

Mr. Headly Derry

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THE END OF TAPE AT25

Mr. Headly Derry, Montgomery Lodge

October 17, 1974

D: Mr. Derry
A: Nancy
E: Evelyn
R: Robert

Case
No. 3
Code I/1/H

A: Do you want to start out by telling us a bit about your early ^{up} life at Bancroft?

D: Well, I did tell you some of it, didn't I.

A: Well, tell us again while we've got the tape recorder.

D: ^{well} "During the summer, of course I lived on the farm and I helped to do the general farm work which consisted of planting seeds like potatoes, and corn, turnips, lettuce, carrots and beets. ^{and all the rest of them} And then as soon as the summer was over, why then we usually worked in the woods during the winter time. Well, that started anywhere from, well I've often seen quite a lot of snow the first of November and I've seen it two feet deep in, well the first day of April. That is in the woods you know, but on the hill, it was... it's a very hilly part of the country some hills there you couldn't hardly climb up them. Where you ever at Bancroft?

A: Just once or twice visiting.

D: Well if you ever go through there again, you go up the old, what they used to call the old Hastings Road. It's a continuation of Front Street, Bancroft and it goes up to Hamooth and you can go up around up to Derry's Bay and you turn left and you can go up into Algonquin Park and you turn right you can go down east, you can go on down to Highway 17 down near Rockbrook. Then there's a road, number 41 highway I think, it ^{goes} ~~is~~ ^{another town} ~~comes~~ out to number 7 and then it goes west to ~~A~~ I forget what it is now, and then it goes south ~~and~~ again and you end up in Belleville.

Q: What would you do in the woods during the winter?

A: That mostly was cutting down wood, you have to cut the tree down to get the timber out or it was in the summer time, I think I told you, we peeled the bark, the bark of the hemlock tree that they used to tan leather. Now they tell me, I never saw it done, ~~then they~~ but it took seven years to tan a cow's hide. They put it in a... I suppose they sliced it, ground up the bark likely and maybe added water or something else to it and they soaked the hide in that. But now they claim that they can do the same amount of work in seven hours by using acid. Now the cow hide when it's tanned is oh, approx. exactly that thick (1/4") and the acid or the use of the tan bark or what ever they used would shrink it in size but increase the thickness of it. When they used it mostly for soles of shoes. And then we had to cut wood and sell it for stove wood. There was a company that they called the Ravenna Lumber Company and there was also the Gilmore Lumber Company and they'd go around through among the farmers and they'd buy the timber on the farmer's place, they wouldn't buy the land, just the timber. Sometimes they'd only buy one kind of timber like beechwood or something like that. You see in that country there was, most of the timber was beech, maple, birch, there was three varieties of birch, and a little bit of ironwood and ash, three varieties of ash, white ash and black ash and another kind they called pin-ash. I don't know much about that. I know that black ash grows in a swampy or wet place and white ash grows out on high land and white ash is what you would use for certain things it's a much better quality of timber. We used to make the handles out of it or things like that but I imagine ~~we~~ it is pretty well cut off by this

D: time because it's fifty ^{years} since I left there, more than fifty.
I left in 1913.

E: Where did you go when you left?

D: Went to Trenton and I lived here till 1969.

E: Can you give ~~me~~ us some recollections of what Trenton was like?
Say two or three decades ago?

D: At that time, Trenton in her early days was what they used to call
a saw mill town. The saw mill here they cut logs into lumber
was one of the main industries in the town. In the Gilmore Lumber
Company mill, I never saw. You see it got burned, I don't know if
^{there so I don't know}
it was the same year or the year before I came. I know where it
was, it was built up along the river. Part of the old stone
foundations were still there when I was there and they used some
of them in the building of the British Chemical plant. Well then
as I said before ^{nearly} all the valuable timber has been cut off. It
used to be pine, there used to be a lot of good pine trees but
sometimes people want to clear ^{up} ~~off~~ land, they cut the small trees
down and bushes and burn them, ^{sometimes} then ~~the~~ the fire gets out of
control it kills a lot of valuable trees. A pine tree will stand
up even if it's dead for years. And then after you get up about
that high from the ground it's real dry. We used to cut it and
sell it for firewood, kindling mostly. You know how much it takes
to make a cord of wood, what they call a cord of wood. If it's two
feet wide by the pile is eight feet ^{long} ~~wide~~ and four feet high, that's
cut two feet long. Well then they have cord wood, you don't ~~very~~
very often find cord wood, that's nearly all used for, used to be
used for lumber because it made good lumber. There was lots of
it and they wasted so much that we haven't any now. A man that
lived there and was born there, and lived there all his life time

D: told me that he remembers when, when in the spring, the Gilmore Lumber Co. any th'g'd cut, they ~~also~~ called a cut of logs this summer and then they'd pile lumber up and they'd let it dry ~~as~~ to the next winter and then they'd sell it to anyone who could want to buy it. And he said he's known them to sell three thousand feet board measure, you know how they measure lumber, don't you, it's an inch thick and they usually cut the logs twelve feet long and then they saw them into lumber whatever size the log will make. Some logs are only that big (1 ft. diameter) ~~and~~ at the top end and some of them are that big (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. diameter) And the Gilmore Lumber Company they tell me, I didn't see this but I just took the word of the people that told me, that they used to take the logs through a machine, I suppose they called it a saw, it was run for a circular saw and they'd square the logs up to whatever size they wanted and then they'd pile them on the carrier, nine logs, three wide and three high. Then they'd put them through a ~~machine~~ ^{machine} that'd cut all those nine logs into lumber at one cut. They were cut with band saws. You know what these like and then if there were, now you take the first board they'd cut off of the log would be narrower with a lot of bark on it.

all then they'd have to edge that, they called it, and then the slabs, that would be the first one that they'd take of would be a slab and then they'd maybe get a narrow board out of it and then the next one would be wider. And any that wasn't good enough for lumber they'd put it in the scrap pile and make fire wood out of it. And I don't know but that there was some mighty good stuff went into that firewood. They thought the supply would never end, but now, about three dollars for a thousand feet of far better pine lumber than you can get now at any price

D: It went up to six hundred dollars.

W: That's quite a jump. What did you yourself do in Trenton?

D: Well ^{in Trenton} ~~that~~ I worked on a farm near Trenton for one or two summers and I worked a couple of summers in the canning factory and I worked for ten years in a factory where they made egg fillers. They're the racks that they pack eggs in. To pack the eggs in them you had to put the fillers in a wood, in a case made out of wood. There were two or three different weights and in some places the lumber is $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick in the end and the centres of the boxes and in others it only $\frac{5}{8}$ ths, some only $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch some only $\frac{3}{8}$ ths. Now then, and but they got, used to pack the fillers in those boxes and ship them in a car. It took a good size car to hold eight hundred boxes. An then they got, they had to pay so much freight on all that, on the lumber and the egg fillers and the boxes, say there was a kind of box they called the export. They were made out of, the end of the boxes were $\frac{5}{8}$ ths of an inch thick and the centres were the same. The sides and the top and bottom were about $\frac{5}{16}$ ths and they they nailed them up, they had a machine to nail them on. For a long time they used to nail alot by hand. Why some of those fellows that got used to nailing those boxes by hand they could dirve nailles faster than you could count them. I never could get up much speed at that, I've done alot of it but, Well then they took, they got the idea of packing those fillers incorregated paper boxes then they could get a hundred and fifty in a box and the box weighed three pounds and a wood ^{hold} box that would ~~weigh~~ the same amount of filler would weight ten or eleven pounds, you see. So you see on seven or eight ~~thou~~ hundred or a thousand boxes. Then the corregated boxes didn't take up near as much room in the car as the wooden boxes. They pretty near switched ^{for shipping} entirely to corregated boxes beacuse if you had, a car would hold about a thousand cases of these fillers in the corregated boxes where as it would only hold eight hundred, seven or eight hundred^d

D: wood cases. It depends on what a heavy case they were, what they call a road case, they were mostly used, well we'll say locally for ~~the~~ stores that bought and sold eggs, they packed them in these wood cases. I guess I told you how they kept track of the, ~~if~~ there was a man buying eggs and a farmer had four or five dozen ~~de~~ eggs ~~well~~ they'd pack them in. they always stood at the end of the box. They'd fill one end, well the boxes held enough fillers to hold ¹⁸ ~~thirty~~ dozen of eggs. So you see they saved alot of weight in the freight and alot of space in the car so they can get a thousand cartons, that's what they called the paper boxes, cartons and the wooden ones were cases. Well the wood cases, they averaged, well we'll say they averaged ten pounds a piece and the paper ones only about thres. And then you could get a thousand cartons, paper ones in a car where you ^{only} could get about seven or eight hundred wooden ones. It depended on the size of the car and what kind of cases they used. I've done pritten near every kind of work, when you see it done you get a better impression that if you ^{you do} hear somebody tell aboutit.

W: Did you have any other jobs in Trenton?

D: Weell, yes, I worked for a ~~you-~~ year in a shop where they painted railway couches. It's quite alot of work to do a good job on them, to really finish them up. They have to be, the old paint, they either have to be burned off with a blow torch or taken off with liquid paint remover. It rubbed the, you put the ~~liquid~~ paint remover on with a brush like a paint brush and then they's scrape it. It took the old paint. ^{obb} And to do a coach a real good job on it they had to put nine different coats of new paint on it, not all paint some of it was colour and if there was any ~~old~~ dints in the wood they'd fill them up with what ~~you~~ ^{they} call ~~it~~ putty, it was really white lead and oil, they'd put that on there and you know on the windows along the windows where the window sills are, they were made out of wood in the old couches, the new ones now are steel. And on a small coach there'd be, the windows are close together, the boards weren't that wide, I've seen me spend

D: two or three days just sandpapering that piece, windowsill, why that's hard on your fingers. You may be apt to spend two or three days washing the inside of the coach to get the, sometimes people would try to do a cheap job and give the inside of the coach a wash and then maybe they wouldn't get all the dirt off then they'd cover it up with varnish, then right there I'd have to do a good job. You had to take that varnish off and the rest of the dirt that the other fellow left on and then put on fresh. And it was awful easy to try to take the old paint off and not spoil the coat that was under it and you had to be pretty careful not to do too big a space at a time because if you did, if you went through the, like if there was a coat of paint on and then maybe they'd use the coach for a while and it would, it would get dirty, smoke from the engine and it'd be things like that and they'd put on a coat of varnish and then they'd hardly make a good job of it, that take that dirt off and that coat of varnish and put ~~on~~ new on.. And it was really quite a job.

W: Did you do anything else in Trenton?

D: Ah, well yes. I did quite a bit of carpentry work. I had a little work shop by, oh four or five years I guess. I made window and door frames for a lumber dealer there. Do you know anything about the town? You know where that Dominion store is?

R: In Trenton?

D: Yes

R: Yes

D: Well I lived just two blocks from that only on Crown Street. There is a, the first street next to the bay, is Bay Street and then there's John Street and Dundas street and Heber Street and then Crown Street and George Street and Princess and that, that was the.. and those streets all run parallel to each other and ~~there~~^{there} was and crosswise there was Herman Street and Scott Street and Campbell Street, ~~Bazn~~ Sidney Street on the east side of the river. Then they, .. of course they'd have to go cross the bridge cause there was

- D: a lot of other streets across the river. I didn't know so much about them but I only lived on the east side.
- N: You mentioned Barn Street. Do you happen to know how it got a name like that?
- D: What was that?
- N: Do you happen to know how Barn Street got it's name?
- D: No I don't, but they,used to have, people that had lived there long before I did, they had different names for the streets. Some of their..we would call them foolish, (space in tape) was Stony Lonesome and another one was the French Village and so on. They didn't have ther... while I was there they'd rename the streets. Well I suppose that... I don't know how they got their names, where they got them,but... The street I lived on was Crown Street, that is where I last lived. When I first went ~~to~~ to Trenton I lived down on College Street and that's not far from the river and then all them other streets they crossed. Oh, I went and got mixed up on it. Dundas, Heber, and John. Dundas was really the main highway, runs from Toronto to Montreal maybe was down through Belleville here, Napanee, Kingston.
- R: That's Highway 2?
- D: Yes the streets named and later on the houses numbered. When I first moved to Trenton in 1913 when you got a letter from anybody, why they'd just address it they'd put your name on it and the town. And then got so that wouldn't be why I might live on the west side of the river and somebody might live on the east side but if they just put Trenton on it why they'd... What they'd call the Trenton coupeage mill. They made bars and things like ~~to~~ that and it isn't there any more. That's... I don't know when they tore it down or burned it down or something and of course that applies to an awful lot of places, where they used to be real good factories and things where hundreds of men worked. Then they...especially if they worked with timber or wood and then it was all used up and then they had to go someplace else.
- I see, I got the paper from Trenton today, I see they're going to build a new

D: factory here or they had built one and ^{to} they one make tin cans and now they're going to build one a cement. Tearing down a old house that was there for a hundred and fifty years. And they're going to build in the lower part of it a place for a store, I think it was a store and then up over it bachelor apartments. One thing has to disappear to make room for something else

R: It's too bad, still that old things have to go like that all the time

D: What's that?

R: It's too bad the old buildings have to be torn down so much.

D: Well yes it is. And alot of it could have been avoided if they had been careful with the timber in the first place. I heard my father saying that he worked in a woods when he was young and he said some of the timber, the logs that they'd condemn, say they weren't fit for anything, wouldn't use them to make a skid way to pile logs on. Now he said they're cutting ⁽¹⁾ into lumber and selling it for first class ~~lumber~~ lumber.

E: Do you remember working in the sugar bushes?

D: Sugar bush? Yes, we had a small sugar bush on our place but just a little one only syrpp for our own, we never made any sugar. Sometimes when we'd be boiling it down we'd take nearly all the syrup out and then we'd put the kettle back on the fire and let the little bit that was left there turn into taffy. Ever eat maple taffy?

E: Yes, it's really good.

D: It's good isn't it. When it's ready for sugar it's about ready for taffy. You pour it on ice or snow.

* * * * *

D: (My one son) is a pharmacist, so, there's just the two of them left at home now. We just have the two boys.

E: You just had the two boys, eh?

D: No, just had one boy and one girl. But my son had two boys; my daughter had three.

E: Heavens!

D: One married; one grandson is married. His picture's up on top there if you're interested. And, then the other ones. There's a girl and she's living, as far as I know down to, way down East somewhere, I forget where it is. We was down there this summer just after this...this school closed. The high school you see. And before she started into university. That's a, a pharmacist is a pretty good job, for a young fellow to do.

Oh there was lot's of work you could get maybe,, if you would do it. Any kind of, you know repairs. The roads would be. They had a system in those days, I don't know whether they have yet or not. That farmer had ^{to} do two days free labour on the railways, and they called it statute labour and, and, and in the winter time there was any lumbering to do, when the

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lumbermen were taking out ~~time~~ timber. They had to snow plough the road themselves. To build a snow plough, they'd get a good size tree and then they'd cut it in I think 16 feet long, and split it in two. And turn the flate side out you see and put cross pieces on. Then they'd drag it with a team of horses, or sometimes, two teams. That's the way they cleared the road. They didn't have these high-powered snow ploughs that they have now-a-days. Never even dreamed of them then. One winter, that the snow was awefully deep, I was only fourteen years old. And I'm eighty-one now, so it must have been quite a while ago. And my father ^{and another man} ~~a lumberman~~ had a job taking lumber off another man's place and they had to drag along the cordwood for tan ~~be~~ bark. That's was in the summer and after a good snow storm they'd ah... More often the big storms would be at night. They'd get up in the morning and go out, when you could hardly see, through the window; the snow was deep, and drift-
in g you know. But we used to have in the summer, it would get pretty hot. Just ^{as} ~~as~~ hot as it is around here. And we'd plant the ground. Plant it with seed, and. You'd never notice, the potatoes for instance, get a good size about that long, or smaller, and you see all around there's what you call the seed end of the potato. They'd cut that off and they'd even cut

and put them in a pot
 out all those eyes: the sprouts, they called them eyes. I don't
 know why they did. Then if you planted those, in the
 spring you'd have ten to fifteen bags of potatoes.
 Store them in the cellar and it would start to grow out.
 And at the time here, these sprouts would
 start to grow. Then you'd take take and cut the sprouts
 off, cause they'd take all the good out of the potato.
 Then you'd plant them in the ground and plant the seed.
 You there some who take the oh medium size and cut
 them in two or three pieces pieces and put all of it
 in. The three or four pieces in what they call a
 hill. And the hills were in rows about three feet
 apart and the hills would be maybe about a foot, a
 foot and a half apart in the row. And we when, after
 a little while, you'd plant them, ^{if you want earlier potatoes} ~~maybe~~. You
 planted them early; Well maybe the last of April.
 Close to May, around there. But if you had ~~wanted~~ wanted
 to have winter potatoes, you didn't want to plant
 them until the first of June. And turnips, if you
 wanted to have a real good turnip, you wouldn't do
 your seed until the first of July. Then to leave them
 in the ground in the fall till it's good and cold,
~~almost till the frost~~. They'll stand more frost than
 any vegetable you can find. A skin on them about
 that ~~thick~~ thick. Actually they taste ^{best} best when you
 plant them late, and pull them. I pull them when
 there's snow on the ground. I found it was old on
 your hands.

Turnips will live in the frozen ground . You wouldn't believe it hardly. They used to sell a brand sack of the big turnips. And a brand sack is bigger than an ordinary potato bag or flour bag. And they sell the whole sack for fifteen ~~cents~~ cents. You wouldn't get one... you'd have to pay... I don't know what they are now , but. But a turnip about that high that big around. The tops were green, you could cut them off. And if you cut them too close to the turnip, you'd spoil the flavour of them.

Cemetery.

DERRY — At Belleville General Hospital on Friday, March 7, 1975, Hadley V. Derry, former resident of Trenton, husband of the late Bessie B. Derry. Dear father of Cecil, Bernia, (Evelyn) Mrs. Gerald Paul, of Bay Ridge, brother of the late Mrs. Leah Lingard and the late Earl Derry.

Friends are invited to call at the Weaver Funeral Home, Trenton. Funeral service will be held in the Funeral Home on Monday, March 10 at 3 p.m. Reverend Frank Hobbs officiating.

Entombment in Mount Evergreen Cemetery.

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HEDLEY V. DERRY

Trenton

Funeral services for Hedley V. Derry, 49 Crown St., Trenton, were held Monday, March 10 at 3 p.m. from the Weaver Funeral Home followed by interment at Mount Evergreen Cemetery.

Born in Bancroft Mr. Derry died Friday, March 7, at the Belleville General Hospital in his 76th year. He is the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Willis Derry.

He is survived by a son, Cecil Derry, of Sarnia, and a daughter, Evelyn (Mrs. Gerald Faul), of Bay Ridge. He is also survived by five grandsons.

Mr. Derry was predeceased by his wife, the late Bessie B. Spatia and one brother, the late Earl Derry, and one sister, the late Mrs. Leah Lingard.

Mr. Derry, a retired carpenter, was a member of Grace United Church in Trenton. He was a Sunday school teacher and a Sunday school superintendent at Grace United Church.

Bearers were Lorne Myles, Val Carswell, Arnold Cronkwright, Dave Parkinson, Gerald Paro, and Charles Brown.