



Vira Bateman

Interview

July 1994

Length: 1 hour, 5 minutes and 7 seconds

[The interviewer is not introduced, but it can be assumed that George Jackson is speaking.]

George says that he will be speaking to Vira Bateman about the community down in West Gwillimbury, the 6th line, and what was known as The Scotch Settlement. Vira's father was William Ferguson (commonly known as 'Ferg') and he was born in the south half of Lot 8 in Bradford, on Concession 5. Her mother was Rachel Vira Stone, but she is unsure of where she was born. Vira's father had a sister named Kate Trenouth, who was the oldest. She was married to Tom and she taught in a school. Edgart married Reverend William Wilson, on King Street (looking at a map). Vira's father's family had two sisters: Kate who went to teach at a school where she met her husband Tom and Edgart who married Wilson and lived in Toronto. There were also three brothers. Robert Sutherland lived in Toronto and owned the farm where the south half of Lot 8 Concession 5; Vira and Jim rented that farm. Bruce Sutherland was one brother who went to Toronto and then Sudbury. He was a dentist. Henry (also known as Harry) Sutherland lived in Schaumberg, and he was a farmer. Vira doesn't remember too much about her mother's family. But she had an Uncle Wes Stone who owned a hardware store, and Uncle Russell who farmed just out of Beeton (the first farm east of Beeton). Uncle Joe was a druggist who lived in Toronto. Aunt Victoria (known as 'Queen') was born on the 24th of May, and married Wilfred Barton. They lived across the school, and then they moved to the states and Uncle Wilfred worked for his brother. Then they came back and lived in Guelph. Vira herself four siblings named Margret*, Robert, Joan, and Donald. Her mother and father farmed on the 6th line, the north half of Lot 7 (which is the south side of the 6th line). Her father went out West to work for an uncle to make enough money to buy that farm.





Vira does not remember the year her father and mother got married. Vira was born on the north half of Lot 7, Concession 5. Margret* married John Leyne (Irish) and they lived in Manitoba, he was in the air force, then they got married in Dawson City. Robert bought the farm across the road from the road where Vira lived (Caver's Farm). His wife is Doris Wright, and they came from Cookstown. Joan married but they divorced and now she is married to Bob Hartman. They lived at Dawson Creek, but for the last few years they lived at Vancouver Island on Falcon Beach. Marge lived at Parksville and moved north. Don lives in Tecumseth.

Vira went to Number 3 School, just down the road. Interviewer asks if Vira remembers the names of any of her teachers. She remembers Miss Bennett and Miss Perry. Vira didn't like Miss Perry very much; she was the only teacher she had for two years. Joe Drennan was another teacher, he's dead now. Vira says the school had about 30 students. There were black boards at the front of the school and a pipe less furnace. Jim always gave himself credit for burning down the school. She doesn't remember the year that the school burned down, but Vira was going to school then. Collings was another teacher. If you were bad you had to go in a closed closet. People would throw their crusts in there and there were mice. Vira can't remember the teacher in charge during the fire. The old school was a brick school. Vira cannot remember if there was a shopping centre on the 6th Line. If you wanted to go to the store you had to go to Bond Head; you would go down with the mailman. Interviewer asks Vira to name some people who went to school with her. She names Helen Kingsley, Norman Hudson, Jack Armstrong, Doris Armstrong, Helen Woods, McArthurs, and Kingsleys. Herbert and Helen Wes* lived next to Vira. Helen died from pneumonia. Herb was little when he was born, and he lived long. Vira went to high school in Bradford by horse. They drove with umbrellas to keep the rain away. They took the back way (by 6th and Simcoe Road) and kept the horse at Queen's Hotel. A horse ran away coming home one day. He ran between the hydro pole and the fence and walked back to town. He got hit by a truck and walked funny. Vira was sitting in the buggy and was not hurt. Vira met the Wilson girls in the winter and one of the girls sat on the horse. The interviewer's mother left her horse at the hotel as well. One day Osler met Vira on the street and pulled out peppermints and wanted her to give them to the boys, but he had TB and so the





candies would probably never get to the boys. The interviewer went to Jack McCabe's house and he says that was the alleyway to the stable. He said he doesn't own the walls. The one wall was part of the store and the other wall was part of the hotel. He just owned the alleyway that you could drive a horse and buggy through. Vira did not go to the 5th and final year of high school. Then she went into training, got sick and got her tonsils out, and then went back into training for nursing. She then gave it up because it wasn't for her. She turned her head every time a man got his needle, and that's how she knew nursing wasn't for her.

Then she came home to the farm. It was mixed farming with cows and sheep, not everybody had sheep. She would separate the cream and made butter when she was married. When she went to Uncle Bob's the first year she was married, she took the cream to the cousin's [inaudible] [*Tape cuts out and then resumes*] She dated Jim Darling for two years, Earl Grey for two years, and then met and married Jim Bateman. He was living in the Bateman farm. He started his schooling at Cherry Creek. Mr. Bateman bought the farm and he had a nervous breakdown and couldn't sign the papers. Mr. and Mrs. Bateman had to move to a little stone house on the Third and lived there for two years with three children. Finally Mr. Bateman finally got onto the farm. They moved down after Jim started school. She was married in 1938 and moved to the farm on the 5th line for five years. They had just mixed farming with pigs, cows, and crops. Vira would drive the tractor. Cannot remember what type of tractor she drove.

She was at 5th line farm from 1938-1943 and then moved up to Highway 88. She had two boys and three miscarriages. Jim had always wanted a girl. William James was born in 1941 and David Sutherland was born in 1944. Wesley had a sawmill and they had 200 acres on the 13th that was pasture. Wesley called one day and asked Jim to help him, so Jim helped him (he put on new overalls). Ernie Hughes and Rita had been married for about 13 years with no children. Jim and Ernie were good friends so Ernie found out where Jim was and came to tell him that they had a girl. Jim took one step backwards and the joint that joins the saw and the tractor wasn't covered, so he got caught in it. The men had to run to the tractor to turn it off but that takes time. So his leg was broken and his other leg ripped off at the bone. This all happened just because he was retuning a favour. Vira only heard him complain about it once.





George asks about the types of social activities Vira took part in. When she was with Jim Darling and they were in high school, they were going to the school dance and he bought her a flower and by the time they got there the flower was frozen. There were very cold winters. She went skating in Bradford. She can't remember how many rooms there were in her high school. The interviewer asks if there was anything in Bond Head that was happening socially. Vira says there were always the Euchres they went to for the war. They would be held at the Orange Hall across the road, and the hotel; they would fill both of them. The hotel is still there at the end of 88. There was a common room in the hotel, but Vira was normally in the Orange Hall. There were dances and presentations, the normal country activities.

Vira was part of the Women's Institute, but specifically the Bond Head Institute. The other Institute was for juniors and she was past being a junior. Vira went to Bond Head to the Presbyterian Church when she lived in the old Scotch Settlement. When they moved back, they went to the Methodist Church because it was union. That church burned down a couple of years after she married, in 1941. When she was married they went to the one across from Uncle Bob's [inaudible] She remembers Jim looking out and seeing the fire and Vira had the baby so she couldn't go. Then they went to church back in the Presbyterian Church. Then they tore that down and they went to church in the hall. It was a great church because it was comfortable and felt like home.

After Vira was married there were about 20 of them and they went from house to house for social gatherings. Most of the parties were at her house because it was large; gatherings such as 25th wedding anniversaries were held there as well as Halloween parties. There was a party for Jack and Norma's 25th and Bill and Gertie's was at the same time so they bought two card tables and chairs for them to use. The day after the party, Vira told Norma the least she could have done was thank them for it. They didn't thank them because they thought it was just for Bill [inaudible] [Tape cuts out and then resumes] The interviewer notes that it's interesting that with a group of people like that, one experience builds into another experience and you establish a routine. Louise was a musician in that group. Some people play harder than others and it all depends on how long you can play. Louise has added to a lot of parties. [Tape cuts out]





[*Tape resumes*] When they were on the farm on the 5th line (when Vira was just married), their neighbours were Henry McCabe* (to the west), and the Browns. They didn't have a telephone then so if Jim had a message while he was cutting wood, he would give it to the Browns and they would tell Vira. There was hydro on the farm and a bathroom. Some parts north of Bradford did not get hydro until about 1946. Vira didn't have hydro until 1938. The Browns had a telephone, but they did not. The Watsons were across the road, and the Lloyds. Bob Westlake was here (*looking at a map?*); his father's name was Henry. Bob had the first television, and the neighbours were invited to see some big fight. The kitchen was big and he went to the counter to pour drinks so he missed the fight in his own house. Wes was on the north side. The Culberts were on the west and then McArthurs. On the south were the Bentleys. There was one year in which many people died, one was the Bentley boy who died of a sleeping sickness [*the names of others who died are inaudible*]. The Wilson Stoddart's* farm was across from either Langfords* or across the road. The name has been there a long time.

Vira notes that she hopes she's got all her facts right. She couldn't remember her grandmother's name because they always called her Grandma Stone. It was found that her name was Jane. Grandpa Stone married for the second time. Louise Abernathy was Grandpa Stone's first wife, and Jane was his second. Grandpa Stone lived on the Culbert farm on the 5th line. He moved to Aurora after. A lot of history can start out with just two people in the 1880's. George asks if anyone has written a Sutherland history? Vira says yes, she gave what she had to the boy [*inaudible*] [*Tape cuts out*]

[*Tape resumes*] They are talking about William Ferguson Sutherland who was Vira's father. His father was Robert Sutherland, and Vira's not sure who his father is. Vira's father is buried in Bond Head. Vira's mother was born 1894 (*looking through a book that belongs to Vira*). Vira doesn't know when they split up (*the churches?*); a district that small didn't need two churches, and they were even fighting back then. Vira's father was 75 when he died... [*the rest of their discussion is mostly inaudible*] [*Tape cuts out*]

[*Tape resumes*] Now they are discussing school concerts (at S.S. #3). They had to go across to the Auld Kirk. The school concerts used to be in the church, and everyone had to take





part. Vira had to dance with a boy she couldn't stand. You needed to practice; usually the whole month of December would be spent putting together the concert. The teacher was usually evaluated on how good the concert was. Vira had to do a duet with Margaret Fever*. Jim and Vira went to Dr. Webster's funeral in Bolton and Vira knew no one there. Lunch was served and a girl comes in the room with a plate of sandwiches. It turned out it was Margaret; she married a bank manager and that's where he was posted.

[*They continue to look through a book*] They had a son, Robert. Robert Sutherland died February 24th, 1854 in his 60th year. His wife was Isabelle and daughter was Janet. Christina, Janet and unknown did not get married. This is a different Robert Sutherland from her grandfather; this Robert would be related to Muriel Reynolds. [*Tape cuts out*]

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

