



## Deerhurst Taping

### *Group Interview*

June 14, 2004

Length: 46 minutes and 30 seconds

[*The interviewer and interviewees are not introduced. It can be assumed that George Jackson is directing the discussion but the other speakers can seldom be identified.*] George notes that he is speaking to a group of people who have lived in what was known as Deerhurst. This is one in a series of discussions about hamlets in the area. George asks a woman named Marjorie\* [*possibly Marjorie Baynes, whose family lived in Deerhurst*] how she would describe the location of Deerhurst to someone who's never been there. She would say it is on what used to be the #11 Highway (now called County Road #4) about halfway between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Lines of West Gwillimbury. George asks the same question to men named John and Bob. One of them replies that the church and the post office can be used as the boundaries. George says that they can all agree that it is on Highway 11. He comments that there are three different names given to Highway 11, including Yonge Street and Penetang Road. He also mentions that these are used interchangeably in different sources.

George asks what they think Deerhurst would be remembered for. One woman says it would be known for its post office and the United Church (the church isn't there anymore but the cemetery is). There are more and more new houses going up and only about two older houses still standing. George asks about the founding families of Deerhurst. He knows that the Baynes ran the post office and the woman notes that it was up until 1912. Richard Baynes bought a section of Lot 15. The Baynes had 75 acres starting at the 12<sup>th</sup>, then there were 25 acres in the middle, and then the Cronans had 100 acres to the north of that. Baynes bought the 75 acres from the Cronans since it originally belonged to them. Isabel\* says, besides the Baynes, William George Bell\*, [*name is inaudible*], and the Fieghens\* lived in Deerhurst. The Fieghens\* lived in





Isabel's\* house before she did. They came from the Collingwood and Thornbury areas where they had a sawmill. Mr. Bell retired after living in Deerhurst [*inaudible*] Marjorie says that the post office closed at the end of December in 1912 for rural delivery. She thinks they were open for about 10 years. A woman says Walker [*last name is inaudible*], James Wood, and Matt Kneeshaw were all on the ledger and the last postmaster was Richard Baynes. Baynes' son William Richard was an assessor.

George asks what the most exciting yearly events were in Deerhurst but no one seems to remember any events. It's mentioned that the Ebenezer Church had a steeple with a lean to it; this information was known by some. The only businesses were the post office and a little general store. A woman named Sarah says that the building was divided into two parts: the post office and the general store. The north window in the southwest corner was the post office and the rest was the general store. The house over the store had a room for storage, living room, dining room, kitchen, and three bedrooms. One of the men says that the closest blacksmith was in Steele's Corners. George asks what forms of entertainment there were in town. It was common to gather at someone's house to socialize and sing songs, particularly on Sundays. One of the women says there were two church services and people would try to go to both. The Ebenezer young people would meet at Gardener's house; there were maybe 20 of them. There was a dance hall in Gilford that they would sometimes go to.

George asks about travelling experiences. One woman mentions travelling by bicycle; there wasn't much travelling except to see family. George asks if they had orchards on their farms. One of the men says that his family planted their orchard when he was six years old. He remembers helping to hold the trees as they planted them. One of the women says there was a skating pond in Steele's Corners which belonged to Mr. Gardener. The entire family shared one pair of skates. George asks if the men present played baseball in Fennell's Corners, but they did not. The women say they went to watch the games. They're asked if they remember the names of any players; [*inaudible*] Matt, Gordon Kneeshaw, and [*the rest of the names are inaudible*] played baseball on a team. One of the men says there were girl's baseball teams in the Scotch





Settlement and Bond Head. George notes that Isobel Watson (Mrs. Coutts) told him about playing baseball on a women's' team.

John says his family bought their first car in 1915 from Bradford. It would only be driven in the summer time. They had to crank the car; it was a Model T Ford. [*First name is inaudible*] Sturgeon was one of the first to buy a car. John has a write up which Howard Gardener\* made to document all the cars that different people owned. John doesn't remember any barn fires when George asks about them. He doesn't remember any fire fighters from Bradford coming to the community but there were always police officers on #11. Another man notes that the first police officer he can recall was Sam Irving\* who patrolled Highway 11. John adds that when an accident was over, a few hours later Sam would always search the fields and one day he found a bottle of alcohol. He rode a motorcycle. They don't remember having any chicken thefts in the area.

George asks if they remember any stories that their grandfathers told them. One woman says she knows a story but it was told by her father. There was a woman (a neighbour) who would buy Humbugs (a square minty candy) every time she went to the post office and general store. George asks about Highway 11. One man says that it was taken over by the province in 1922. Before that, the road was full of pot holes and mud. They had a machine called a grader which was pulled by horses. They would grade the road in the spring. One of the farmers on the road looked after it. This scraper had wheels on it and George mentions that some of the earlier ones did not [*inaudible*] Bob says that Donald Gray and Jimmy Sloane had a township grater.

One of the women shows them a photo of Deerhurst [*inaudible*] Edward Dunn was a teacher in Deerhurst who became an inspector in Toronto [*inaudible*] George asks if there were any hills in the community to go tobogganing on. One woman notes that the Moriarty farm on the 14<sup>th</sup> West had many hills and would be used for tobogganing or sleigh riding. A woman asks how many families lived in Deerhurst in their time. One woman says there were only three houses that she knew of. There were four people in the Dunn household and two at George Bell's house; there were also the Fieghens\*. There were about four families. The post office and Ebenezer Church were the places that brought people to Deerhurst. The mail came from





Bradford by train and then arrived at the Deerhurst post office. A woman reads an excerpt of an interview with Laura Baynes. Every day before seven o'clock, her father left for Gilford. On his way, he stopped to pick up the mail at Fennell's at what is now Jane [*last name is inaudible*]'s house. He sent the mail on the north bound train and did the same for the south bound train to Toronto. Then he went back to Fennell's Corners, leaving any mail there before moving on back home to Deerhurst. In the afternoon, people came in for their letters which would be handed out in the little mail pockets.

George says that they will also be talking about the Hollows community because that area and Deerhurst are related. Many people from the Hollows came to Ebenezer Church. George asks if anyone has something to add about Deerhurst before moving on. Bob would like to add that he did in fact have an experience with chicken thieves. His grandfather had chickens stolen from him in 1928 at Lot 15, Concession 13\*. They found out who stole them because his grandfather tracked them down. One woman would like to add that she read that Hector Sutherland was a blacksmith in Deerhurst. Her document says that Bolton\* was an innkeeper, Hector Sutherland was a blacksmith, and Samuel Walker was a postmaster and store keeper in 1972.

George asks the group to describe the location of the Hollows. One man says that the boundaries are Lot 5 to Lot 12 in Concessions 12, 13, and 14. [*Group interview cuts out*]

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

