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HERSTORY PROJECT

Mrs. G. Dyke interviewed by Helen Lovekin

Mrs. Dyke: Now what do you want to know about?

Q. First I would like to ask you some general questions and then some specific ones that we have come across in our research. How long have you been in Thunder Bay?

A. All my life. I was born in Port Arthur.

Q. What did your family do?

A. My grandfather came 130 years ago and at that time his mail was addressed to Thunder Bay. He came to Thunder Bay as representative of a mining company, he had gone to the California Gold Rush and to the Caribou (Canadian Gold Rush), so he knew quite a bit about minerals. His sons all learned trades so four of them combined and came to Port Arthur and built Woodside Iron Works. The company still exists in P.A.. It is 95 years ago, this July since my father and mother came because the boys stayed down east when their father and mother came here, and they learned their trades. Then there was the blacksmith and the machinist and the pattern maker and one was a carriage maker and painter. They all seemed to have two trades and they were all master mechanics in whatever they undertook. So their mother thought that the Lakehead would be the Chicago of the north, before there was any C.P.R. running through. So they came up - four of the six boys - to the Lakehead and with their father they built the first building and had that all ready and father was buying the machinery down east and making it because he made the first engine that was used in the shop, and it was 85 years ago, the 19th of July. I don't remember dates but my oldest sister was 6 weeks old when they came up; they crossed the lake in a sidewheeler and one of father's oldest brothers was settled in Port Arthur and so they started up right away. They put the machinery in right away, as soon as it came up with father. The C.P.R. was building towards P.A. 95 years ago but it wasn't up to P.A.. They had a foundry and so they could cast iron things. The C.P.R. was desperately in need of foundry and machine work as well as blacksmiths. The blacksmith wasn't so bad because you can move a blacksmith and a forge and an anvil, but you can't

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move a machine shop and a foundry. So they set it all up and commenced to work at once. Father was trying to get the boiler in place and get the engine so it would do the work and there is a shaft overhead with the machines underneath and you pull a lever and the belt that is up top will turn the machine you are working on. This one shaft will turn all the machines, if there is two rows, then there are two rows of shafts. Well, father couldn't get it up at once and there was such a need for it that father put a great big iron thing which could fit 3 or 4 men and put it at the end of the shaft. These men turned the shaft by hand to run these different machines. When one was winded he would step out and another would take his place - and they worked until all hours of the night because there was such a demand for their work. There was an old man in the shop and I remembered old Ned Hill and he was always kept on and when I knew him he was old but he had the job of just knowing where everything was and he also turned the crank and a man that endured that, father kept him on. The other men had gone of their own free will but Ned had a family and he stayed. That was the beginning of Woodside Iron Works. There is really a great story of the beginning of the shop, when they had the place set up, men were married and had their homes - the brothers, and then there was grandmother and there was the three girls that were 13 years younger than the 6 boys. So there were a lot of women and they decided they would have a pink tea down at the shop to celebrate the opening.

Q. What is a pink tea?

A. It was called a pink tea in those days just for a little decoration I guess. But the women had pink teas at church - we say they had teas nowadays - well they added pink and gave it an air. So they had a pink tea, they brought cups and saucers and the baking and all and the work stopped for a half hour and they had pink tea to celebrate. This brother who was in the other molding room or shop as was the case, had cast a horseshoe, a little horseshoe. There was a pattern made of it in the pattern shop and then you put it in sand - you have to see a foundry to know how it's done. And he cast a horseshoe for every woman there. As a child I remember that every kitchen had a horseshoe with a little bit of - not canvas but anyway, you put a piece of cloth on the back and you made this little pouch and it was a matchfolder. I don't know where our's went, I don't know if my brother keeps it or not. Anyway, that was a souvenir of the opening of it and they had a lot of things

like that, and they are really a story nowadays.

Q. Could you tell me a little bit about your education?

A. In P.A. we had the Central School which was the only school in the whole city and then we had the high school which was the only school in the whole district. They came from Fort Frances and Murillo if any of them wanted to - I don't remember that any of them did though - and Fort William and Westfort. They came to this four roomed high school.

Q. Where was it?

A. It was where the gym is at the high school on the hill - P.A.C.I.

Q. So they were quite close - the two schools.

A. Yes and the high school was torn down and the big one built then, they added the gym. It was just four rooms and two teachers and finally they got a woman teacher which meant three.

Q. Do you recall what year that was?

A. I don't know.

Q. But you were at school at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Did that cause any sensation? That a woman was teaching?

A. Of course most of the teachers were women but in the high school there had just been the two men always. Then I think this woman was buffeted around by the two men but she stuck with it. Miss Achison was her name, she came from the east. We had a great many teachers who came from around Sarnia because they could come direct by boat.

Q. Was she a young woman when she came?

A. She seemed young to me - she may have been 30. And I think she taught history and geography and the principal was a Scotchman who had taught boys' school in Scotland and why he came out here, I don't know. Except that he drank once in a while.

Q. Perhaps he was just another black sheep that was shipped off?

A. I don't know, but he was a very superior teacher. The other man was Mr. Morgan and he taught physics and chemistry but he had learned German and at the most unexpected time we would have a little lesson in German just when the principal wouldn't know anything about it. Everybody picked up a few German words.

Q. So you feel you got a well rounded education?

A. Yes - and a great many went to Toronto University which was something. It

would take on the part of the teacher, a lot of real teaching to get them so ambitious as to go on.

Q. Did you finish high school at all?

A. In P.A.? Yes.

Q. Did they have Grade 13 at that time?

A. Well, they didn't have grades - in the public school it was the book - Junior and Senior 1,2,3 and 4 and then in high school, I guess it was the year, 1, 2 and 3.

Q. There was just the three years? How old would you be if you graduated each year you passed?

A. I started school when I was 4. My father was chairman of the Board of Education or a member of it, years and years. This time they were short one pupil to get the government grant so they said, "Tom, you have lots of children, you can just spare one." Well, I was tall and big for 4 and so I was sent to school and my aunt Ann, his sister, was the kindergarten teacher. And she taught up to the end of the first book I guess. So I was strong and well and I was just 10 or 11 when I was in high school and I got through high school and we had teachers college in P.A.

Q. You became a teacher?

A. Yes, for 4 years. So I went through that and when I graduated I wasn't quite 16. And they couldn't grant me a certificate, I was too young.

Q. You had to be 21?

A. You had to be 18, however they granted me a special dispensation and I went down east to mother's old home and taught there for a year.

Q. Which town would this be?

A. Out of Meaford, near Owen Sound. Then I came back and because they had done this, allowing me to teach, I was obliged to teach one year here, so I supplied in the different schools in P.A. -well, there was just the Central School. Then they built the south ward and I took the principals place, she was sick or went on a trip and I think that was when I was 16 that I was principal of a south ward school. But I was 5' 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " so they didn't argue with me.

Q. This was a secondary school?

A. Yes.

Q. Because you went through teacher's college rather than normal school?

A. Yes - because they didn't have a normal school.

Q. And you taught, married, raised your family - how did you become interested

in becoming an historian?

A: If you grew up here, naturally you saw it all happen so you couldn't help but be interested. You might say I just stumbled onto it or grew into it.

Q. It has become for you a career?

A. No.

Q. Do you look at it as more of a hobby?

A. Hobby, yes. Goodness, I hadn't time. You raise a family - these women that work and raise a family are braver than I.

Q. How many children did you have?

A. I raised 3 children, but I had a lot of company.

Q. Company with friends or with your children?

A. Both, and relatives - we had relatives all the way from Halifax to Dawson City, and they all stayed on, on trips.

Q. With both your career as a teacher and a historian, did you find any discrimination? You mentioned that Miss Achison had a bit of trouble with the men but you were able to hold your own?

A. Yes, but it was the first lady teacher and if any pupil had to stay after 4 she was delegated to stay too.

Q. But you were the principal in the south ward - how many teachers were under you?

A. Just one - of course don't mention that - I was principal at 16. That's why I was young when I was teaching, because I started at 4.

Q. Was this a lady teacher as well?

A. Yes.

Q. You would have had no experience between wage differential?

A. My goodness, I think the teacher got \$32 a month or so.

Q. Regardless of whether you were a man or a woman?

A. No, I guess the men got more because they were the principals and sub-principals and they had families - they would have to have more - but \$32 and \$35. There were some of the girls that had a special permit and taught, that saved money and went on to university.

Q. Was a teacher paid according to whether he was married or not?

A. I think there was a set wage.

Q. For a man or for a woman.

A. Yes, but the man was always married and the woman wasn't.

Q. This was before women were allowed to have a career after marriage.

A. You didn't dream of anything after marriage, other than scrub bare floors and scrub clothes - you hadn't time for...

Q. No married ladies taught, even if they didn't have children?

- A. I don't think so. They didn't here anyways. There were widows - that was different.
- Q. As a historian, I have come across some of your works which are extremely competent and have you ever had any trouble with the - there is quite a few male historians about knocking anything you might have to say.
- A. I have never had any trouble because whatever I wrote I had printed myself and they didn't consider me a full scale historian - I was just a woman that was writing down a few things. I don't know whether anybody wanted to have any trouble with me or not but I never did. I wrote 3 booklets and I have the.....
- Q. What about the organizations and co-operation between women and their organizations?
- A. I really can't recall any dirty work, they seemed to have - well you can't say they have worked together always because they haven't always. There have been women - some girl teachers who came from down east who were stirring the teachers up to go on strike, years ago. Such things had never been heard of - teachers going on strike - too bad because teachers have a wonderful influence on their pupils and they don't have an influence through strike. It sets them down a bit I think - for the pupils. But I think that this one that was the leader in all this, wasn't hired in the second year and things were done gently, they didn't have a fist fight.
- Q. What was her proposition? What was she upset about?
- A. Wages, and she was principally upset about it, everything that a strike would...
- Q. So you felt your wages were high enough?
- A. No, the wages were always low.
- Q. And yet, you would not consider strike action as the course to take?
- A. Not...
- Q. She was upset about wages, she was upset about what else, hours?
- A. One thing they were upset about was that we weren't producing teachers of our own and these teachers had to come from down east and of course, in those days, the girls were very glad to get a position and so they came from Petrolia and Sarnia because it was close to the boat. So, one thing she was going to strike for was that the Board of Education would pay their boat fare here. There were people in the town who boarded teachers - they were well cared for and were honored citizens in the churches and all were fine

- women. Some of the finest women we ever had are teachers.
- Q: Can you recall, as a young girl, the suffragette movement being discussed?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was there a suffragette organization withing Thunder Bay?
- A. Of sorts. It wasn't very strong but of sorts. The suffragettes had many cartoons in papers of the suffragettes and I think some of them were accused of wearing pants and you could be run in, you could serve a term if you appeared in pants. It is not many years ago since my husband told me that I could go to his tailor and order a tailored suit with pants - any material or any cut - and he would pay for it. He knew perfectly well that I would never wear pants and out here it is just the kind of thing because it's cold and keeps your ankles warm. It's not so many years and now we don't think anything of it at all.
- Q. Must have been awful hard washing long dresses and...
- A. Yes, washed by hand.
- Q. After the suffragette movement of sorts, do you recall the organization that also had something to do with that movement?
- A. Miss Black who was one of the first librarians in Fort William wasn't a fighting suffragette but she was quite in favor of that. Mary J. Black.
- Q. Unfortunately, all her people were lost when she went out to B.C.
- A. Yes, she had a brother that she went to when she was sick - before she died, and I suppose like so many people, they cleaned up everything thoroughly.
- Q. Too bad that she hadn't given every...
- A. I suppose, like many people she was going to write it up herself.
- Q. I believe that the Women's Christian Temperance Union supported suffrage?
- A. Yes, they weren't fighting about it but...
- Q. They gave support.
- A. Yes.
- Q. They sent petitions and endorsements.
- A. Mother believed and belonged to the WCTU for years. We were a big family but mother always had help - always had a maid and had a washwoman, that came Monday all day and Wednesday for a half a day. That was the day when our dresses and our underwear were washed but not the sheets or pillowcases. That was once a week. She was president of the Ladies Aid and a member of the Mission Circle and the Miss WCTU and the Mother's _____. Anyway, mother went to that and the one thing I remember about it - she came home
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and mother was the kind that she never looked for an argument, she was a very wise, sweet woman, but this night she came home and we sat down.... had not experience keeping house for a man and had no family and never did but she undertook to tell the mothers how to bring up their families and Mrs. Dr. Smelly had 8 and Mrs. Neelan had 7 and they had big families and here(where) was this woman telling them how.

Q. What sort of things was she recommending?

A. How to dress your children and how you fed them and what you taught them and everything - she knew how. These women with no children who knew all the answers. Mother and Mrs. Smelly talked it over and they agreed that they did the best they could at the time.

Q. To get back to the WCTU - you mentioned it in your book so I wonder - you have never heard what happened to Ricobs or anything - nobody seems to know.

A. Young folks organization - The White River Band - and we had the record books for them but Dr. John Ritchie of Regina - he was a surgeon there for years - he is an uncle of Ken Ritchie the doctor in P.A.. A very fine man - well he was secretary for years and years and he was a pure wit and his minutes - you got there early so you wouldn't miss John B's minutes, it was lovely. So we had them - it had closed down for years and finally my sister sent them to him and of course he wrote back - he was delighted - he said many of the words he didn't know what they meant but he had used them. So that is were that went, and as for the rest I don't know but Mrs. Hamlet -.....

Q. I found several books in the library that were minutes. One of the more notable was a report of a social survey by the Department of Temperance and Moral Reform in the Methodist Church. It is rather complete, they went into a great amount of detail with it. Was that a woman's organization or was it just church members?

A. I don't know for sure but I would say it was an organization within the church not necessarily all church officers. What was it called?

Q. The report was called the Preliminary and General Social Survey of Port Arthur, March 1913, Directed by the Department of Temperance and Moral Reform in the Methodist Church and the Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church.

A. So, you can take your pick there.

Q. Yes, it is rather - so detailed, I was wondering if it had been a notable organization.

- A. Well, I think it was like so many organizations that just are born and flourish for a while and then go. They were doing good work in getting that written down.
- Q. The statistics were very good.
- A. In my letter I told you to contact Mrs. Hamlet who lives in Waverly Towers. She is still - there is a little nuclei of the WCTU - she and her sister, who is now in Westmount or Grandview in Fort William. Let me see, did she die just lately? Anyway, Mrs. Hamlet will know - she's a little birdie woman a very nice woman, a widow.
- Q. I have noted on my studies of the English suffragettes - they were the prime movers - that they allied themselves with temperance movements, for the rather obvious reasons. Nellie McClung was very closely allied with the temperance movement. Although it wasn't a militant movement, literature was circulated for women's rights and this went along with temperance, which was because women couldn't afford to....
- A. I don't think so, it was the same women largely in all organizations. King's Daughters and all of these - oh, mother belonged to the K.D. or the Queen's Daughters - it was the Queen's Daughters in Victoria's time and then it was the King's Daughters.
- Q. Could you explain the function of the Queen's Daughters?
- A. It was an organization that fostered patriotism and when any noteworthy person like a Governor-General etc. came, the Q.D. looked after them and they had meetings and showed the flag, like the Imperial Daughters - but they were older women - younger than lots of the IODE. It was just a patriotic formation.
- Q. There was also another book I came across - a report on the Local Council of Women - The West Algoma Local Council of Women. You convened that 30 years didn't you?
- A. No, I didn't.
- Q. There was a Mrs. Dyke.
- A. It might have been my mother-in-law. But I attended - I don't know whether I held any office in it for quite some time. But I wasn't a leading light - but I think my mother-in-law was and she was a member of a hospital aid before the RMG hospital was built and during which time, mother and Mrs. Dr. Smelly and Mrs. Neelson and Mrs. Mical. Quite a bunch of them that were very friendly and they enjoyed their friendship at these meetings and once the RMG started - once a week they went to the hospital and mended the sheets and pillowcases and towels. Mother always had a good maid, woman or girl, so that

her children were in good hands and mother was up early so that in the afternoon she could go and bring word back of what they did.

Q. This would be the ladies social contact I suppose because they didn't work out of the homes. If you didn't belong to an organization, you wouldn't go out very much.

A. Yes, that is so.

Q. I did come across the minutes from 1894-1950 and I wrote a list of all the proposals and the amendments that the council had made for the women. They strongly pushed for women sitting on various boards, particularly the School Board and in 1917 they wished to have at least two women appointed to the Taxation and Organization of Women Labor Boards. Although they were interested in hospitals, they seemed to have suggested - in 1930 a pre natal clinic in Port Arthur - all sorts of things that women are still asking for. It seems that they were thinking along feminist lines - did it strike you that way at the time?

A. That's why they organized - to have mightier say in things than they have had before because they were supposed, just to run their homes and bring up their children. And now they banded together and asked for some things like the RMG hospital. There was just St. Joseph's Hospital and women didn't go to the hospital to have their babies. The RMG hospital, the women urged that until they got it and the primary idea was for it to be like a maternity hospital. They had wards and private rooms for maternity but it was RMG - that was General, The Railway, Marine and General Hospital. Well, in those early days there was a great deal of typhoid, and they had a lot of typhoid wards and men's and women's. And my oldest sister went to the RMG to have her baby and there was a night nurse on for the men's typhoid ward - she came across the hall to answer the bells of the young mothers. To have a nurse - who would be far more interested in gabbing all night with those men than bothering washing and scalding her hands before coming to the mothers and Eva went home with typhoid fever.

Q. Did she survive?

A. She survived but she was ill for a long time.

Q. The baby as well?

A. Yes.

Q. They were both very lucky.

A. Yes and lucky too there was a Scotch nurse - a married woman. You see any

trained nurse was scarce and this woman married and came with her husband to Port Arthur and someday, I think my brother-in-law knew them well enough to have her come and look after Eva. She was Scotch - trained and we had very few trained nurses in those days. That is what started the RMC - to be a maternity hospital.

Q. Were you also a member of the Women's Institute?

A. No, that was a rural organization. They made - two or three years ago - the word went through all the institutes : "Have your district written up." and Mrs. Oliver did it for Slate River. Each area had it written up and I presume all those books and papers are kept at the headquarters.

Q. We are having a difficult time extracting the Hymers book from a Mrs. Thatcher. She has it and she is not giving it out.

A. Well - and hasn't had it published yet?

Q. No. I know that the Women's Institute did some valuable things including setting up libraries and providing rural women with what they needed - a place to go and be with other women. The council is more politically orientated - was there any tension between the two or did you co-operate?

A. I don't recall any tension.

Q. Was there any co-operation between the two groups for projects?

A. Some.

Q. Can you give me the areas?

A. I just have the feeling.

Q. Did you hear of the Dominion Women's Franchisement Association? They did change their name to a much easier one which was the Canadian Suffrage Association. I talked to Mr. Russell Brown and he said he remembered but he couldn't remember anything about the suffrage movement other than they wore pins.

A. They tried to be militant to stir themselves up and to head up a slight war but they never got that far. Each strove a little bit and all together they have got some very good things for women.

Q. After looking at the minutes I am finding so many things that we are still fighting for. Looking back, do you think we have changed very much? Have we gotten anywhere?

A. They have really done very well. Slowly and without making big distresses. They quietly accomplished a good many things.

Q. Have you got something that you had worked on then, that is still not an accomplished feat, that you would very much like to see happen?

- A. I don't think I can pull that one out of a hat. Because there are so many things that they just have quietly gotten. Nellie McClung - she used to come and speak. Her father-in-law was Presbyterian.
- Q. She came to speak here?
- A. In P.A. and F.W.. The men loved Nellie McClung, she was witty. I used to go with father, and to hear her speak in the evening, there was lots of laughs in it. She was very diplomatic and very kindly but she made a point.
- Q. Was she an inspiration for you?
- A. Yes and she had some experience with liquor and so she was out and out for WCTU. I remember her speaking in the Presbyterian church in Port Arthur - St. Paul's - and there would be as many men as women because she was worth going to hear and you quite agreed with what she had to say because she put it quite nicely. She spoke this evening and I think there was some big - I don't suppose it was a war, but something was on and the Archbishop of Canterbury had said that he couldn't do without his wine because it helped his digestive system and stomach do it's work. And the way she would state it and she had a little twinkle in her eye and everybody was laughing about this. The Archbishop wasn't an out and out prohibitionist, he liked his wine. She was a very fine woman. She went west - her father-in-law was one of the earliest ministers in P.A. - Methodist, because Robert McClung, who she married taught a Sunday school class of boys as a minister's son was expected to do. My aunts were all teachers and my grandmother taught the Bible class and my uncle was a Sunday school superintendant, and his wife played the organ in church. These were unruly boys that Bob McClung was teaching. He was a very young man, 19 or so. Well they would sit around him with their row of chairs, heads tight together listening to him. And they discovered that he had a copy of Robinson Crusoe in a Bible cover and he was reading that to them and they just loved him and loved his stories. Nellie went west to teach in those early days and she fell so in love with Mrs. McClung and there was a young son and she was so disappointed because if she could marry a son, she would be Mrs. McClung's daughter-in-law. To her great amazement and joy, this boy showed up one time - he was a druggist - and here was a ready-made son of her own age. So she said that she - well, she would say it of course - she simply said her cap and he couldn't get out of it. So they married. She lectured and travelled a great deal and was acclaimed wherever she went. She was well-known and one time she heard that her husband was objecting to her being away so much

without telling her. So she went home and she had been honored in Toronto and Ottawa and he felt she was getting beyond him so when she got there in the evening and they had tea, she said to him, "Would you please pass the brown bread?". That was the staple food, brown bread, and she wanted him to understand that she was still staple. So it went on from there. She loved Mrs. McClung and Mrs. McClung loved her, more than any of her own children.

Q. Was she treated well by the papers here?

A. Yes, wherever she went.

Q. Did they print up any of her speeches?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. So, if I go through the microfilm - you don't know the years she was here?

A. No, I couldn't tell you....If you just get up and give dates and times, it just bores you to death. I see you have read "Plane Down", that story in there. It is pure fiction but this is the house they came to. They came in that door tumbled down their goods there, and went into the livingroom and we made fires in the kitchen and the back shed still has the great woodpile. Ann Causelet, the Dickinsons were really pioneers, her great grandfather ran - I don't know whether it was the first paper published in P.A.. His granddaughter is Mrs. Ann Causelet and she lives in this cottage where old Captain Marrin lived. Ann Dryna - my mind went blank, what was I going to say about Ann Dryna?

Q. We were talking about Nellie McClung.

A. Oh yes, that "Plane Down" and they have been here for ever and ever and Ann speaks very slowly. She lives back again in F.W. and she phoned this morning. She said, "Mother and I have racked our brains trying to think of the year that plane mishap and we can't remember it at all. When did it happen?" I said, "Imagine, have I convinced you?", "Convinced me of what?". "That's pure fiction" and she said, "You told it too well, we thought it was true."

Q. You have been very active in women's organizations all your life, and so has your mother. How do you feel about the women's organizations now?

A. I'm strictly a temperate woman, Father called it the "accursed stuff" because he had such trouble with the men, especially the foundry men. He payed their fines and hauled them out and got them back to work. He and mother were strictly temperate and one thing I object to is that these organizations now - there is wine and cheese - well, it doesn't seem to dawn on them that they don't need to have this wine and cheese business but they think they've got to do like some of the others do. There are other less outstanding things

that they are also embracing and it used to be that now the Canadian Club was a splintered organization, it was for the most part made up of cultured, educated women, and I don't say that they aren't educated now, but I don't like some things and I feel that the women's organizations should stand forth for the best in Canada and you can't bring up children to avoid alcohol if you belong to these organizations that serve it and take it. You have got to be on one side or the other. We didn't serve it and we didn't miss it and didn't need it. And then, after all, women have a place that is separate from men and women are dressing like men and their doing so many things that men do.

Q. Do you mean working?

A. No, I mean in every way. For example, car racing and boy, the women are driving the cars along with the men. They have to do with all the sports.

Q. You think that's wrong.

A. I think the men like them to be women.

Q. Nellie McClung had a saying: We were talking to a woman who preferred to have her coat taken off and the doors opened etc. and Nellie McClung referred to that once as "wanting to eat the icing rather than the cake." And that goes right along with her brown bread saying, where you have to be recognized for your ability, and whether they open the door or not shouldn't stand in the way. To me, this is the goal I'm trying to work towards, and I think a lot of other women that I work with would agree with me on that. It is the cake that I would rather eat, you get too many cavities eating icing - too many holes in it. Do you have a daughter?

A. Yes, in California.

Q. Do you think that it is a better life for her than it was for you?

A. It was pretty rugged and we didn't know it because it was where we lived and what we were used to. They have sidewalks and roads now that you can go without going down to the axle and in my day, in Fort William especially. And we have conveniences now in the house and travel etc. Yes it is much easier. I was telling somebody of a classmate of mine who got to P.A. from the States and came to high school. I don't know how she got to P.A. and her father had died and her mother was lecturing for something. She and her brother and, I don't know how they jerked themselves up but anyway they both got to P.A.. She was poor and had no money or backing but she got up to Collegiate and she worked her way. She got up for this English woman who had 2 girls and she

washed and dressed them and got them breakfast and got them to school and did the beds and dishes and left the house tidy - to come to school herself. I didn't think she paid and as for clothes, she gave her her cast-off clothes and this woman was two sizes smaller than Lula and Lula I remember had no hat so she wore a bonnet every winter and it was all she had. And you could jolly well take her with a bonnet or leave her. She went through public school and went to the teachers college which we had for a few years and then she went up the line to teach and married the first man that asked her. She hadn't had a home, so just to have a home. She wasn't asking the man much about him. He had a farm but it had been burnt over and when I saw her after some years of marriage, her hands were like horns - she was still using this burnt over wood and she had 5 children and somebody said "one every Friday" - every year, anyway. Her husband wasn't interested except to feed them - that was his duty done. She wanted them to have an education so she sewed and she proclaimed herself a barber and then she got a second hand chick hatchery - an incubator - and turned one of the two bedrooms she had into an incubating room and hatched chickens and sold them around the district. Then she raised tomatoe plants and sold them and sent her children to school. Then they had to go into town for the high school - her oldest daughter went first and she got babysitting - had a room but I don't think her board, but did that and it was enough to bring her cash. Then she went home Friday night and her mother did the sewing, washing and ironing, fixed her up on Saturday and then she came back Sunday night and brought a big basket of food. Her brother was ready for high school and they just put a sheet up in her room with a bed on each side and she managed the food for them. He eventually became a teacher and she trained in McKellar Hospital and she had the money that they paid the girls - \$2.50 a month or \$3.00 and if she broke a thermometer, it was a disaster and she had clothes her mother made out of old clothes. Stockings and those button - on shoes was all she had and she learned like her mother, that was what she had and she wore it and she was thankful. Had a pair of denims so she could go hiking with the girls. The next girl went into the RMG and had a bad time. The matron didn't approve of her - a poor girl in the class with some of the girls that had more - so she dismissed her on the first pretext she could find and she herself was dismissed for dismissing the girl. They all managed and were splendid children. How many are doing that nowadays?

If they haven't silk stockings and all the rest of it, they sit down and howl at the moon, but these youngsters didn't.

Q. I feel sorry for the girl you went to school with who married the first man who came along to get a home and live with a man - probably not a very happy life.

A. Oh, I'm sure, but she wouldn't cheep, there would be no squabbling, she made her bargain and she kept it. Dad finally died and he had a thousand dollars life insurance in some organization - very little. Now that is five \$200's - well the youngest girl had died so there were four and she was the fifth so they each got \$200 and that was just touching the clouds. She came to F.W. and two or three times she came representing the Women's Institute and they would pay her way down and then she would stay with me and she told me "I just went on a regular binge, I bought an electric iron and an electric kettle" and then she bought enough black silk or rayon and a neighbor helped her make a dress and a jacket and she had \$50 left and she put it in the bank - so she had a bank account. The others - it was spent the same way - had to give a good account of every nickel. She died long since and at Christmas time I write one of her daughters and this daughter - her son and another boy in the neighborhood were going to play PeeWee hockey in F.W., so they stayed with me. Youngsters love to see through a house so when they had been there a little while I suggested that the boys go on and look through the house and see everything. One youngster went home and I guess he hadn't been in a big house before and he told his mother all the details - the furniture, what they had on the beds, how they took a bath in the bathtub. He is now a grown man and married long since but she still gives me a little of his history and she and her sister were fine women and well thought of in the community and the one boy is a teacher and the other is head of the highways in Kenora and I don't know whether he is still there or whether he is retired or not. They have always accepted any help - so nicely - no embarrassment, just thank-you very much.

Q. Was there any help for a woman who wanted to leave her husband - perhaps if he physically beat her or the children? Was there anyone she could turn to if she had no family?

A. Well, they turned to the church and the minister and his wife. Of course, she went into housework - that was her refuge.

- Q. Would she be able to take all of her children?
- A. If there were children that would be different.
- Q. She would have to put up with it.
- A. Yes, many of them did.
- Q. This is one of the things we are still trying to work on.
- A. There was often a very nice neighbor man who would beat the daylights out of him - which he well deserved.
- Q. I asked an Italian lady in Italy what a wife would do if the husband beat her and she said that generally they never moved from the original village and she had her brothers protect her. It would take one thump and generally he got the message.
- A. There was an early priest - Father Baxter in P.A. He was a great big burly man and if he heard of any man that had been beating his wife, he'd take off his clerical black gown, "nightgown" as they called it, and he'd just give him such a thrashing that he wouldn't forget it. Many a man stopped beating his wife when he had a beating from Father Baxter. He came out here in the early days and said mass and that white house down there is built on the old foundation of the old Catholic church - the Sellars live in it. There was quite a family of them. They were the early elevator people and grain people in the Lakehead. Mr. Al Sellars bought it but it was in such disrepair and it was finally torn down and then the foundation was remade and he built the same size on the same foundation. It was during the years I was away from Silver Islet that it was finished so it took some arguing on Ethel Sellars' part to convince me that it wasn't the old Catholic Church.
- Q. Do you remember WWI?
- A. Yes.'
- Q. I am a history teacher - do you remember after the war, in your experience, if the attitude towards working women changed much?
- A. Yes, it commenced a change because the women had worked so hard during the war.
- Q. At jobs that a lot of people didn't think they could do.
- A. Well, there were more stenographers and bookkeepers and things like that.
- Q. Did it progress further after WW2?
- A. Yes and after WWI and especially after WW2, the people had learned to go out and enjoy themselves and people had learned to leave their children and go out. They took their families lightly to what they had been before. A mother wouldn't

leave her children and go gabbing. They think nothing of leaving them and they can pretty much bring up themselves, the youngsters.

Q. Do you see no discrepancy between a woman hiring a girl to feed her children breakfast and lunch and do their clothes and send them out to school, even though she lives within the house, to women who have to use daycare centres to do the same thing? Do you see much of a difference?

A. Of course daycare - Miss Michaels has now set up her own school in the Salvation Army Hall and has the daycare. That is a real profession. She has a real degree and education.

Q. The point I'm getting at is the effect on the children. Why would it be more acceptable to have a girl living in your home to do that?

A. Because they are home - that's the only difference. These daycare centres, where the girl has to know a lot and the child must learn a lot.

Q. Yes, they are very careful with them.

A. There was a couple married in Wesley Church and they were quite active, they were both teachers. They had a child and they didn't show up again and it was some time before one of the ladies went to call and found that this beautiful little girl baby had an enormous head - it was terrific. There was something wrong with the children and so from that, they banded together and Wesley let them have a room and they met every morning with a different mother looking after these 5 or 6 children. It meant a holiday for the mother - 4 days a week and 5 mothers, and 5 children and they did simple games and things and looked after them and the mother would be refreshed and rested. I went down for about 26 years. I was the relief officer - that is an attendant to the second-hand clothing and people would come to my house, I had a trunk that was never empty and never full.....I would then send overseas - twice a year there were great shipments. I remember one time we sent 850 lbs. and that is a lot to pack and Mr. Gerry would come and help us rope and the McKenzie dray came and took it, shipped it, and paid the shipping charges and just charged us for the shipping charge - they never charged us for their dray and went on for years and years...I would often be at the church in the mornings after school and these children - the little girl with the great big head, I don't know how she held it up - it must have taken a long time to get it....

Q. How long did she survive?

A. I think she was 9 or 10 when she finally died. The others, they were misshapen and mongoloid. I always stopped and talked to them and told them a story, so that they got to know me.

- Q. After the war, when ladies had been working in factory jobs and that sort of thing, when their husbands came home, did they expect them to go back to the way they had been? What sort of conflicts came from the change?
- A. They expected it. Women often went out without any squabbling, they get their own way and they had more money than they had ever and they weren't going to give that up right away. So there was difficulty. The majority of women stayed with their husbands.
- Q. And the husbands learnt to live with liberated women?
- A. It wasn't so easy for the men to get jobs and there are a few sensible men that would see that their wives really had to bring in the bread and butter and they had to work at home themselves. You saw quite a few, but also you saw the one that wasn't going to have it. He was king of the castle and was going to stay so. That was the unfortunate few but it is wonderful how many ironed out. There was one English girl that came out - the men came home first - well they sent the women home first - anyway, she was-_____ and she married an Indian from the mission over here and in England they are not so concerned about the color of their skin as we are. A great many of them marry from the Near East - red and brown skin. One of our taximen was at the station and this girl came to him and wanted to be taken to the mission, and he was shocked. She was a fine looking English girl, so he said "Are you sure that is the right address?" She had married a native Canadian and was going to stay with his people until he got here. He very nicely tried to persuade her not to but she was going - he took her for quite a long distance and then you turn up to the reserve and he said he noticed that her chatter ceased when he turned up because it was pretty crummy in those days, they've decent houses now. He told her that this was the house and he told her he would wait and for her to go to the door. So she did and a big, fat, very unclean looking squaw came to the door - the mother of this boy she married. She just threw up her hands and came back to the taxi and said for him to take her away from there. He told her he knew and had tried to tell her but he decided she had better see for herself. He told her he would take her to his house or to the Salvation Army, whichever she wanted and she could get help from the Red Cross to go back home. She chose to go to the Salvation Army and reported to the Red Cross and they came and helped her. She just went right back home. They would have been marrying boys from all the colonies so she.....now they are very fine, smart Indian men that are working on the highways and working at machines. They've had a tough time, our native people.

Q. We have a lot to account for.

A. They used to scalp people and shoot them down with arrows and burn them and do all kinds of things. If we had a hoard of people come in and take over our country - they had it for thousands of years - of course they'd fight.

Q. As far as scalping goes, it was white men that taught the Indians - they used it for bounty. It was easier to bring in a scalp, they thought of ears for a while but a guy could bring in two different ears and say they were ears from one person and so, the scalps.

A. More power to them - fight for their land. If somebody came along and put me out of this house.....

Thank-you for your help Mrs. Dyke.