michigan. They were very riotous and most of them were drunk. Left on February the fourth at twelve o'clock for the land of the West. Next day, whilst passing the Irish coast, we all got seasick and continued so, the weather being stormy for nearly a week. We were ordered out of bed and strewed on deck like a lot of herring hung out to dry." (both laugh) I can imagine. "The seventh of February, terribly stormy. Ship Bohemia (??) went down off the Irish coast, thirty-two lives were lost, four or five saved. Our berth was a way aft cabin and a good deal more comfortable than if we had been in steerage, et cetera. Got pretty fair diet of porridge and hash and beefsteak to breakfast. Soups, potatoes, cold meat for dinner, and tea and cold ham and steak for six o'clock."

A: Hmm. Many of them weren't able to get, eat anything--I think--(both talking at same time)

L: No, I bet they weren't, and then it says "sometimes gruel for supper." What would gruel have been? (car noises)

A: Well, you cook porridge--

L: Yeah.

A: --thin porridge.

L: Uh hmm. "February fifteenth." So it was just taking, took them a little less than a month in that whole time.

A: Uh hmm.

L: Isn't that intriguing. (car squeals tires) "Touched at Halifax. Stopped there from six A.M. till twelve noon. Went ashore. It made a bad impression on all our minds. It is a very broken-down looking place, although it has a beautiful situation. The streets are built along the side of a hill, mostly wood houses. It has a very large barracks, the great depot for our Indian troops. Coming down the river, we passed a few very nice forts in a very commanding position. When we got to sea again, we saw a few whales. Nothing more of importance occurred till we landed in Boston (knocking noise). At the entrance to Boston there is a very large fort. Landing in Boston at one P.M. Got our baggage checked without even being opened. Went from quay [mispronounced] to the city at a distance of five miles by a branch of the Central Vermont car." That again would be the train--

A: Uh hmm.

L: --that they're talking about.

A: Oh sure.

L: "Took, uh, Central Vermont Railway car to Montreal. Crossed over one of the largest bridges in the world across the Saint Lawrence. Changed cars onto the Grand Trunk of Montreal." And then comes the part about Montreal here--

A: Hmm.

L: Before--That's very interesting, isn't it? What a life. (laughs)

A: Uh hmm.

L: You really had to have the pioneering spirit, right?

A: Uh hmm.

L: Quite courageous to go.

A: Then came out here (0900) _____ (??). Just imagine, Mother must have been only about eighteen I guess, by the time they came out here.

L: Uh hmm, really a young girl just.

A: Uh hmm, and there was, there weren't any, uh (muffled thump), about two or three other white girls.

L: Uh hmm. Uh hmm. You had quite a family, uh--yourself, from what I see here. Ada May (??), married, uh, born 1900, married 1921 to Harry E. Smith. And these are your children--

A: Uh hmm.

L: Dallas, 1922; Ronald, 1925; June, 1926; Orrie, 1928; and Marilyn, 1936.

A: Uh hmm.

L: That's a lovely family.

A: Yeah, it is.

L: Five--

A: Yes, five of them.

L: Is that one boy, or is that, was Orrie a boy's name?

A: Yes, Orrie's a boy.

L: Oh, I see.

A: And Dallas is a girl.

L: Yeah, that's--

A: She's the one that did this book, but, uh---

L: That's a very different name for that, uh, year. I haven't heard it before, yeah. That would be popular now. (both talking at once) (car sounds)

A: Uh hmm. She, um--

L: Uh hmm.

A: I don't know, I haven't heard any--yes, there was a girl, a friend of mine, who had been here and that's why I came to name her Dallas. (airplane noise?)

L: And, um, this was your father, Stanley Clayton Towle. [pronounced *toul*, as in *towel*]

A: Yes, Towle—[pronounced *tōl*, as in *toll*]

L: "Born January 28, 1862." (coughing in background)

A: Uh hmm. (coughing in background)

L: “And he married (coughing in background) in 1888, Agnes Stoddart (??)--

A: Uh hmm.

L: “--born August 27, 1867.”

A: Uh hmm.

L: So, uh--Uh hmm.

A: So, uh--

L: And this is the house.

A: Uh hmm. (coughing in background) That was the house he had built.

L: Uh hmm. You were married forty-nine years.

A: Yes, hmm, passed away just be--

L: Just before the decade.

A: Just a week after the forty-ninth anniversary. (sniffing in background)

L: And you have a picture of Fort Langley school, 1912.

A: Uh hmm. Uh hmm. We may have another one. Thought I had another one somewhere. There's many books there.

L: Uh hmm. Oh, now these pictures are, maybe you could explain them. This is your mother feeding the ducks--

A: Yeah, feeding geese. She used to always raise a few geese. And that's my two brothers, and this is the three of us, and then later on, my younger brother came along in 1914.

L: You're feeding the ducks there. And who would this be in--

A: This is, this was myself and then my youngest brother.

L: Oh yes _____ (??). And is this another brother of yours?

A: Yes--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --that's my brother, Addy(??) Towle--

L: The horses, uh hmm. "He was a good pony to pull the surrey." (Ada laughs) And here we have a campout.

A: Uh hmm.

L: Uh hmm, that looks like fun there.

A: Yeah, that was, uh, you wouldn't be interested, I guess, in those--they were other, the other two, Mrs. Towles; they're married to my dad's brothers.

L: Your dad's--

A: He had two bro--

L: Oh yes.

A: Adam, or he had, David, Mrs. David Towle and Mrs. George Towle.

L: Uh hmm. So they were aunts, and--and what about this portrait here?

A: That was--these are Mother's--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --sister and brother-in-laws, that are--

L: Oh, I see. It says "Stanley was a prosperous farmer and had the first car in the community. He always studied and specialized in law."

A: He liked to read law books.

L: Uh hmm.

A: Never got very big opera--uh (laughs)--education, but he could, he would memorize (1200) these law books and things.

L: Uh hmm.

A: I guess he was--

L: And what relation was he to you then? Was he one of the brothers? One of the Towle brothers?

A: One of my dad's--

L: Yes.

A: --Stanley--

L: Your dad's brother, uh hmm. "Stanley, when company came over for a meal, he loved to see the reaction when after saying grace, he would continue on, asking blessing for each cow, each horse, and on and on--" (both laugh)

A: That was, uh--a Macdonald's, a Macdonald's Scotchman's prayer, they called it--

L: Oh yes.

A: --and he had memorized that, and he would get the reaction of people and he would go on to telling about all that (both laugh)--_____ (??) what cows and they'd think he was pretty serious.

L: Uh hmm.

A: And this was, uh--

L: Now this--

A: Smith, Smith--

L: Yeah, George Pacey (??) Smith. Was this your husband?

A: My husband's, uh, father.

L: Oh, your husband's father, uh, oh, okay.

A: Uh, previous husband.

L: Oh, okay. And he was born in Saint Mary's, Ontario, 1869?

A: Uh hmm.

L: And he had these brothers, uh, and sisters. Quite a large family there, what, seven altogether.

A: Yeah, uh hmm.

L: And he married Margaret Lowry (??), 1892.

A: Uh hmm.

L: Margaret was born in Napanee. Where's that--

A: That's right, Ontario. (both talking at once)

L: Eighteen-seventy.

A: Ontario.

L: Oh, in Ontario. Uh hmm. And so, then it was the Smiths that had the property.

A: Uh hmm.

L: Was it that family, the Smiths--

A: Yes.

L: George Smith.

A: And that's the very place, that's right on the hill there.

L: That's a picture of the barn.

A: That's where the--

L: The big barn. Uh hmm.

A: And the house, and all, it's just--

L: Uh hmm.

A: They used it for a while, as a kind of a gymnasium, and then they tore it down, I guess so--

L: That's right. So it doesn't mention there when he bought that property, does it?

A: It was 1916.

L: Nineteen-sixteen. What was his, um, can I maybe just read this little bit here?

A: Uh hmm.

L: "The Towles [pronounced *toul*, as in *towel*] knew the farm across--"

A: Don't say Towles [pronounced *toul*, as in *towel*], Towles [pronounced *tōl*, as in *toll*].
(laughs)

L: Oh sorry. The Towles [pronounced *tōl*, as in *toll*]. Sorry. Okay, I'll start again. "The Towles (??) knew the farm across the valley on the hill was for sale. But there had been different people looking at it. And so nothing, it was nothing to get excited about, till, what's this? Some city folk by the name of Smith, sounds ordinary enough, they bought it. (Ada laughs) Two girls and one boy. That boy, was he ever handsome. (Ada laughs) Wow. Papa teases Ada. But he is six years older and his sister says that he's engaged to a girl in Vancouver." Was that true?

A: I don't think he was engaged to her, but he went with her. (both laugh)

L: Till he saw you. (both laugh) "That sister Hazel is really nice and at last Ada has a girlfriend close by. The younger sister, sweet and quiet, Roberta, was noticed by Addy (??), school-day sweethearts."

A: So we have a sister and a brother married a sister and brother.

L: We do, eh. Hmm, isn't that nice. That happened in my family too. It's unusual. "It was a new and different way of life for the Smith kids. When Harry had finished school, he worked in a store. And Hazel had been going to a girl's school, learning the graces for a fine lady. How to buy and wear fine clothes. How to entertain and be entertained. How to sit and walk, or how to set a beautiful table. Roberta was not that far in school, so carried on in the country school." Would that have been the, this Fort Langley school that was called--

A: That Milner school she went to--

L: Oh, that Milner school, uh hmm. "However, she and Ada absorbed this area of the frills--From Hazel, I'm sure." (Ada laughs) The frills of life, I guess she means. (car noise) And so these are the, this is the young Mr. Smith.

A: Uh hmm. Uh hmm.

L: Yes. (both laugh) **(1500)** Yes, here he is--

A: They were older than that when they came to V--to Langley, of course.

L: Uh hmm, uh hmm. That is a very nice picture here.

A: Uh hmm.

L: So this was, uh, well, no, this wouldn't have been advertised, like that, but--

A: _____ (??)

L: They bought the property in 1916 and the farm. It was just called the farm then.

A: Uh hmm. Well, it was a farm--

L: Was that the Hudson's Bay farm at that time, I guess it--

A: It was Hudson Bay land there--

L: Hudson's Bay land, uh hmm.

A: --and the man that owned it before was Emptage (?). And he has two daughters at Fort Langley. You might even like to talk to them sometime.

L: Uh hmm. Yes, I would. Emptage (?), okay. Hmm, if you can hear that, you can probably hear my pencil. Now we have a picture of the, uh, house on the property. And Grandma Smith, there-- (car sounds)

A: Uh hmm. This is, um, up close to that, big auditorium--

L: Yes.

A: You go up the hill and the big auditorium there, and this is quite close to where it is now.

L: Uh hmm.

A: Little did we ever dream of a college on there.

L: Uh hmm. That's right.

A: She's got "Queen's Scout," but he was, he was a scoutmaster, but I don't think he was a Queen's Scout. He was, uh, he was in the Cadets--

L: Oh, yes, in 1912. He was too young then to be in the war.

A: They went to, uh--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --went to, went to, the, to, uh, quite a trip with the, uh, with the Cadets to Australia and New Zealand in 1912.

L: And she's got some very good pictures of you and your husband, uh, in your teenage years here.

A: Uh hmm.

L: You're cute.

A: See, that was from down on the road--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --looking up there, and there was the barn and the house up there--

L: Uh hmm. Oh yes, right. That gives a good perspective of it--

A: She thought I was standing there looking up to see if I saw her-- (Lynn laughs)

L: And then, uh, this is a picture in, the kids in the car going out for some fun, eh? (car noise)

A: Uh hmm.

L: Uh hmm, isn't that nice?

A: We were (coughs) in a play when that was taken.

L: Oh, yes.

A: Oh, we had dressed as real old maids. (laughs) We had teeth blackened out and a cat in the humpty-dumpty _____ (?). (laughs) We were a sight to see.

L: So how long did you know your husband before you finally were married?

A: Nineteen-sixteen to the end of twenty-one.

L: _____ (??)

A: Quite a while.

L: Uh hmm.

A: On that road, you know, you come down the hill--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --and that, it used to flood every year--

L: Oh, yes.

A: --and he made this boat. It was always getting lost. He called it “Alice, Where Art Thou?” (Lynn laughs)

L: Isn't that cute. So that's the Salmon River--

A: Yes, but it used to flood, and they've got some dikes or something now that they don't, uh, it doesn't flood up there anymore, but sometimes we've gone to school right from Jardine (??) right down to Fort Langley--

L: Oh, gee.

A: --to that bridge going into Fort Langley.

L: Uh hmm. That's really cute. (laughs) What is she seeing here? Maybe I should read this bit. (Ada laughs) Um--“Getting back to Har--” oh here's a little bit about--I better just start here. “The hill on which, that (1800) barn sits is across the Salmon River and on that location today, in 1979, is the Trinity Theology College. To the left where the house is, is now 401 Highway. On Grandpa Towle's property, or what was part of his land, stands the Silver Springs Bible Camp. Getting back to Harry, while in the Scouts they had the honour of being inspected by the Duke of Windsor.” Hmm.

A: Yes, he had quite--that old store--

L: Hmm, he shook his hand. (both talking at once)

A: --this, that I showed you, that old store that scouts, he had scouts meet there, and so many of the boys around here, they're old men now really but-- (laughs)

L: Uh hmm.

A: --they were his, uh, scout boys, you know, and they had, they were to go to, uh-- Maybe there's a picture of it in here, where they went making different projects to go meet the Prince of Wales when he was in, and the exhibition used to be in New Westminster, uh--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --in Queen's Park--

L: Oh yes, uh hmm.

A: --and that's where he met the scouts, and they were all so thrilled getting all--

L: I know, it says here--

A: --perked up to go. I kind of--

L: It says here, it says here “So Harry claimed to never have washed his hand again.” (both laugh) That’s cute. “And finally he really noticed Ada, and thought it better to have a gal in hand than one in Vancouver. (both laugh) But he also knew he was falling in love with a genuine girl, not all class and frills. Years later he was to wonder what ever marriage to that kind of girl would have been like, so he only guessed that it could never have held the happiness Ada had given him.” Oh, I see, he was, um-- (both laugh) I guess we all do that, don’t we?

A: Yes, I--

L: Wonder what-- (both laugh) “Well, I’m getting ahead of my story here” she says. “There were many picnics with all the young people, many boat rides on the river, and many moments alone together. Harry took on the leadership of the scout troop in the district, and on one occasion a carload was being transported home from a campout, the car--from a campout. The car left the road and became stuck in the muddy ditch. You can well imagine the mess and hard work it took to get it back on the road again.”

A: She put a lot of little stories together and stuff--

L: Yeah. There certainly are, aren’t they? A lot of family pictures too.

A: Uh hmm.

L: There you are. They’re talking about you again here, are they, or-- (car noise)

A: They’re talking about my brother Addy (??)

L: Oh. “Addy (??) was always teasing the ladies.”

A: Like father like son. (both laugh) This was my dad and mother’s fortieth anniversary--

L: Hmm.

A: --and they had a mock wedding.

L: Oh yes, isn’t that a nice idea. So the Smiths and the Towles really spent-- (car sounds)

A: They really mixed. (talking simultaneously)

L: --a lot of time together. Uh hmm.

A: Yeah.

L: Uh hmm.

A: Always--

L: Oh, what's this? Was there a proposal in here or did--It must've been in this part.
(both laugh)

A: I really don't remember what it was, she did put down--

L: It's talking about taking plate, uh, pictures. "What was used for the flash? The camera was set up after everyone had taken their places, and then after the lights were turned out, the camera was opened. While (2100) everyone kept very still, waiting for the blinding flash. (Ada laughs) (ringing phone) It left you seeing stars for a while. The flash was a sheet about ten by ten (phone rings loudly) placed on the wall or the back of the door." Would you like to answer that, or--?

A: Excuse me.

L: Sure. (tape is stopped momentarily, then started again)

A: She really fixed that one up.

L: Isn't that lovely? "The time for sharing. I love you Ada. Make me happy, say 'yes'. I just did, I love you. (laughs) My mother always said, 'If you want to marry, you better use the horse.'" (both laugh)

A: I see that kind of a sense of humour, I'll-- (both talking at once)

L: She sure has. That's very nice. Let me read this now. Oh no, we were just talking about, um, the flash of the camera--

A: Yeah, that was kind of a powder on a paper, or something, that they used to have in those days. His hand is (laughs) tucked in his shirt (?), you know. (laughs)

L: Wow. There was some kind of--

A: Kind of a powder.

L: --explosive powder in the centre with a fuse attached--

A: Uh hmm, sure.

L: "The fuse was lighted and everybody waited."

A: Uh hmm.

L: "Aft—" Oh, now she's talking about the proposal. "After the proposal, all the big plans began." Let's see if we can find out when he proposed to you.

A: I don't--think she's got that there. (laughs)

L: What did he say when he proposed?

A: I don't know. (laughs)

L: Do you remember, or was it, um--Maybe you'd known him so long--(both laugh)
Maybe you proposed. (both laugh)

A: Maybe I did. I don't think it was leap year. (both laugh) (car sounds)

L: Okay. And anyway, "The big plans began and it would be the long weekend in May in the garden. The cherry tree would, should all be in bloom." So you were married right on the property, then?

A: Married at our own home and, uh, uh, lilacs were all out and--

L: Oh, I see.

A: --we got, we got, um, oh, loads of white lilac from way down where the old fort is.

L: Oh yes.

A: And we went down and got this, loads of it. And then when John and I were married, we were married on the twelfth of May too, and it was, uh--

L: Hmm.

A: We had lilacs-- (laughs)

L: Again, eh? (laughs) That's one of my favourites too--

A: My sister-in-law, Hazel, was the, the best girl. (laughs)

L: Isn't that nice?

A: So it was, lilacs were our colour, our day. (car sounds)

L: Uh hmm. "And with all the relatives from New Westminster, they would need lots of room, and the baking. Oh my, it took lots of hands, no deep freeze to store it in--"

A: No. (laughs)

L: "--ahead of time."

A: No.

L: That's right. I can imagine. "Well, at long last the great day arrived, and even the weather cooperated, but not the cows. (knocking noise) (Ada laughs) Yes, I said the cows. (Ada laughs) Just two hours before the ceremony, they had broken through the fence, and who had to round them up? No one else but the bridegroom. (Ada laughs) He always thought they were the stupidest (Ada laughs), the stupidest animal that God created (both laugh) and he was sure. Bathed and shaved and off to his wedding with the help of, Alden (??)--"

A: Curtis (??).

L: Curtis (??), I see. "And to the happiest and most beautiful bride the world has ever known. (both laugh) (both talking simultaneously) I'm sorry, you talk. (2400)

A: You can imagine, this is her daughter--

L: Hmm. Okay. That, that is a nice picture of him all spruced up for his wedding, eh. (Ada laughs) I'm tellin' ya'.

A: He was--

L: Look at the creases.

A: He was--

L: Yep.

A: They had the table set in the front yard.

L: This is nice--

A: The cherry trees were all in bloom and they were--

L: Uh hmm.

A: This is--

L: "God loves you and offers you a wonderful plan for your life." (car sounds) Isn't that nice? That's very nice.

A: This was Terry's sister, and this is Alden Curtis (??). He was just, he was just like a brother. He had had no brothers.

L: That's right, he just had the--So this was your girlfriend then, Harriet?

A: Yes, Hazel.

L: Or Hazel. Uh hmm. That's really pretty.

A: This was, um--

L: Hazel was the bridesmaid.

A: Uh, Irene, uh--I don't remember her name.

L: "The pretty flower girl was Miss Eileen Moore (??). (talking simultaneously)

A: That's right.

L: And then you left for Tacoma, Washington.

A: Uh hmm.

L: In a, was that a per--? "In Papa Stan's car." (Ada laughs) Yes.

A: He had just got a new one. In those days, they used to trade them in. Dad would get a Ford car, and then every year he traded it in, and they weren't made that good, you know. And they, uh, they'd wear out in about a year. This was that house again.

L: This is, um--

A: That little house that--

L: I think we call it Hubbard House--

A: Is it? Well, that's-- (talking simultaneously)

L: Right now, I don't know why.

A: It's Old Mother Hubbard's house. (laughs)

L: Oh, is that why? Maybe, maybe it was, it looks like the pantry or--

A: Our first one--

L: Oh, yes.

A: Well it, when we had it--Of course in those days we had to have, burn, wood. It was really a woodshed out here, but they have made a little porch at the back.

L: Uh hmm. Tell me about your days, in the, on the farm. Exactly what years, can you remember? Uh, the years that you lived there?

A: Well, one thing we had, we didn't have any electric light over there. I guess we were, couldn't afford, it cost a fortune to bring it across from the main road. It was, everybody else had it, but, and we had just well-- a well, not, of course, not running water there. So it meant pumping water. (Ada laughs)

L: Was the water good water?

A: Yes, it was good, and, spring water, but of course you had to pump it up from the well.

L: Uh hmm.

A: And they had, they kept about fifteen cows, I think it was.

L: Uh hmm.

A: And, uh, Harry used to grow dahlias, and they'd sell the bulbs to, uh, br—and peonies, and then he, uh, he grew tur--they had a big field of turnips (**2700**) and potatoes and all that sort of thing, and then he used to have a string of stores in Vancouver. He would go in every Thursday with a load of, uh, produce, perhaps they'd, they'd kill a calf, and there'd be that, and, uh--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --and the big potat--perhaps a few sacks of potatoes and turnips. They had, especially grew wonderful turnips on that land.

L: Uh hmm.

A: And then they, uh, and what else? Oh, rhubarb was one of the--

L: Rhubarb, mm.

A: --they grew. And he had quite a string of stores in, uh, Vancouver there and he'd sell them, and then bring our groceries back. So we didn't shop much at any shopping centres in those days. And if you wanted to go shopping, you had to go way into Vancouver. There were no, all the, there were little stores, you know--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --one at Milner, and--

L: Convenience stores.

A: Uh hmm. And, you could, there were many people did buy perhaps all their groceries there. But, if you wanted to buy clothes, or you wanted to buy wallpaper, or you wanted to buy anything special, you had to go to Vancouver.

L: Uh hmm.

A: But, uh--

L: I guess you did a lot of wallpapering, eh? (talking simultaneously)

A: So and then--Yes, that was what the-- (laughs) But then, oh, and they, he, there were quite a few Gravenstein apple trees on the place, and they rented the place across the, the road that goes up from the, up to the Trinity college. Across the road, like, it would be East, there was a big farm there, an old farm. And it had a lot of, uh, Gravenstein apples there. And Harry and his dad would, uh, pick those and they'd bring the bucket in, and they had, uh, a cider press-- (airplane sounds)

L: Uh hmm.

A: --and, of course, us women, we had to get out and help turn it, because you couldn't, there was no electricity to turn it on, or to grind them, so we all had our turn at grinding.

L: Oh boy. (both laugh)

A: That was, we'd dread the day, but, um, and they'd, he'd make apple cider. And I'd, now what would he get? About eight cents a gallon or something for that lame stuff, but of course eight cents, I suppose, bought-- (car sounds)

L: Quite a bit more--

A: --quite a bit, uh-- (talking simultaneously)

L: --in those days.

A: And--

L: Did you, did you turn it to grind it?

A: Oh yeah, we turned it. (laughs)

L: Yes. It wasn't with your feet at least. (laughs)

A: And I had a raspberry patch--

L: Oh, yes.

A: --and my cat. And I had, uh, chickens--uh, they--Buy baby chicks from (3000), oh what was the man's name? Sandell and Rumps (??) in those days had a big hatchery. They'd buy young chicks, and they had, kept quite a few hens there. And, uh, they'd buy them as they were young and then when they were six weeks old or so, we'd always have fried chickens-- (laughs)

L: Uh hmm.

A: --every Sunday.

L: Oh, yes.

A: But, uh--

L: Uh hmm.

A: So--

L: So there was quite a few of you living on the farm then, at--

A: Yes, there was at, and the big house was the, the girls weren't married either at that time. We were married first and we had that little house.

L: Uh hmm.

A: This little one.

L: Uh hmm.

A: And the children started coming, and then they would walk over to Grandma's and--

L: Oh, yes. That was kind of nice for them--

A: _____ (??)

L: What a lovely place for children to grow up in.

A: Uh hmm. It was great for the children, they--

L: Uh hmm.

A: --they used to, uh, play house and they would, uh, set up house under one of the apple trees, and then they'd gather everything up in a doll buggy, or wagon, carry it to another tree, and set up a housekeeping-- (both laugh) So they were, and, uh, finally, we lived there till nineteen--uh, what was it, thirty.

L: Uh hmm.

A: Was it, or was it, uh, twenty-nine?

L: Uh hmm.

A: And then, and then, then we moved across the river, but then after, in 1930 we moved into Vancouver--

L: I see.

A: Just, just us, but we had, we had, uh, four children.

L: And did the Smiths continue to keep the farm at that time?

A: No.

L: No, they sold it, eh?

A: Uh hmm.

L: What were the circumstances of their leaving the farm? Do you remember?

A: Well, Harry was tired of it. You, you know, you just, you couldn't make any money to, for bringing up, we had a family and it was--

L: Uh hmm.

A: And it looked kinda hopeless for a family coming along.

L: Uh hmm.

A: There was so little money in farming in those days.

L: Yeah.

A: So, uh, anyway, he finally got into Vancouver and took up indust--well, he got a job hauling milk from Glen Valley. My brother had a truck line and he, uh, **(3300)**, and they got a contract to haul milk from Glen Valley into the Fraser Valley Dairy.

L: Oh, yes.

A: And he got on one of the trucks for that, and they had to, uh, he'd have to leave about four in the morning and get back way out there. And he would pick up freight, or like groceries and freight for the stores out in Glen Valley, and all Langley-- (airplane sounds)

L: Uh hmm.

A: And he would pick it up after he would bring the milk in Vancouver, and then he would take it out with, he would have to leave about five o'clock in the morning and--
(end of Side 1; blank from 3375-3503)

L: Hmm, in the morning.

A: He'd have to be there to pick up the milk about nine, and then they'd, they would, in those big heavy cans you know, handling it was a lot of hard work.

L: It really is.

A: And then bring it in, and then I would take orders on the telephone, from the wholesales and then get the orders and pick it up and, and then when he got finished at night, he had a little garden and he, the kids were all, had their little gardens, and helped, but he, uh, he studied then till midnight, and then-- (laughs)

L: Oh, my goodness. What was he studying--?

A: He went--Well, he wanted to be an industrial art teacher. He went to, um, Tech. School on the Saturday.

L: Oh, yes. Uh hmm.

A: And then **(3600)** he had been so long out of, uh, high school, that he had to get caught up on that. And he went to, uh, he went to night school and he took correspondence courses. And he went to, then on Saturday for the Tech. School.

L: My, he was busy at that time.

A: And then, that was a seven day a week job and there was no holidays.

L: And you were working at it too.

A: Well, I'd take the phone calls, and feed them all. (laughs)

L: Was that phone calls for orders of milk? Or was it produce?

A: No. It was groceries taken out to stores--

L: Yeah.

A: --you see. He'd unload that and then--

L: So you were more or less taking calls for the groceries?

A: Uh hmm.

L: And Fraser Valley Dairy became Dairyland, didn't it?

A: Uh hmm. That's right.

L: Hmm, I thought it was the same thing. I remember Fraser Valley Dairy. He didn't actually deliver the milk house to house then?

A: Oh no, he took the bulk milk, you see, and then, uh, they--

L: Did he work for them for quite a while?

A: Well, he hauled--They had a contract for about, uh, five years or so. Oh no, more than that, I guess, till about thirty, about thirty-seven maybe. And then, (cough) uh, someone else got that. They had other things to do and then he got a school in 1938 and we went to Rossland and he taught up there from thirty-eight till forty-four.

L: During the Second World War--

A: And the children were all growing up and it was quite an excitement to take them up there.

L: Right--

A: And now we had an extra one, you see, our baby came along in thirty-six in Vancouver. There's that little house you see too, uh--

L: Oh, yes.

A: --when the kids were coming along.

L: Uh hmm. That's a nice picture.

A: Dad pulled the string on the camera. (laughs) (3863)

(3863-5238) Outline of end of interview – not transcribed

- Lynn arranges to borrow scrapbook from Ada
- Girls getting married
 - o Hazel and Randolph Fox
 - Store at Milner
- Hazel's daughter
 - o Langley May Queen, 1939
 - o Teaching in Vancouver

- George Towle marries Pearl Armstrong in 1923
- Look over pictures
 - o Milner United Church
 - o Fort Langley United Church
 - o Addy, Ernest (Ada's brother)
 - o Eagle Harbour
 - o House in Vancouver on 12th Avenue
 - Birth of Marilyn
 - o Harry in milk truck
 - o House in Rossland
 - o House in Cloverdale
- Harry teaching industrial arts in Cloverdale
- Harry teaching at high school in Langley (1951-1958)
- Harry's heart attack (1958)
- Harry's death (1961)
- Dallas's family in Calgary
- Ada talks about her family and where they are now

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