

ANN HILL BEQUEST

Nelly Miller

Interview with Mrs. Lorraine
(and daughter Mrs. Coupland)

1st December, 1986

Mrs. Coupland had read about our activities, and 'phoned Mr. Dobie, who referred her to me. Her mother is related to Mrs. Lorraine, the Dumfries Academy Physics teacher, and they (Mrs. Coupland and Mrs. Lorraine) combine to research the family history. Mrs. Lorraine (Senior) was brought up at Cove Quarry Cottage (m.s. Miller, Nelly) and her father was probably the last man to work it legally before its first closure. Mrs. Coupland had made a map, based on her mother's recollections.

School

Mrs. Lorraine liked school. She recalled Mr. Mckerchar, the Headmaster, when she left about 1913. He had a big family and always seemed harassed, as if they were too much for him. He was often cross, but she used to take him a rose from the Cove Cottage garden. His house was next door but one. While she was at school a cookery room extension was built on, which was used to start a soup kitchen - 1/2d a plate - great! They all got cookery lessons, but she can't recall who taught. When she wasn't buying the soup for lunch she would go down to the railway crossing to meet the baker.

Miss Graham was the infant teacher, and also took private pupils for music - piano. (I've a note about her teaching 'Hill girl' piano, and also 'Ella May Irving' - as if she was also a music pupil) - for music.

The teacher before Mr. Mckerchar's class was Miss Horn.

Another who gave music lessons was Mary Wilson, whose father, she thought, was a porter at the station - and taught Nelly's sister piano.

After School it was common to attend night school (same place, I think). Her brother Dave's comics were burnt by her mother because he wasn't at night school. Eventually he took an International Correspondence course and qualified as an Engineer.

She took me through her old school photos, and a separate list is available. Roughly going left to right from back:-

Douglas Hind, son of plate layer; John Hastie, son of groom/chaffeur to Dr. Carruthers; Joe Pask, who lost an eye - thorn in it. Lived Railway Cottage, and father worked on railway; George Johnston (son farm worker), Dave Rogerson (Wm. Field - born same night as Nelly Miller), Jim Mitchell; John Mackie (Redhouse - there was another John Mackie in the class, but not in the 'photo'); Mary Davidson (stayed with her granny); Violet Richardson (had an English mother, always dressed up, lived in wee cottage next George Moffat off Station Road end, 'pretend to be fore(man) mason (or free mason?)'); Willie Kennedy (village); Georgina Turnbull (beadle's daughter). In World War 1 Nelly Miller met her with three young bairns. She married John Johnston, the clogger at Toppinghead, and said it's better to be an old man's darling than a young man's slave).

Nelly Miller's sister (Dressmaker, to munitions works - where she got Nelly Miller in); Liz (?) Duff (to Dumfries); Winnie Richardson (sister of Vi, possibly went to Gretna Hall, had aunts in Southsea who had tea-rooms and possibly took over Gretna Hall as hotel); Mary Jane Murray (North Angle, daughter of farm worker); Mary Carlyle (whom she kept up with all her life). Her mother was a widow and supported the family by washing at Robgill Tower. 'Family ages with us'. Her father, stone mason at Cove Quarry, was killed in an accident there in his 40's.

She recalled no pupil as outstandingly clever or boisterous. Perhaps Joe Park was the liveliest - he ran about a lot with her brother. He used to stay with them a lot in holiday time. She thinks he became station master at Locharbriggs.

Later she added more about the teachers. Mrs. Horn was nice. She hardly recalled Misses Reid and Graham, except as a memory of getting straws to make things with in infant class.

I have a note 'other Anne Finlay' - could she be another girl in 'photo whose name she at first couldn't get?

The School had an outside tap in the playground.

Night School - The teacher (i.e. head) took it. Anyone who wanted to get on went.

The previous head was Blackie Broon, who taught her two older brothers. A worthy. He could give you the strap and then be nice to you. In Nelly Miller's day she didn't remember getting the strap much. She and Mary

Jane Murray had very long hair, and she recalled the boys behind her (Park?) getting into trouble for putting their hair in the ink wells.

She now moved to a second 'photo. 1st, Finlay (nice, wee, quiet); Rogerson; Jim Mitchell; 2 Mackies (nice); May Davidson; Irving (better dressed than most, an only daughter, parent married late); Richardson (pal). Possibly Jessie Scott next, not sure. Then maybe Jeanie Black - wee one. Big Mary Sword at end. There was also the Nicol girl (daughter woodcutter at Calavertsholm) and a Saddington (father in sawmill at Beltenmont). Next row Dougal Hind; George Davidson (awful nice, nice family, Hayfield). There should be a boy Steel from Hollee, and someone from Jolly Buildings (which she never heard called 'Nelsons') at the back.

I think Annie McCormick and Lizzie Rae were from the School. Lizzie Rae lived at Moorend.

She thinks Miss Horn never married.

Church

She showed a Sunday School Attendance certificate for 1911 (and also for another year). She recalled being taught by Miss Reid, who was also at the School. Therese Graham also taught, or possibly her sister, Violet. She mentioned someone who was the ladies maid at Mossknow sewing for the cantatas.

Her sister was nursemaid to the Walkers at the Manse. She says that a close relative of Mr. Walker, his brother she thought, won a lot of money on the pools which helped the Walkers educate their children.

She showed me two large volumes, one for the 'Boys Paper' and one for 'Chums' which were awarded in 1907 and 1908 for Sunday School attendance (possibly not for herself?)

She had no recollections of the previous Minister, Mr. Graham, but knew that she was christened by him, and that her mother liked him.

They were brought up in the Church, as people then were - Sunday School at 10, Church 11 and Bible Class at night.

She was in the junior choir, as was Jean Turnbull - a grand singer - and, she thinks, Georgina. Mr. Turnbull was beadle.

Occasionally School outings were to the field opposite Beltenmont.

Sam Wallace and Mr. Turnbull were elders.

Sport and
Entertainment

She recalled otter hunts and fox hunts, which she associated with the Nugents of Cove. She remembers the gamekeeper following a fox, which had 'stolen' their hens to the railway bank.

She didn't play/remember badminton. The choir social and the Bowler's social were occasions. Her parents weren't in the choir, nor went to the pub, but her father occasionally played bowls, latterly. There was carpet bowling in the Hall, and a bowling green in the village.

She never knew card games played.

Men played quoits, and there was wrestling in Peel Hole Bridge (through railway crossing, don't go for house, make for Shawrigg).

And, of course, Soirees.

The Mary who taught the piano was maybe not Wilson, but Richardson, and sang in the choir.

Other outings (Church) - to Springkell, Castlemilk, once to Silloth by train.

Economic

Her father, and her mother's father both worked at Cove Quarry. Her father had left Fife, served in an iron works (?Lochgelly), went to railway, to the quarry, where he drove the pug.

She claims that the stone can be recognised.

In the 1890's (I think this is a bit muddled) - they were hit by the Development of a special sort of brick.

The Manager she seemed to call 'Johnny' Lamb - (should be Tom?)

There was a bridge outside their cottage, even then said to be unsafe, since pulled down.

In the course of the morning she mentioned 3 fatal accidents at the Quarry. One above, another was her grandfather.

Her father had to clear things away when the Quarry closed in 1905. Went to Lanarkshire, then back to Dumfriesshire. It re-opened and closed again about 1913.

She said a lot about the cottage (which no longer stands) and showed a photo. At the back was a beautiful wood, featuring bluebells and water lilies (since cut down). The bridge was still standing during World War 2. They used to carry water, two pails on a yoke, from a spring in the wood.

There were 23 steps from the railway to the cottage. They had a cow, hens and pigs. Her father put down pipes from the river (to get a supply for the animals, I think). This was near a waterfall. There was a lot of wild fruit - raspberries, hazelnuts, crab apple.

They got feeding stuff from Carlisle.

They made their own cheese and butter. They had a big milk house (and field from Cove for the cow). They also kept turkeys, which the Martindales took to Annan.

Gypsies used to come and sell them brooms, which they stopped buying when they discovered that the handles had been made from wood purloined from their own ground!

There would be hams hanging up in the cottage. They often went to Carlisle on a Saturday, to pay the feed bill. Not often to Annan, though a waggonette went there every Friday. Martindale took her mother's turkeys, and an old man from Irvington took hens for her, in a basket under the cart. He also supplied carrots, if they'd run out of their own, and would give her an apple. (To Irvington by foot, across the river, thro' woods, thro' middle of Birchiehead farm). People could get lost going that way, so her mother would get her to show people the way.

The previous occupant of the cottage - Jack Scott - left 1902 or 1903. The Millers had been at Newton, and then moved to Cove Quarry Cottage. She mentioned that the Scotts had taken her sister (more aloof than Nelly Miller) to Edinburgh once.

Some of Quarrymen came by foot each day from Annan. They left at 6.00 a.m. and worked a long day for 6/- a week.

The Poor House children came to the School. They were always well dressed, in grey woollen skirts and jumpers, heavy boots, short hair.

The ordinary children all wore clogs, and thick woollen stockings in Winter, with mutches over their ears. Katie Martindale alays looked awful cold. It was generally considered that farmers were mean.

Her mother bought her knitting wool from old Sam Wallace, an old tailor and grand singer who sat behind the Millers in Church. His son, Nat Wallace, carried on the business and made excellent suits. He was in the Eastern Star in Annan. He (Nat) hadn't an outstandingly strong personality (in response to my curiosity about why so many remember him). She thought he later travelled for Readymades (which I took to be the name of a firm). There used to be bales of cloth lying in Sam's shop. During the War 'my sister and I' got Sam to make costumes, which cost £1 for material for 'all 3 of us'. Sam was first mentioned when we talked about characters.

There were 3 Dressmakers - Annie Bell (with whom Sinclair the Quarry Manager lived); Johnston (Newton) who had an awful asthmatic wheeze. Nelly Lorraine remembered sitting looking at an ornament in the house and asking, 'Is that the Devil?' Nelly Miller was born next door. The third Dressmaker was Bella Temple, who had a house near Mossknow.

There were two cloggers, Brown the butcher, Bell (or later Ritchie) for groceries. Bella Noon had a wee shop, sold bread, tea-cakes, sweets. This wan the shop nearest the school. She thinks there was perhaps a butcher's van.

There was a Smiddy at Christiellands, and Jim Graham, who married a Little from Flish. Then Davidson the Coal agent, with his son (?) Harold. They were thought to be better off.

~~She mentioned a friend (name?) who was 'on the parish' when her father died. They used to get 2/6d. Auld (name), a tartar, called her mother up to ask how her daughter had got a new frock. She thinks Mrs. Johnstone had made it. (name) would investigate anything 'suspicious' that the poor had. (A very different view of dear old Mr. (name)!) Not many were on the parish - it was a terrible humiliation, but (name)'s family were, her father having been a Stone mason, killed at Cove. (name, name).~~

The Mill was working, of course, and you could get flour there.

[They asked us to omit this]

They used to make ketchup from mushrooms, which seem to have grown in 'Blaeberry Wood' - which was the wood between the house and Peel Hole Bridge. They gathered nettles for feeding stuff, boiled old potatoes and green stuff, mixed with Indian meal. They used to breed rabbits (of all colours) and let them away. The woods were full of them. Also geese, ducks. And trout in the Kirtle.

If people were hard up old Doctor Carruthers would say, just you pluck me a couple o' hens, that'll do. She doesn't remember him much. Once she got pneumonia, from sitting outside with bare feet. He told her mother to sit by her for 10 days. If she survived till then, she'd pull through.

Then came Dr. Carlyle, related to Thomas Carlyle. She herself was nursemaid for 4 and a half years to another Dr. Oliver Carlyle, in Dumfries (who may also be the Dr. Carlyle in Greta, nephew of Carlyle Aitken).

In times of hard frost the Quarry workmen could be idle for up to 6 weeks and get no pay. Her father's job included gathering the rents from the Hamper - from which he got his wages. But when they were idle they couldn't pay, so he lost out.

Her mother always had a barrel of salt herring. 'Whit's for Dinner?' 'Whawmill' (nothing). 'Whit about saut herrin?'

The Greta munitions work in World War I must rate as part of the parish economy - but see under miscellaneous.

They kept a huge collie to frighten tramps.

They gave up keeping the cow.

Their cow was called 'Ready'. She remembers it having a calf. Henhouse on top of Brae. They, or she, used to cling to top of the henhouse and then jump.

Annie McCormick's mother opened the level crossing gates.

Farms and
Farming

When they didn't keep a cow they got their milk from Martindales. (It was in this context that she said farmers were often considered mean, altho' she seemed to hold the Martindales in considerable regard

nevertheless). They got milk (and butter if needed) every morning before school, and the bill - about one shilling and 6 1/2d - at the weekend. The Martindale mother was in Nether Woodhouse, then their son went to Under Woodhouse (??).

Most farmers were mentioned only incidentally - like Glendinning at Broats.

Back to Martindales. Son married a Masterton. Sister still stayed there - Nelly Miller paid her for butter. There was Jim, Ted (brother), Kate (married Reid from somewhere like Chapelpark). Old Mrs. Martindale was said to be mean, Katie never had any gloves, had sore hands from hacks.

When Millers had a cow Forsyth was in Woodhouse. The old man retired, went to Merkland, the sons to Australia.

Burnet (Nouthill) 'older than me' - one in sister's class.

Miscellaneous Bruce's Cave. As children she, and the gamekeeper's (and the gardener's) children used to go to the hole in the rock to say it was where Bruce saw the spider.

She remembers her brothers getting a motorbike with side car, which must have been before they emigrated to Canada in 1913.

Lots of Pools in Fairy Row - Mary, Jeanie, Maggie. Also Swords, then poor, later prospered.

Characters - (don't publish) ~~lived with~~ lived with ~~the~~ a beautiful person. It was considered a scandal when went to Church. She also remembered not understanding the jokes of 'the older women' when Annie Bell had a child by the Quarry Manager.

God's Hole - mentioned - on Wicketthorn Road to Woodhouse - footpath through, a great pondlike hole, said to have the dead dogs of the villagers. Slimy.

Railway Bridge (for Cove sidings) fell down after Quarry closed.

Farm mentioned in connection with God's Hole.

The time she ran away to London. She wanted a kitten, wasn't allowed (coming home from Wylies, who must have had a spare one). She hid the kitten in her shawl and made for London, getting as far as the level-crossing

(1 mile) before being caught.

For some reason she wore long stockings over her clogs in the snow.

On a Sunday they would be able to walk to the village along the railway, the shortest way, when there were few trains.

Her own family - John (born 29.12.87), Agnes and Ann (1890 - one died), Janet (11.92), David (3.94), William Bruce (11.95), all in Burntisland. 2 died. Walter (11.97 Kirkpatrick), Elizabeth Scott (8.99), Ellen Dewar Ramsay (3.01), Andrew (19.11.02). She was called after an Aunt in Fife, where John Dewar was killed in an accident.

Mrs. Coupland's great-grandfather, Walter Lorraine was also killed at the Quarry - hit by a crane, it is believed. He didn't work there, but lived at Wicketthorn 1810-1864, 53 when he died. His father, John Lorraine came from Caughillhead, Langholm, and before that Oakwoodhill (and married Margaret Byers). Margaret Byers came from Eaglesfield. A Margaret Miller at Wysebyhill, 1809-1852, comes into the family tree. She married James Byers (Eaglesfield). Margaret Byers (1805-83) married Walter Lorraine - see Kirkpatrick Fleming Churchyard.

Three of her brothers went to Canada. The last brother went to Derby, became a Scout Master, was at the Jamboree with the later monarch. (Perhaps a fourth brother also to Canada?) She and sister worked in Munitions Works - and a lot of the recent exhibition (at Stranraer) was her reminiscences.

One of her grannies - surname Bruce - was from Skye. She had photos of William Miller, Janet Williamson. One (she) died 1938, lovely complexion, looked like that till death. In 1916 her father got work on Dornock. Brothers to Canada on 'Victoria' - but they didn't know. Left 12th. 'Titanic' sunk 15th - feared them on board. Came back 1914, took third brother, joined Canadian Army.

Gentry

Cove then belonged to Patrick Nugent, who always lived there. She described him as 'higher' gentry than its next owner. Little.

Remembered old General Graham, who died - Anne Finlay's father was chauffeur. Probably hard up. Had gamekeeper, staff.

~~Theresa Graham died.~~

[There was surely
an additional bit added later.
Never typed?]