



Orleans County Historical Association

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Orleans County Historical Association

Oral History Project Interview

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Harling
Lee Street (15517 East Lee Street)
East Barre
Albion, New York (post office)

The following interviews were conducted by Helen
Mathes of Barre, New York.



Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Harling



Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

Eva a. Harling
Clyde W. Harling

Signed
Nov. 10, 1982

Date

Understood and agreed to:

Helen B. Mathes

INTERVIEWER
Nov. 10, 1982

Date

Harling 1

For the Orleans County Historical Association

This is an interview with Clyde and Eva Harling, who are at their home in East Barre on Lee Street better known as 31A now-a-days. I am Helen Mathes, Historian for the Town of Barre, recording this on the 10th day of November 1982

M Eva, would you like to tell your story first?

E Yes, I was born March 14, 1906, on a farm at Clinton, Michigan and attended a rural school until eighth grade. My Uncle William Boyce came to New York state to buy a fruit farm on the Transit Road, returned to Michigan and induced my father, my Uncle Ray Boyce and two brothers-in-law, Dale and Roy Goheen to sell their farms and move to Orleans County in the 1920's. We located west of Rich's Corners on the Baldwin farm after a hectic experience of moving our furniture and a team of horses in a box car, with a hired man in attendance and my family traveling by a train to Buffalo. My father made the mistake of transferring to the trolley station, after getting off at Albion at midnight, phoning uncle Billy, who didn't answer, but a neighbor, Mr. Nesbitt did and they met us with a team on the bob-sleighs for a cold bumpy ride to my Uncle's home. I stayed with them the rest of the school term to attend preparatory in the Albion Grammar School on West State Street.

M Eva, I remember when your house burned, when I was a small child living at Rich's Corners, can you say something about that.

E I think that was in 1935. About 4 O'clock in the morning, Joe Craddock and Walter Fritz came to our home to awaken us with the news our home was burning. My sister, Edythe ran to Rance Wrights to telephone and had problems awakening him but when the fire company came it was about gone.

M What did your family do after the fire, when you were homeless?

E They were told they could use the Riches Corners Community Building, while their home was being rebuilt. My Mother was so excited she took the canary off the hook, placed it in the middle of the floor, then the men carried out the mattress and threw out the bedstead and broke it.

M Would you like to say something about your Church affiliations?

E I became a member of the Transit Baptist Church when the Reverend Butler baptized me in the Sandy Creek, east of the bridge on the Transit Road. He slipped on a stone in the water and we both went under. Later I transferred by letter to the First Baptist Church in Albion and was honored when it celebrated our centennial in 1959 as being one of the oldest members.

M What schools did you attend?

E I attended Albion High and graduated in 1925. I learned telegraphy in the Albion local office on East Bank Street and served as relief manager in several towns until assigned to the Albion office, adjacent to Robson theatre.

M Where was Robson Theatre?

E It was on the west side of Main Street just before you went up the hill.

M Near the Library?

E Yes, I think it became the Rialto later on.

December 17, 1927 Clyde Harling and I were married in a home wedding with my sister, Doris Boyce Craddock and Robert Harling as attendants. The snow was so deep when Hannah and Frank Long came for us to catch the train at Eagle Harbor for Buffalo, no roads nor side walks were plowed. All passengers walked duck fashion down the middle of the Buffalo streets.

M Eva, I know you have always enjoyed music and played piano for Grange and other organizations. Did you ever have lessons?

E Music, dancing and hand crafts have been my hobbies. I recall my oldest sister, Edythe Bird and I driving a horse and buggy four miles, Saturdays to take piano lessons from a man teacher. He would hit my fingers with a pencil when I made a mistake, so I quit taking, after ten lessons. My brother, Raynor played the violin, so we had a session about every day after dinner and I still enjoy playing.

M Your sisters name is spelled different than usual, do you know why? Is it a family name?

E She was named after my mother Margaret Edythe but I don't know why they spelled it the way they did.

M Where were your mother and father from?

My mother was born in Pembroke, Canada and when she was very young her parents died so she was brought up by a family

E named Service, near Clinton, Michigan.

M I first became acquainted with you and Clyde in 1943 when we moved on a farm near you. We had quite a few bad winters at that time. Would you like to say something about those?

E Clyde will tell you about that, but I would like to tell about the dances. We would attend dances at Barre Center and Gaines Granges. They alternated every Friday night. Several high school students and neighbors with families would fill the halls for a hilarious time, ending with box lunches.

M They were really interesting dances, we used to go too. Now how about your family.

E We have two sons, Wells Harling, who lives at Floral City, Florida and Dr. Ronald Harling, who is a veterinarian in Barre; nine grandchildren and five great-grandsons. I have enjoyed making dresses, granny gowns and afgans for them.

M I know your son, Dr. Harling. He has a big practice going and is also Councilman, for the Town of Barre and served on the Albion School Board for a number of years.

E Would you like to tell us about your 50th anniversary party? We were honored by our families giving us a party at the Apple Grove in Medina to celebrate our 50th anniversary, December 17, 1977. What a precious memory! A little humorous, worrisome occurrence happened just two days before the party. Clyde was helping Ronald doctor a horse, when it reared up at him and came down with its hoof landing on Clyde's foot. His Doctor bandaged it and prescribed some pain pills, so we could dance and enjoy our friends and relatives that evening.

M I remember your party well. It was a very nice one. You will be leaving for your home in Florida next week, could you tell a bit about that.

E For the last twelve years we have spent winters in our home at St. Petersburg, Florida. When we return in April, we notice many new people have settled in Albion. We welcome you and hope your lives will be pleasant in years to come, best regards,
Eva Harling.

M Eva, I would say you have led a very interesting life. Thank you for sharing it with us. Clyde I guess it is your turn now.

C I was born on November 27, 1906, in the old Harling Homestead, on the County House Road, where most of the Harlings were born. My great-great-grandparents, William and Margaret Walker, came to this county in 1834 from Westmoreland county, England and settled on a farm of 60 acres. My great-great-grandfather walked from what is now East County House Road to Batavia, with money in a money belt to pay for the land. When they left England by boat they had three sons and a daughter, Sarah 2 years old. The three boys were stricken with a fatal disease and were buried on Staten Island on arrival here.

M Do you know what they had, Clyde?

C No, I do not recall that. I believe My Great-Great Grandfather and Grandmother lived in a log cabin when they first arrived here and would help the Indians when they were passing by. They built a stone house first and then added on as the family grew.

M That was real interesting Clyde. Do you have some more on your family?

C My Great-grandfather, Frank Harling came to this country to visit the Walkers in 1849 and became interested in their daughter Sarah and they were married in 1850 and continued to live with the Walkers. They had a large family of 10 children. Their oldest boy, William Walker Harling, married Lucy Parmalee, and they had my father, Wells Harling. My grandmother passed away at the time of my father's birth so my great-grandmother brought him up.

M Sounds like your ancestors were some of the first settlers in this county. How about your father and mother?

C My father married my mother, Myrtle Williams, in 1906 and I have two younger sisters Ruth and Lucy. We lived with Great-grandmother Harling until her death when I was 6 years old. At that time the farm was sold to William and Ellen (Nell) Wilson, so we moved near my grandfather Williams, east of Rich's Corners. My early schooling was at the Rich's Corners Cobbles-tone school. We have many happy memories of the old school. Our Christmas Programs, when we would go to the woods for a Christmas tree and decorate it with popcorn strung on strings and colored paper cut in strips and hung on the tree and of course we all had to recite a piece and sing a few Christmas songs which are still my favorites.

- C Also we would go to the woods on Arbor Day to get a tree to plant by the school. We had a good time skating on a small pond and sliding down hill plus catching on side of bobsleighs for a little ride as they came by. Margaret Harling was the teacher most of the time I went there. I believe Rachel Phipps taught one term. I had the job of janitor for a couple of years to make a little much needed money.
- M What happened to all those trees we planted on Arbor Day? I can remember planting one every year.
- C I guess we weren't very good planters. The school is gone now— As it was taken down in the 1950's after being partially destroyed by fire. The Cobblestones from the school were hauled back to Lake Ontario.
- M I went to the same school a few years later and remember it as a lot of fun. So what happened next?
- C After two years of living near my Grandfather Williams we moved in Fred Hyde's tenant house at Rich's Corners. By the way I walked $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles to school for two years at age 6 and 7 before moving into Rich's Corners. I would like to tell about my walk to school from Grandfather Williams farm. Farming has made some drastic changes, since I was 7 years old. There were ten farms on that road (east of Rich's Corners). They all made a living, raised a family, had a car and many were saving a little money and were happy with their lives. My grandfather and grand-mother Williams raised four children on 40 acres of land, paid for the farm, had a car and enjoyed life. My grandmother made butter, and the butter and eggs bought their groceries on Saturday night when all the farmers went to town. My grandmother would go to the picture show and grandfather would swap stories in Sam Watts harness shop.
- M Rich's Corners was quite a metropolis in the old days, wasn't it?
- C It had quite a bit of activities such as soft ball games in Jess Trolley's yard, and neighbor-hood card parties. Also had religious meetings at the old school house and Jay Parmalee would lead the singing. Mrs. Charles Trolley lived across the road from me and was my Sunday School teacher. I would use some language sometimes she didn't approve of during the week, so she would reprimand me the next Sunday. There were two grocery stores, a blacksmith, post office, cooper shop and a dry house and veterinarian at that time in 1913. Fred Hyde always kept every one posted on what was going on around the Corners. My father

C and I made apple barrels a couple of years during World War I. I would set the barrel up and carry it to the heater to shrink it to proper size and my father would finish it off and I would stack it up. My father had only one leg so I did the walking. I was about 11 years old then. I would also ride with Ed. Trolley delivering barrels to the farmers in a wagon with high sides drawn by horses.

M Clyde, can you tell us a little more about your father's illness?

C Yes, my father broke a bone in his ankle when I was about 6 years old and the Doctor treated it for a sprained ankle until it became diseased. He had the leg amputated but the infection had spread into his body, so he was not able to work again. This placed the task of supporting us upon my mother. I remember she patched bean bags for Sands Bean House one winter for a living. There wasn't any child welfare in those days so people were on their own. We had some good relatives, especially my grandfather and grandmother Williams who helped us thru. Dr. David Cooper was our Doctor and very good friend. He found some work that did not require skilled nursing so my mother started nursing; and father, with the help of us children, kept the home fires burning. My mother obtained work at the Arnold Gregory Hospital as night nurse and was there for about 10 years while my sisters and I finished school.

My father passed away when I was 13 years old, so I went to live with my grandfather and grandmother Williams in 1919. I started high school at Albion, I walked $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the Transit Road Trolley stop. This trolley was an electric car that ran about every hour between Rochester and Lockport and traveled very fast. Therefore many people were killed and injured at the crossings. They would stop at all roads to pick up and discharge passengers. The fare was 12¢ from Transit road to Albion and if you knew the conductor real well he might let you ride once in a while for nothing and then we could use that money to buy jelly donuts. The shanty where we waited until the trolley arrived was not heated and when the weather was coldest was when it might be an hour late. Needless to say we were cold at times. Carl Bergerson was principal and we never had a discipline problem in those days, as we all knew he could handle us. He was a fine teacher and we all respected him. In those days we didn't need a computer to add and subtract as we were taught to do it ourselves. I graduated
June 1924.

M After high school, Clyde, what was your first job?

C Well, I went to Rochester School of Commerce for an accounting course the fall of 1924 for one year. After completing this course I obtained a clerical job with the Merchants Despatch Inc. which was the Refrigeration part of the New York Central Railroad. The starting pay was \$85 per month for 45 hours of work per week. The pay wasn't much but when the big depression of 1929 came along, I was one of the lucky people who always had a full pay check and they were nice people to work for. I always lived in the country so I did not like office work too well, so I asked to be transferred to an outside job as Inspector of Refrigeration. I was sent to the Buffalo Icing station, where I supervised the Icing and ventilation of the Refrigeration Cars as the trains pulled by the Icing platform. I worked for the railroad 15 years before retiring to the farm. After we bought the farm in 1932 I commuted for 10 years between the farm and Buffalo except for about 3 months in the summer when I supervised the icing of refrigerator cars being loaded at Elba, New York with lettuce, carrots, and spinach. I have seen as many as 20 carloads of produce loaded out of Elba in one day and about 1300 carloads for a season but the refrigerator trucks came along to take the business away from the railroads, so that is just a memory now.

M Clyde, now we'll talk about your life with Eva.

C In 1927 I married Eva Boyce. Eva has told you about all the snow on our wedding day. We started house-keeping in half a house on East State Street, Albion, for the big sum of \$25 per month rent. I had a pass on the railroad so I commuted between Albion and Rochester until I was transferred to Buffalo when I would drive to Batavia and take the train into Buffalo. Eva was manager of Western Union Office in Albion, so we were doing O.K. for those times with both of us working. Eva and I were both brought up in the country so about 1930 we intimated to my step-father, Walter Waterman we might like to move back on a farm, as we were living in Batavia after two years in Albion. When the 1929 depression struck, many of the Banks closed in 1930 and many farms were sacrificed for practically nothing. The farm we bought in 1932 was one of those farms, consisting of 223 acres of land and two sets of buildings.

M Clyde, can you say exactly where that farm is?

C 15517 East Lee Road which is about three miles west of Clarendon.

C There were no improvements in the house but we were able to have it wired for electricity but had three wood stoves to heat it at first, until we could afford a furnace and then added other improvements. The next winter was when the temperature dropped to -35 degrees and many of our fruit trees were frozen out. It was real frosty when you would get up in the morning, when we had the wood stoves, so you really snapped around to get some heat going. We planted an orchard of cherries and apples and I always enjoyed working the orchards. Raised beans, wheat, and feed for our livestock as we always kept from 30 to 40 holstein heifers which we disposed of when they were ready to freshen. I also enjoyed the cattle business very much. When we first went on the farm, Eva made about 24 lbs. of butter each week, which we sold to customers, plus the eggs from 80 hens and that helped buy our groceries. I continued working on the railroad for 10 years after we went onto the farm and hired help to do the farm work, plus what I could do part time. I would drive from the farm to Batavia and take the train into Buffalo. When I left the railroad, the thing I missed most was the train ride between Batavia and Buffalo.

M Clyde, I remember back in 1943 we had a real bad winter, can you say something about that?

C Yes, that was a real "rip-snorter." I remember in the winter of 1944 we had a bad snow storm and it kept blowing and snowing for several days. The town of Barré's snow equipment could not take those big banks and broke down so we were completely shut in for 13 days but we had plenty of food and burned wood so we had no problems. After about 12 days we got "cabin fever" so went out to the Hindsburg road with the horses and sleigh and went to a dance with Helen and Dave Mathes. During this storm Helen would come by on horse back to deliver bread and mail. Another time I remember when our electricity was off for 3 or 4 days because of a heavy ice storm and many of our neighbors were happy to come in for breakfast, as they were all electric and we had a furnace that burned coal or wood and a wood cook stove and a pump, we could get water for our house and livestock. Those old conveniences were very good when disaster struck.

M Clyde, I know that you retired a few years ago and I wondered what happened to your farm?

C Eva has told you about our fine family. Wells was on the farm with me for a few years and when he decided to leave I sold most of the farm to Homer Maxon and sons, but kept the East house, where we still live after 50 years on this farm, plus barn and 33 acres of land on the south side of the road. I reserved the use of the apple orchard, which I operated for about 8 or 9 years. At this time in our lives we started to go to Florida each winter. We own a home in St. Petersburg where the sun usually shines each day. In fact for years the St. Petersburg Times has given a free paper, if the sun doesn;t shine sometime during the day. We leave here in November and return in April. I still like New York in the spring thru the fall.

M I remember, Clyde, that you went on a Grange trip one time, would you like to say something about that?

C Yes, in 1969 we went on a 21 day trip by railroad, bus and boat thru the Canadian Rockies and intercoastal waterways to Alaska, back thru Washington, Oregon and the United States Rockies by rail to Buffalo. This was a trip long to be remembered, especially thru the Canadian Rockies from Jasper to Baniff and Lake Louise. The scenery was just breath-taking. We recommend this trip to anyone who enjoys nature and mountainous country.

M Clyde, I know you have been Grange members for a long time and I wondered just how you went about planning this trip or getting information on it.

C Well the trip was sponsored by the Grange, which sponsor trips every year. They advertise that you can leave your pocket book at home and they will take care of everything, the tips and everything is all arranged on the whole trip. Your baggage is taken care of and it certainly is an enjoyable trip.

M You have always been members of the Barre Grange and I wondered when you joined?

C I believe we have been members of the Barre Grange for forty-
some odd years. When we first joined there used to be as many as a hundred and fifty would be there for the annual dinner and it was really an enjoyable time for all the farm folks.

C They would have these meetings in the afternoon so people could get home to do their chores at night. And I also have been a member of the First Baptist Church of Albion for many years, I think close to fifty, and have been a member of the Masons for fifty-four years.

At the time of our 50th wedding anniversary, as I sat at the table looking out over the crowd, I thought it didn't seem but a short time that we were married. Eva has told you of our 50th wedding anniversary party at the Apple Grove. It really gives you a big thrill when you can have a party in your honor and look out over 140 close friends and relatives. After all, your good friends, relatives, and most important good health is what counts in this life and the Good Lord has blessed us with all three, plus many other blessings. We have lived in a wonderful age from the horse and buggy days automobile, radio, television, airplanes and a trip to the moon. Wonder what the next 50 years will be like?

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(End of taped interview)

The interview with Eva A. Harling and Clyde W. Harling was conducted November 10, 1982 by Mrs. Helen B. Mathes.

Transcribed and final typing by Helen B. Mathes.