Local History Project

For

Margaret Henry - Sunday 1 p.m.

By

John Lewis.

Subject

Elizabeth Woodbine - Glimpses of the East from 95 years on.

Enclosed,

Signed authority for use of material.

Part A. Audio Cassette Tape of interview.

Part B. Transcript of the audio tape.

Part C. Summary of the interview.

Part D. Essay on theme of interview.

Glimpses of the East from 95 years on Newcastle and Toronto.
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE
1989.

ELIZABETH WOODBINE give my
permission to JOHN LEWIS to use this interview, or part of this interview, for
research, publication and/or broadcasting (delete one of
these if required) and for copies to be lodged in
the Newcastle University
Library
for the use of other bona fide researchers.

Signed

Date 11th June 1989

Interviewer

SD Lewis
Part 2.

Transcript of the Interview of

Elizabeth Woodbine.

By John Lewis.
Part B.

This is an interview by John Lewis with Mrs. Elizabeth Woodbine, who was born in Wolverton, before the turn of the century, in 1894.

J. Mrs. Woodbine, what is your full name?
E. Elizabeth Rice, nee Woodbine.
J. What was your maiden name?
E. Carpenter.
J. Where did your parents come from?
E. England and mother from Scotland.
J. And what was your father's occupation?
E. Tanner.
J. I believe he went into the country a lot yes, him and my mother used to go into the country for a while, he was driving and shearing sheep. He was the boss for them, but we never heard very much with her. She used to - they say she used to say the Americans used to trouble them a lot but they never - a few blacks around. They would come up and they would go on - would never stop and camp overnight where they were, but...J. Never had any trouble with them?
E. No, oh, wanted tobacco and a few things like that, but you had to be pretty civil with them.
J. And where were you born?
E. Hubbard St. Wolverton.
J. And when was that?
E. The June, 1894.
J. And your mother died soon after your birth.
E. My mother died on 17th June 1894.
J. And you were taken by father-parents?
E. Yes. Hicks and Matilda Carpenter.
J. What relationship were they to you?
E. They were my father's brother and
Sister-in-law.

J. And your foster mother died.

E. My foster mother died, Matilda, she died when I — I suppose between six and seven years old when she died and I didn't know nothing about it, I always thought that they were my parents, but I suppose when he married again, he married Ada Eda Barnes and she was much younger person and I suppose I didn't get the knack of it... but I think she said she... she come in to be my stepmother, which wasn't very nice for me in my position but as for other things, but anyway carried on our life, they still liked the right, him and her, I don't know which it was, whether he stuck to me or she stuck to me, whichever it was, but that was that part of it with them.

J. And what did your foster father do? 

E. What did he do? Iron founder.

J. Iron founder.

E. Yes.

J. And what did they manufacture at the founder?

E. On anything in iron - stove, last, weights, j.epers for balconies and all, you know, anything like that - being the pattern and...

J. And where were they living?

E. Planker at Boldington.

J. And what religion were they?

E. Church of England.

J. And which church did you go to?

E. Saint Mark's in Heswall Rd, Boldington.

J. And do you remember when you
Began school?
F. Tell me what that was?
T. When you began to go to school.
F. Oh, when I was a bit over seven.
T. And what school was that?
F. St. Islington Public School, Hubbard St.
T. Do you have any particular memories about going to school?
F. No, none whatsoever - oh, just might have been - we used to always think very funny. The headmaster wore his big top tophat and his swallowtail coat for form times.
T. How many teachers were there?
F. I think it was in the infants I think. There was only Miss Cameron and another one in the infants and then there was a Miss Hopper and Miss Holland - Holland and two Miss. Burke and Miss Lane. That's all there were when I went to school.
T. And what age would you be when you left school?
F. Oh, somewhere about thirteen.
T. Were there any high schools in the district then?
F. No, there was none about anywhere.
T. And...
F. There were a few private schools and a few night schools.
T. Were there many hotels around your area?
F. There was one just in Wancle Road, just in our little thing, just down the street. There was one.
T. Were there many drunk?
were there till 11 o'clock at night.
J. Any larrikinism?
B. Oh, not much, the police got onto them a bit, they used to be the "ragged rileen" at the Bank corner; they had a lot of trouble with them though. That went on three for ages.
J. Well there would have been a lot of railie [railway] ships...
B. Yes, all railway ships in there, and a few others in there. There were a good few weeks in there times, and a day or two there was a fair few weeks you know come over the bar and there. But there was no big thing come in at all.
J. Did you hear of much trouble with the foreign sailors?
B. No, we never went near Bricklayers or any of them places and that's where all the shipping come in to there.
J. There would have been a lot of black-ridding going on in those days.
B. Oh yes.
J. Did you hear much about it?
B. Not much, there used to be a big fellow black-hair, he used to enquire them into the ships, but was it you know, not as I knew it.
J. And do you know how he operated?
B. No, I suppose he operated with the hotels.
J. He'd frequent particular hotels?
B. Oh, I think at Hudson's and the Bluebell, the Bluebell was a bad one, that's where the "ragged rileen" used to hang around the Bluebell.
J. The Bluebell and Hudson's hotel.
F: Yes.
T: And what transport was there in the district then?
F: Oh, all the transport I knew was horses, horse and sulky and cart, the buses drawn with horses— it was all horses used on them, there was no other transport.
T: And how would you get to Sydney in those days?
F: By boat, go down at 11 o'clock, go to go aboard 11 o'clock, and get in to Sydney daylight.
T: Do you remember what the fare would be?
F: No, very cheap, I know that now— I think I used to— I think I went for nothing. Used to lie, I think to.
T: Do you remember what the street lighting was at all? I remember the street lighting was the lamps.
F: Oh, all I remember the street lighting was the lamps.
T: What sort of lamps?
F: Oh, I don't know what they were run with, bloke used to cockie along with the on a stick and pull the little chain.
T: A lamplighter.
F: Yes.
T: It would probably be gas.
F: Yes, I suppose it'd be.
T: And what sort of lighting did you have in the home?
F: We only had candles and kerosene lamps that's all we had.
T: And what did you use for cooking?
F: A, the fuel stone, wood and coal.
T: How big was the house that you lived in?
F: How big was the house? Three bedrooms.
Laundry. We used to bath in front of the stove with the galvanised tub.

F: What sanitary arrangements were there?
S: Sanitary? Oh just a cistern.

F: After you left school, what did you do?
S: Nothing. Stopped home and did every job of all trades - worked from when I got up till I went to bed.

F: And where did you do the shopping?
S: Wellington, Oh in Outfield's, and then had the Sunday if there'd be any extra kills we'd do some shopping with some of the, you know, communicate with them and shop with them.

F: With the people she dealt with you at the foundry?
S: Yes.

F: And Banks - There was a banks handy was there?
S: Oh, the banks we dealt with was the one at the bank corner, New South Wales.

F: Were there any Aborigines around Newcastle then?
S: Any what?

F: Aborigines.

S: Not as I know of the three could. I think the Aborigines of my time was more at Fort Stephens because they used to come down there. I think they was more where you knew where the water was and I think there was more there. I never ever seen them, I have been there on the Station then going back.

F: Yes.

S: But I never heard of much of them.

F: And what did you do for entertainment?
Oh, the only thing I know I got older and got a kick up, we used to go by boat up to Fern Bay and Tomago and there places fishing there, no other not much other. Go to the pictures you know - all outdoor pictures, no indoor, all outdoors there wasn't much, oh people then still went to the races and the dog fights they used to have them with them.

J. And your parents had a place at the Lake.

E. Yes we had a nice little place down at Belmont, it was very nice and we ended up there for ages, rain hail or shine we went to Belmont.

J. How did you get there?

E. By skilki, had a rowing boat you know for fishing and we had a little punt used to take us over to the point all it was shallow where we were.

J. Which point would that be?

E. Oh, Belmont Point - right opposite Coal Point - right opposite Oh, Marksee Point that one we could see Coal Point across from there.

J. And there were no Aborigines out there when you...

E. No, I never ever known of came but they tell me that there was a terrible lot. We used to go across to the beaches at the back of where we were, right over to Longford, you know it...

J. Blacksmith's?

E. Yes, the beaches and there were millions and millions of them cockleshells and they reckon that they was the blacks.
I don't know whether that's right but they said that's what it was and we used to go down to Florida fishing a lot. Down to the channel, very good down there then it was.

J. Did you have much contact with your natural father during those years?

E. No, I never had much. I never had much contact with him. We used to go out and see him sometimes - you know - sometimes, but it was a dirt track and it wasn't very good for travelling, but when he got old and finished sick, he came out and lived with us, see.

J. And where was he living when you used to go and see him?

E. Where were we living?

J. No, where was he living when you used to go to see him?

E. Where was he living at Power St.

J. No, where was he living then?

E. Mrs. Woodbine is quite deaf. Where was he living?

J. Where was he living?

E. Yes.

J. He was living at Warren's Bay. Oh yes, he was at Warren's Bay.

J. Could you tell me much about your courtship?

E. Not much - war was on - you didn't go very far. I met my husband and he was in the naval dept and guarding the ships and...

J. And what was his name?

E. Cecil Robert Woodbine.

J. (Correct name: Robert Cecil Woodbine.)

J. And he was in the navy and could you tell me anything of his family.

E. Oh, all I know about his father, he was a
Walter at Watt St., his mother was a
laundress, and he worked there at one time
when he left school, but it was very short.
Held, for him, he didn't like it and I
think he went to Gilbert's. He big coach
works and went apprentices to painting,
you know, for coaches and all thing
like that, but that's all I really know
of them.

J. Did family was associated with Woods
Brewery too, weren't they?

F. Yes, that was on his mother's side they
were. Store's her father was the head
brewer at Wood's and he was also the
chair at the Secreatarian - the Methodist
Church, Hamilton.

J. And when were you married?

F. Oh, 1st October, 1918.

J. And where was that?

F. Oh, at Hamilton - I don't know what
you call that church - it may be
Melkland Road. I should think, next
to the near Steggles. I don't know the
street. Methodist, Methodist church.

J. And where was your first matrimonial
home?

F. At home with my people, lived there
for a few months.

J. And what were the economic conditions
like then?

F. Oh, not very good, he never had much
work, never worked went over to the
Dyke and worked there for a little while
and went another one from that on the
poor but, never kept nothing.

J. And where was your first child born?
Oh, Haybury St, Walthamstow.

And where were you living then?
And where were you living then?

At Islington, Upper St.

And you left Islington after a short time.

Yes.

And what did you do then?

We went to Chadlestown, along Islington Road. Started a bit of a stall, ran up, couple of pence and a bit of a cart and went around selling it, never got paid for the milk; the pence went dry and that ended that business. Well then we went from there, still on Islington Road, Chadlestown, up to the Beatrice, the bit managers; he went up there for greens — he wasn't there long, ended up that lot ended up there going back to Islington.

You sold the place at Chadlestown?

Well, we never got much for it, about five acres you know; land.

And when you went back to Islington, you went back to your parents' place?

Yes, straight back to Upper St. — yes.

And what did your husband do there?

Oh, selling a bit of fruit and vegies and anything you could get, not much.

From a cart — and your second born was born there?

Oh, see one was born — oh Delma was born out at Chadlestown, Islington Road — that's the second one.

Yes, and when was that?

August

1921.
And your third child was born when you came back to Elsington. Your second one was born at Charlestown, your third one was born when you came back to Elsington.

And what's one was that — what was her name?

Loris — Loris was born in February.

What year?

I wouldn't know.

1924.

I wouldn't know. I'm very bad at these.

And after a short stay at Elsington again you went to Morewether.

Yes.

Under what circumstances did you go there?

Very poor, we was on our own, it was much better. We was on our own at Charlestown — or Morewether, and we had another poor house there, Mary at Morewether and she's in September. Don't ask me the year because I wouldn't know.

And how did you come to get the place at Morewether?

Well, dad trick — the one that scored me — he gave me a bit of money when I was married and he rigged me up — sent me to the tinker — will some place up Gloucester way and we got a bit at that, built the place and that was that, so it was liveable and all in it never cost us much. Somewhere, had no worry.

And start how the fruit and vegetables
Your husband had a few chickens too.

Q: Yes we had a few chickens in the yard, they were all pretty good; they were all pretty well bred, and they were — he'd been in a Maitland egg camp thing and run a Autumn to Spring trophy and that kinda that bit of that, we ended up there with that — finished up. 

T: And after some years there, about 1933, you moved out to Toronto.

Q: Yes.

T: And what did you do there?

Q: Scutch farming we tried that out, she was living in my brother-in-law's house to see if it was going to be payable until we got our and then we sold our elsewhere land-house and built our place out here along... 

T: About how many layers would you have had?

Q: 3000 to 4000; but that wasn't always, we had to gradually bring them to that. When we first went there, each season would be so many chickens fell, losing them up, fell the hens, keep the pullets, she began to do all right.

T: There was no laid on water?

Q: No laid on water, we had a couple of tanks and we had wells at the end of the sheds to get the water.

T: And you had to carry the feed by hand?

Q: Yes three times a day we fed them and then we gave them leisure for dinner again, besides that, collected the eggs twice a day that's all of them.

T: And when you collected the eggs?

Q: Twice a day.
I. What did you do with the eggs then?
II. Put them into the marketing board. Tanner used to come twice a week.
III. You had to clean them and pack them?
IV. Pack them, yes, we never graded them.
V. Did you grow your own luscene?
VI. Yes, we grew our own luscene.
VII. And you put it up with a hand chaff cutter.
VIII. Yes, with a chaff cutter.
IX. You had a few hours when you were on the farm.
X. Yes.
XI. Which one was that.
XII. Ronald.
XIII. And that would be about 1934.
XIV. About that.
XV. During the years of the depression did you ever get the dole?
XVI. No, never.
XVII. Did you apply for it?
XVIII. Yes, when there was how I applied for
XIX. Indentment and they paid I couldn't get it, I couldn't get a penny.
XX. Because of your income?
XXI. Yes, they said no.
XXII. Where did you get your stock feed and
XXIII. Groceries from?
XXIV. Thrifty's, J. B. Thrifty's in Toronto.
XXV. They were the local merchants.
XXVI. Yes, groceries and everything we got from Thrifty's.
XXVII. And how did you arrange payment?
XXVIII. We had to wait til we got our egg board
XXIX. Cheque, We never had one thing coming in and we had to wait til we got
XXX. That and then we used to give them the cheque. Sometimes we got nothing out
of it sometimes we got something back.

T. Was there a doctor in Toronto when you went there?

F. No, no doctor.

T. Where did you have to go for a doctor?

F. I think you'd go to Newmarket.

T. And what about chemists?

F. Oh, no Chemist.

T. About 1946 you sold the farm at Toronto West and moved to another farm about a mile out of Toronto, and you started up there again.

F. Yes.

T. Egg farming again.

F. Yes.

T. In a much smaller way.

F. Very small.

T. And you didn't continue that operation very long.

F. No.

T. That ceased about 1955 and about 1959 the Department of Education commenced.

F. Yes, took the land off the back of the house, right across.

T. And what was that for?

F. To build the High School.

T. And your husband died in 1960.

F. Whilst that was still under resumption.

T. That's right, yes.

T. And you've been on your own ever since.

F. And I never got any money from the land for four years after it was sold to them.

T. And what did you live on during that time?

F. What we got from the farms out along Aurora Road, we lived on that. And I
never got a pension until oh, I think it'll be easy eighteen months after he died when I got the pension.

T. And you enjoy reasonably good health?

E. Yes.

T. Toronto must be a good place to live.

E. Yes, too. Happiest place I've ever lived at, never had much money but have happiness.

T. In 1887 a pamphlet advertising land at Toronto predicted that a person dwelling on Toronto Estate pay three months in a year, add 20% to his life. That prediction seems to have been realised in your case.

....

T. Do you think it's the lake air that...

E. I think so. I think you get a different person as you get older. You realise more of life. I do honestly.

T. Well, you've just had your 95th birthday.

E. Yes.

T. And you're as fit as a fiddle.

E. Everybody says I am. I was in the meals on wheels on Wednesday and absolutely 95 and not out, he said "by gum" he said "that's something."

T. Mrs. Woodbine, thank you for your time.

E. Thank you.

Recording made at Toronto 11th June 1989.

John Lewis
Part C.

Summary of Interview of Elizabeth Woodbine.
Elizabeth Woodbine
Glimpses of the Past from 95 years on.

Elizabeth Woodbine, born at Selington on
12 June 1894, has not had an easy life. Her
mother died ten days after her birth, and her
stepmother died when Elizabeth was about
seven years old, and her first-born
child died aged seven years. Several
depressions and a long struggle for
survival brought many changes to
her family circumstances. From 95 years
on, Elizabeth recalls many tough experiences.

On the death of her mother, Elizabeth was
 fostered by her paternal uncle, Nicholas
carpenter, who operated an Iris nursery in
Power Street, Selington and his wife Matilda
Matilda had two adult children from a
previous marriage, so Elizabeth grew up
within an adult environment. On Matilda's
death, when Elizabeth was aged about
seven years, her uncle re-married. A much
gentler woman, she, the new stepmother,
immediately adopted Elizabeth as the family
structure, until that time Elizabeth had
believed her step-parents were her
natural parents.

Elizabeth attended Selington Public School
where she completed primary grades after which
she remained at home in domestic service.

The family home was of ponderous construction
three-bedrooms, parlour, dining room, kitchen
and laundry. There was no bathroom.
Kerosene lamps and candles provided the
lighting, and a solid fuel stove heating
and cooking facilities.

Elizabeth married Robert Earl Woodbine.
In 1945, shortly after the end of World War II, family moved from Rome to the United States. Family spent several years in New York City before returning to Italy in 1950.

In 1950, after graduating from high school in New York City, family moved back to Italy. Family spent several years in Italy before returning to the United States in 1954.

In 1954, family moved back to New York City. Family spent several years in New York City before returning to Italy in 1960.

In 1960, after graduating from high school in New York City, family moved back to Italy. Family spent several years in Italy before returning to the United States in 1965.

In 1965, family moved back to New York City. Family spent several years in New York City before returning to Italy in 1970.

In 1970, after graduating from high school in New York City, family moved back to Italy. Family spent several years in Italy before returning to the United States in 1975.

In 1975, family moved back to New York City. Family spent several years in New York City before returning to Italy in 1980.

In 1980, after graduating from high school in New York City, family moved back to Italy. Family spent several years in Italy before returning to the United States in 1985.

In 1985, family moved back to New York City. Family spent several years in New York City before returning to Italy in 1990.

In 1990, after graduating from high school in New York City, family moved back to Italy. Family spent several years in Italy before returning to the United States in 1995.

In 1995, family moved back to New York City. Family spent several years in New York City before returning to Italy in 2000.

In 2000, after graduating from high school in New York City, family moved back to Italy. Family spent several years in Italy before returning to the United States in 2005.

In 2005, family moved back to New York City. Family spent several years in New York City before returning to Italy in 2010.
When the Toronto West farm was sold and a 5-acre block was purchased one mile west of Toronto township, another egg farm was established on a small scale. That operation ceased in 1955. The property, excepting the Avoca Road frontage, was recorded by the Department of Education in 1959 to establish the Toronto Heights School.

Elizabeth's husband, Cecil, died in 1960; her eldest daughter, Delma, died in 1983, and in 1987 and again in 1988 she underwent major abdominal surgery. Living alone, she enjoys relatively good health, pottering in the yard and garden. Elizabeth considers her life to have been unexceptional.
Part. D.

Essay

of

Theme of Interview

of

Elizabeth Woodhouse

Theme

Memories of the Past
From 95 years on

Newcastle and Toronto
A company of citizens met in 1835 and decided to form a company to manufacture and distribute gas in Tewaukon. The following year, on December 23, 1836, the City of Tewaukon was chartered as a city. The first gas was delivered to several homes in November 1836 by Mr. L. E. E. and Mr. A. L. G. Gas was turned on in 1850, and the first fire was fought by the Tewaukon Fire Company, which had been organized in 1849.

The company continued to grow, and its success was due in part to the government's decision to proceed with the construction of the Tewaukon-Hoquiam railway in 1875. The railway helped to attract industry and population to the area. In 1877, the company was reorganized as the Tewaukon Gas Light Company, and the town continued to grow and thrive.
It seems like the text is mostly illegible and difficult to read. It appears to be hand-written notes which are not legible enough to transcribe accurately.
Municipalities adopted the scheme in November 1879. With changes of government, political procrastination and shortage of capital, it was three years before the scheme was authorised in October 1882, and another five years of drought and epidemics before water flowed into the Newcastle Reservoir in December, 1886. But it was not until 1911-13 that these was widespread expansion of the water and sewerage services to the general community, whereas the current Water Board area has a population of 410,000 of which 96.5% have water supplied and 82% have sewerage.

Electricity became available in Newcastle on 1st January, 1892, when the Newcastle City Council built a power generating plant in Sydney Street. The station was extended in 1912 and decommissioned in the early 1950s. The Railways Department built another generating plant in 1920. This became Newcastle's main power source until the mid-1950s. Taken over by the State Electricity Commission in 1953, its output was reduced when Wangi came into operation and demolition began in 1977 and was completed in 1978. The Hunter Region now produces 38% of the State's electricity and supplies 30,000 regional consumers.

Newcastle at the turn of the century was an undeveloped settlement of about 75,000 people.

6. Newcastle Herald. 4.1.86.
in five were under 15 years of age; 33% of all
deaths were children under one year; the average
infant mortality rate was 145 per 1000 deaths.
Food was scarce, children were suffering from
malnutrition. Of the population, 80% lived in
houses of 4 rooms, without bathrooms, and
lacking sanitation and water supply. Doctor
John Harris reported that in 1903 poverty
was greater than 10 years previously.
By the 1920s the population had doubled,
and economic conditions had worsened.
Thousands of families were close to starvation
and whole communities of mining towns had
sprung up in the bush, notably at
Adamstown Rifle Range, Stockton, Carrington,
Gisborne, Cattle Estate and Horsehoe Beach.
Some of these communities remained into
the 1950s.
Lake Macquarie was discovered by accident.
The 30 ton schooner "March" under the command
of Captain Williams had left Port Jackson in July
1800 for a cargo of coal from Coal River. Reid
mistook the entrance to Lake Macquarie, then
discovered for the Hunter River. He found
coal in abundance and returned laden to
Port Jackson where he learned of his mistake.
The location was then named "Keid's Mistake".
Rev. Kendall, Shepparton, in 1855, established an
Aboriginal mission on a 10,000 acre grant
located north of Reid's Mistake and encompassing

S. Roberts, J. E. Newcastle, The Making of an Australian
O'Regan, Shepparton. Newcastle in the Great Depression,
Belmont Bay. The mission house was located where the Belmont township is now sited. The mission for various reasons, was abandoned in mid-1838.

Governor Darling granted Threlkeld 12,800 acres of land in 1839 on the opposite side of the lake, comprising the area known now as Deerhurst and now known as Toronto and Tidal Point. Threlkeld named the grant Thegnet, and began mining coal at Tidal Point in 1841.

The opening of the main railway line in 1877 aroused new interest in the Tinten estate. An hotel opened that year on Mulberry Hill and the estate was renamed Toronto after the Canadian city of that name on Lake Ontario.

In 1891 the Excelsior Land and Investment company obtained a franchise to build a
standard gauge railway between Tinten and Toronto. Various means of locomotion were employed, including a horse-drawn trolley. Engines used were the "Tootalo", "Pygmy", and Steam Motor No. 67A. The line revived the railways in 1911.

The outstanding pioneering businessman in Toronto was Thomas Charles Smith. Mr. Smith opened a store in Beecroo on 1st January 1900. Six years later he took over a store in Exshaw, and in 1917, he opened a general store in the Boulevard, Toronto, now operated by third-generation Smith. Mr. Smith was active in local government, church and social

11. Smith, p. 33
affairs. It is credited with founding the State Ambulance Service. The firm established the first pharmacy in Toronto and made available premises for the first doctor and dentist and premises for a bank and a police station.

Following the gold mining enterprise in 1841, district mining has continued. Other activities since then have included fishing, fish canning, sugar milling, boat building including housecraft construction, orchards, sawmill, factory, charcoal burning, tea tree oil distillation, timber, power generation, egg production and cockatoo farming.

Census figures for 1986 show Newcastle population as 129,490 and Toronto 63,355.

Both areas have undergone great evolutionary changes in industry, commerce and lifestyle. To accommodate the changing economic circumstances and regional society has shown its resilience by successfully adapting to the changes.

13. Lake Macquarie Herald, 23.7.70.
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