



Harry and Margaret Brown

Interview

July 28, 1992

Length: 47 minutes and 1 second

[The speakers and interviewer are not introduced at the beginning of the discussion but it can be assumed that the speakers are Harry and Margaret Brown and the interviewer is George Jackson. Two women, one of whom is named Jan, help to ask questions.] [inaudible] [The tape begins mid-sentence with Harry speaking] Harry says that was before Mount Pleasant was closed; he was about 9 or 10 years old. The woman notes that Harry used to come down for the night services. She asks if it was the same minister that was at Harry's church. Harry says no, Bradford had a different minister than Mount Pleasant. The first minister he can remember was Dr. Loam* *[name is inaudible]*. He has a picture of the man's daughter which he shows the woman. The boy that Harry is standing beside in the picture was George Belfry. He was killed in World War One.

The woman asks if Harry came to Bradford Church when Mount Pleasant closed. He says no. Part of the family went to the Presbyterian Church at Coulson's Hill because they only had two buggies and a big family. There were eight children in his family. George Brown's father never went to the Presbyterian Church. George Jackson asks what the main difference was between one who went to the Methodist Church and one who went to the Presbyterian Church. Harry says there was no difference. George says that his family was new to Bradford West Gwillimbury; they came up in 1955 and they had attended a United Church. They were moved beside the Presbyterian Church so they started going there and became Presbyterians. At that time they were involved with Murray Faris, Linwood Sturgeon, and those people. They would get into very lengthy discussions about the bible and predestination. They ask Margaret if she knows the difference between the Methodist and Presbyterian churches. She says she doesn't





know; she only knows that she was brought up in the Presbyterian Church. The church she went to was located in Hillsdale. George asks if she knows the Cumming family and she says there were several families with that name. George says there was one particular Cumming family with boys who went into the clergy as ministers. Margaret and Harry just celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary on the 12th of July. 45 years is a long time to be together for a second marriage.

The woman asks Harry what the Bradford Church was like when he attended. He doesn't remember much about being in the church. They began going to the Ebenezer Church [*inaudible*] In some ways it doesn't seem so long ago and in other ways it's hard to remember. There used to be a shed at the back of the church where you tied your horses. That is where Gordon Bateman's garage is now. The woman asks if Harry and Margaret were married when Harry attended that church. They say no, Margaret started coming to that church later on after they were married. Harry went there in 1924 which would be 68 years ago. When Harry's dad moved to the farm in Bradford, the family started to attend that church and some of them went to Ebenezer Church. The woman asks what changes Harry has seen in the church over the years. He says they used to have an old, steel fence along the perimeter of the church's grounds. He says they also raised the back of the interior of the church so that everyone would have a good view of the altar. George asks if Harry remembers anything about the length of the service. George's parents would tell him that when they went to church, you wouldn't just get a message but you would get a lecture and time was not of the essence. Harry doesn't remember the minister's sermon being too lengthy. The woman asks if there were special times or events at the church. Harry can remember revivals going on at the church.

George asks what differences they see in weddings today as opposed to their wedding day. Margaret says that they were married in a house and many people would be married in their houses at that time. In terms of a reception, there would usually just be a lunch after. For their honeymoon, they went to Guelph. Margaret had a sister who lived there and worked in the hospital as a nurse.





[*The interviewers say that they will now begin the formal interview.*] The woman introduces Harry and Margaret Brown and notes that Harry's family has been a part of the Ebenezer Church and Bradford Church for the whole of this century. She asks Harry about when he went to Bradford Church for the first time. He says that he wasn't on the inside of the church the first day he went. The church was full and he stayed outside. Then he used to go sometimes for evening services. There was an iron fence to get in to the church. You walked up the center straight to the front door. The horse and buggy was parked at the back of the Sunday school in a shed. The woman asks how he has seen the church change over the years. At that time, Harry knew everybody in the congregation and now he doesn't. The woman asks if there was a special event or time that he can remember in the church. He has been to a few weddings in the church. Sometimes the preaching was different in the Church, and he remembers one very long-winded minister (not in the Bradford Church but around the area). He preached for three quarters of an hour and that was just the introduction. He doesn't remember the message.

George says their home church was a three point charge. Margaret thinks there was a time when Mount Pleasant, Ebenezer, and Bradford were all listed under one minister but that was before their time. As far as she remembers from her time, Bradford was by itself and everything else was separate. George says, growing up, their home was right beside the church and his dad used to light the church fires on Sunday morning at seven o'clock. After church everyone stood around and chatted. Margaret agrees that nobody just walked out after mass; they wanted to talk to their neighbours. George says many times it would be an hour before people would leave the church; it was a social center. Margaret was involved with young people at the church. They would get together for prayer meetings on weeknights. George notes that young people in Toronto used to go on excursions. Margaret never got involved with those.

The woman asks Harry to tell them about the revivals that took place. Dr. Hunter* wasn't in good health and Dr. Crossley* was the minister that day. He did services in Newmarket and came to Bradford to do some. Harry was in high school and quite young at the time. He remembers his neighbour going down to the service but Harry doesn't remember what was said. The people who were sick went to the front. They had a full house at the church. He remembers





another young neighbour (younger than 20 years old) who went down to the service that afternoon. In regards to services for young people, the Methodist Church had what they called [*inaudible*] Harry went to those sometimes. Harry's dad taught Sunday school and that was after church.

In the winter time you would stay in the church after a while and chat, but mostly in the summer. Church was at half past 10 and when service was over they would go out in the graveyard, walk around, look at tombstones, and then go to Sunday school. Sunday school was for adults and children. Sometimes people wouldn't go to that church for that reason; they didn't want to go to Sunday school. George asks if there were any things that Harry's family didn't do on Sunday. Harry says you wouldn't weed or plough or do any of the heavier farm work. You still had to milk the cows and feed the pigs. There were no restrictions on cooking on Sunday. Supper time on Sunday was a little different than other meals. George says that on one side of his family, his relatives were Pennsylvania Dutch and followed a very strict regime. They didn't cook any hot meals on Sunday. Everything was cooked on Saturday and prepared for Sunday. Harry says his family wasn't that strict.

Harry remembers the minister in Bradford having a horse and buggy. He remembers him going down the road picking up hay for his horses. This was before the 1920s. Harry doesn't remember Rev. Long* having a horse. It is interesting to George how many places and homes in Bradford were originally stables for horses. Harry doesn't remember who the first minister was that had a car. He just remembers that the minister would drive himself in a horse and buggy. In the earlier days, Harry thinks the congregation (the farmers) would provide the hay. Later on, the minister would find his own hay. Harry thinks there must have been a furnace in the basement of the Bradford Church to heat it. He never went to the church basement. The woman says that the church basement floor is just earth. There is dry rot in the basement now so they are putting in all new pillars and beams.

Margaret says her sister, named Mary Brown, lived with Ed* but didn't marry. She was in the choir there a long time ago. There were 4 girls who sang together and she sang the base. The woman explains that Jan is a newcomer to the church so this is an interesting experience for her





to listen to these stories. She is going to feel more connected to the church faster than anybody else. George asks how far away some of the congregation lived from the church. Margaret doesn't think anyone would come from beyond what is now the 400 Highway. Her family lived on the 10th Line (Middletown Road). [*First name is inaudible*] Stewart was Margaret's neighbour on the farm; he was Presbyterian. The people on their farm now [*it is unclear whose farm they are referring to*] are Hayhursts*. George says he is on the radio sometimes. He was in advertising but now he's in career placement. [*Tape cuts out*]

*Note: * Indicates that the word or name is written as it sounded, and therefore may be incorrect.*

