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12.3.85

GF,

Brackenbrae, Broxburn.

b. 1905

GF GF

SR Sara Randall

SR Were you born in Broxburn?

GF Uh huh.

SR When?

GF 1905, 8th February.

SR And you've lived in Broxburn all your life?

GF Yes.

SR What sorts of jobs have you done, since you left school? What was your first job?

GF Well, actually, when I was at school I was working a grocery thing, previous to going to school and at night. Just about half an hour before school time and then on a Saturday afternoon.

SR And that was a grocery in Broxburn?

GF No, it was just up behind.

SR Did you start it yourself?

GF Oh no no. I didna start it, oh no no. It was Mr. Marshall had the shop and there was a change of ownership a Mr. Miller took it over and it was a school chum, that was at school along with me that was in this situation before. He was related to the owner of the business and he gave it up. I don't really mind how it came about, but I got the job anyway.

SR And did you carry on with that full time once you'd left school?

GF Oh no. Actually, you see, an uncle of mine was in the same line of business, and I think there was a bit of a.. he didna care for me working in two places you ken, running about the two shops like. So I packed that up. Of course I was still going back to school. After I left school, I went into the supplementary, I didna go into the higher grade, and I left when I was 14. Anyway, it was the time of the shale strikes and one thing and another. It was a wee while before I had any actual work.

SR Because there was just no jobs going?

GF And, however, I started as an apprentice painter in a firm. I went and got a job.

SR How long did that last?

GF Well I finished my time and then I (? trifled ?) a wee bit. The trouble with the painting and that at that time, was that it was all right in the summer and the spring and that, you'd all the schools, and pubs and these kind of things. Unless you were connected with the firm you were only taken on sort of temporary. They had their ain men and it was only when they were rushed and what not. But eventually I worked a bit in Edinburgh, for two or three different firms, and then

I come across and I worked in Broxburn.

SR As a painter?

GF Aye, oh different jobs. And then I became, I had been in the cooperative for about 35 years and that, I was retiring age, and so I retired. And that was that. So I havnae done anything since then.

SR But all the time, even when you were working in Edinburgh, you lived in Broxburn did you?

GF Oh yes. Oh I had quite a good time coming back and forward. You ken you were doing all your different kinds of work, schools and pubs and private places and institutions and..

SR Did you get well paid as a painter?

GF Oh, you got your rate. In fact as an apprentice I had a wee bit above the union rate because we were doing mair than we should have been, we were working in Kirks and picture houses.

SR So were you better paid than people who worked in the shale mines and in the oil works, do you think?

GF Well, it wasn't so much that. I'll tell you one thing about the shale miners when the war was on, the miners were excused any military service. And, when they came in to pick paper, instead of taking papers that was in stock they had to get a pattern, and they paid a bit mair for the pattern, because it was in a

pattern book. And, then the slump came. That was that.

SR What about your family life? was your father a shale miner?

GF No, my father was a bread van man.

SR In Broxburn? Was he born in Broxburn?

GF Now, now. I don't think he was born in Broxburn. Maybe he was, I'm not sure now. You see, my mother died when I was about 12, and I was a kind of, I had all the troubles of the youngsters who came, mumps and fever and measles and these things and my mother was a bit of an invalid, and she died in 1917. And, that was that. And then after a couple of years, three years, my father married again. It didn't work out between me and the newcomer. I stayed with my father's mother, my granny. She had quite a family in there.

SR She had a lot of grandchildren staying with her did she?

GF Well, she had a family. I mean the houses were rooms and kitchens you see, and there was quite a family of them. But they weren't all at home there must have been maybe about 5 in the house.

SR And when you were small, while you were still with your own parents, how many of you were there in that house?

GF Just the 3.

SR You don't have any brothers and sisters?

GF No.

SR That must have been very unusual in those days?

GF Well, aye, the usual thing was seven or eight, or nine. I once had an apprentice working with me, he was one of a family of 19. And the name was Grant. And one of the customers said "what Grant was that?" and I said I didna ken but I think it was one of the government grants.

SR But you were just on your own all the time?

GF Aye, more or less. My father's side of the family was, were more or less agriculturists. My grand father was a farm worker and so was my granny....

SR Did you live with your granny until you got married?

GF Yes, aye. Well, my mother's mother kept house for my father, for a year I think, and then she had other things to do. My mother's side her uncle had a business that was sort of upsides with the cooperative. They had all a string of shops, like the cooperative, and they paid a dividend same as the cooperative.

SR So, none of your family's had any connection with the shale industry?

GF Well, with the oil work, some of my uncles on my father's side.

SR Did you get married?

GF I got married when I was 25.

SR What sort of house did you move into then?

GF A room and kitchen. To begin with. Then we shifted. About a year and a half.

We were in that house for a couple of years, and then we went away to a lodge up at Craig Binny, The idea was that the wife could care for the livestock up at the..it was cats and dogs. A dozen cats and 3 dogs. That was up at Craig Binny at Dechmont.

SR Did you have any children.

GF One son. Still have.

SR In your first house, when you were a child, did your house have water.

GF Oh yes.

SR And a flush toilet.

GF Oh yes. Not to begin with. Are you talking about my granny's house or.

SR The one you live in with your parents first of all, when your mother was still alive.

GF Aye. well as far as the ones that my parents was in there was a flush toilet. But, with my grandparents, it wasnae. To begin with. But that came along

SR Did they have to pay for it themselves, or did the landlord pay for it?

GF It would have been the landlord. It wasna an inside toilet. It was an outside one, you know.

SR Did you have electricity?

GF No, it was an oil lamp at that time. Though there was gas and electricity in the

town right enough.

SR But not many houses had it?

GF Quite a few different, different.. we had the gas work you see up at the work.
It was off the shale oil.

SR Did your granny own her own house or was it a rented house?

GF No, no. It was a rented one?

SB Form the oil company? Was it owned by the Oil Company.

GF No, no. Private tenants.

SR Were the rents high compared with the wages? Did a lot of your wage go on rent?

GF Oh, I don't think they were very much. I don't think it was a heavy rental.
At that time, as far as the shale workers were concerned they were all down
Greendykes Road, and Mid St and West St and that part of the town, it belonged
to the company, it was only a matter of 4 or 5 firms at the most.

SR Whereabouts was your house?

GF In the Old Town. It was just a cottage type, you know. It was connected to three
in the one block.

SR What was it like inside? Was it very crowded? very small?

GF No. It was roomy enough, but we'd just the room and kitchen. Beds at that time
were the recess beds. Two in the living room. A box bed in the room and then a

recess bed.

SR In your granny's house did you have a bed to yourself or did you have to share it?

GF No, I had the recess one.

SR What sort of mattresses were they?

GF Well, as far as my granny was concerned it was caff.

SR Caff, what's that?

GF Stuff that comes off the wheat and.

SR Did you have to go and collect it yourselves?

GF Oh no, no. It was what was there. You never thought of anything.
They were manufactured of course.

SR What about washing? Were you able to have a bath often or just once a week?

GF There wasna baths in the ordinary house, the bathroom was an exclusive item.

SR So did you have a tin bath that you'd fill up or did you go to public baths?

GF Well, the oil workers, they had the baths, ken the spray baths. I went to them, sometimes. You just washed yourself in a hot tub, or something like that and basin. Zinc bath or something like that.

SR Could anyone go and use the shale workers, oil workers booths?

GF Oh no. It was meant for the miners.

SR How did you get in then?

GF Oh, that was after hours. As far as my mother's side they had the equipment there. They were well enough situated.

SR What sort of things did her family do then?

GF Well. They were all married and it was a sort of family business in a way. The owner in the business stayed in, above the shops, and next door to that was the sister of the owner and it was three sisters.

SR What relationship was that to your mother?

GF An uncle. My mother's uncle.

SR So shop keepers were slightly more wealthy than the average person in the village were they?

GF Well the shopkeeper were quite, quite, not like what it is now, they had business and it was all gone. Of course, when the strikes were on some of them were maybe a wee bit hard hit, but they survived all right.

SR Can you tell me what it was like in the village when the strikes were on?

GF Oh well, you had strikers coming in and there used to be the glass and what not, and the whistles and their bangs and then they had their protest marches and what not in London and so forth.

SR Did you go on strike at all?

GF Oh no.

SR Was there a lot of poverty around at that time?

GF No, no. I wouldna say there was great hardship. There was the parish Council of course at that time, and if they were that hard up they got their boots and so forth. But it doesna matter how good conditions are, there'd always be the odd that didna care for theirself.

SR How did your family cope for illness? Did you pay anything to get the doctor or did he just come free?

GF Well, the doctor as far as my mother was concerned, that was a private patient. If you were working in the oil work you were paying through your wages.

SR But your father wasn't working in the oil works was he?
So you had to pay for every time the doctor came had you?

GF Aye, well any doctors bills, you got your account and that was that.

SR And what would have happened if you couldn't actually afford it?

GF Well, you managed to afford it.

SR But there was no way of getting the money from somewhere else, from the parish or somewhere like that?

GF Oh no. Well, I don't know about most folk. But I don't think the health scheme

was full go at that time.

...about National Health...

SR When you were a child, just playing around and going to school, was there a lot of hardship, was there a lot of illness amongst children then?

GF Well, I think diphtheria was quite a thing, and kind of lung troubles, you know. There was whooping cough.

SR And TB, consumption.

GF Aye, TB. But that was what my mother suffered from.

SR Did she go away to a sanatorium in the end?

GF No, she died at home. But she had been in a sanatorium, when I was about 7 I think.

SR Where did she go? Where was the sanatorium?

GF Just in the vicinity. Armadale - Tippethill. There was that and scarlet fever I think.

SR Did you ever hear tell of children dying of these things?

GF Well.. some.. a few, but no an awful lot. I had mumps and swollen glands. That was the TB, ken the TB. The doctor lanced it when I was in the hospital with the fever, and it came back. So I was hooked into Edinburgh, into the Sick Children's hospital and had an operation. After that I never had anything except the flu.

SR When you went into the Sick Children's were you taken in by an ambulance, were you very ill?

GF I must been taken in. ... Ken I didna get a car back hame. I had to come back with the tram, tram and then a bus.

SR When you first started working as an apprentice, what sort of hours did you work?

GF It would be 8 hours. 44 in the week.

SR And that was the union conditions?

GF No, 48 in the week. 48. You didna get any sick pay. You didna get any holiday money or anything like that.

SR So did you ever take any holidays without pay or did you just work all the time?

GF No, just working. Of course, you had your slack times in the winter.

SR Did you enjoy it?

GF Oh aye, aye. Wasnae a hard job. Depended on your boss. Learning your time in the country was preferable to learning in the town, because of all the different sections, all the different angles of the job, papering ceilings, and papering walls and painting and that sort of thing. You werena stuck to one thing. No like just a case of painting windowsills.

SR You must find a lot of this really horrible then. I shouldn't think they've been very well done.

GF This has all been renovated..
.... his current housing...

SR How long have you lived up here?

GF 35 years, about 35.

SR These blocks have been built that long?

GF Oh aye. ... this has been reconditioned you see...
housing block

SR And you came here from what sort of house?

GF Er, an upstairs room and kitchen, in Melbourne Road.

SR So was this a great improvement?

GF Oh aye. You had the bathroom, and you had the bedrooms whereas before I only
had a room and kitchen and toilet just at the door on the side of my landing.

SR Did you have hot water there?

GF No, no. There wasnae hot water. You boiled it...On the gas. Some had gas, some.
had electric and some had a paraffin stove.

SR Do you think the housing in Broxburn has got better?

GF Oh aye, definitely.

SR Because some of these look so bad from the outside that you wonder if they are any better than the old housing.

GF Well, it depends on the tenant.

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SR Can you remember, when the oil works were going in Broxburn, were they very smoky and dirty?

GF They had the big chimneys, and they had the army guard the essential things.

SR But as you were walking around Broxburn, was it sort of black and sooty and greasy or was it quite clean?

GF Well, you got a lot of fog and mist. You see, all the fires were coal fires and all the chimneys were smoking and in damp weather the smoke came down.

SR So you reckon it was the houses as much as the oil works that made it dirty ?

GF Oh aye because that's what causes fog; it's the atmosphere that's contaminated with industrial fumes and what not?

SR Did you ever go and do any painting up in the oil works?

GF No. I'd nae connection with the oil works. The oil works had no connection wi' us. They had their ain workmen. The man that painted wagons and that sort of thing was the man who (inaudible....).

SR When you were a child and your mother was ill, were there a lot of neighbours came in to help you, to help her, or were families very isolated?

GF Oh well, there were plenty of relations.

SR So it was always relations rather than neighbours?

GF Aye, I mean the community spirit was there all right, and she was spoke to well enough, but she was kind of handicapped. I was kind of restricted in my youth because wi' me having my swollen glands and what not I was aye getting checked for this and checked for that, not to do this and not to do that, kinda hemmed in a bit.

SR When you did your grocery boys job, did you keep your salary to yourself or did you give it all to your mum or to your granny?

GF Ah wee, it was my granny at that time.

SR And you gave it to her?

GF Ah well, yes, so much. I didna give it all.

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SR Was it a tough time, for young people?

GF Well, I canna say that I was, that I had a hard time o'it. Never had a hard time, I never was hard up. I was well enough fed during the rationing period and all that.

... rationing during 1st and 2nd W W's....

SR Do you reckon there were other families who suffered much more?

GF Well, you always had the drunks going about. They always managed that. There was plenty o' pubs. The time of the Prohibition there was four or five, I think

there was five different places closed up. Licensed grocers and pubs.

SR When was the Prohibition?

GF Was that during the war, the first war. The first war I'm talking about.

SR What happened then? They closed down a whole lot of pubs did they?

GF No, no. They had to limit them. That was the same time as the (inaudible) in America.

SR How did it work? I didn't know about the Prohibition in Scotland?

GF Did you no? Well Lenzie is a case in point. The East side of Glasgow. The other side o' Lenzie was Kirkintulloch and Kirkintulloch was dry and Lenzie was wet. You only had to cross the bridge. Cross the bridge to get your booze if you wanted. One area was dry and the other was wet.

SR They had a policy did they of making more areas dry? You said they closed down some pubs in Broxburn.

GF There was a poll taken, somehow or other, the general vote.

SR And before that was there a lot of drinking in Broxburn?

GF Well, every corner had a pub. And half of the street went, there was a pub in between. A pub at the end and a pub at the end. One in the corner and one in the corner.

SR Did your father go drinking?

GF No. My grandfather did and my uncles did, some of them. My father's brothers tasted a bit around, now and again. Course they werenae all staying together. Some of them were working on farms and some of them were working elsewhere.

SR And you?

GF I'm not (inaudible). Smoke plenty on the quiet. I wouldna be here the day if I'd carried on. I was smoking about 40 a day.
...stopping smoking...
...painting people's houses....
...problems with entire housing scheme in which he lives....

GF ... I dinna even ken the folk in this street?

SR So you don't even know where they come from. They've come from all over Scotland have they?

GF Well, they've come from various roundabouts. Some come fra Glasgow, some come fra Livingston I think. I think a lot a Glasgow folk went to Livingston. But the maist o' the folk came up here are people that were staying in Broxburn.

SR Their houses were demolished were they and the council moved them up here?

GF No no. Their houses werenae demolished. Just flitted over. The houses that they left are still in Broxburn. The works houses were all, they were all taken over by the council. They used to be the Oil company's houses.

end of side one.

GF The wages were small there was aye plenty activity. The shops were all busy, at Christmas and New Year they were open till 10, 11 o'clock at night. New Year, I don't think they were shut at all.

SR When did all the people start to move into Broxburn. From Glasgow and so on? Was it when the shale industry closed or was it before then?

GF I don't think there were many people came to Broxburn from Glasgow. There wasna many Glaswegians flitting in. The population o'Broxburn hasna altered that much. They built the Academy and a primary school and another primary school further up. And a Junior Catholic School and a Secondary Catholic School....

SR When you were a boy how many schools were there?

GF There was the public school and the junior school and er the, they opened up a public school in the Main St and a Catholic School...

SR So you went to the public school? Was it a good school?

GF Aye. ...(Eminent pupils ..)

Transcript	GF
Birth Place	I was born in Broxburn on the 8th February 1905.
Industrial Information	When I left the school I went into the supplementary. It was the time of the shale strikes and one thing and another.
Apprentice Painter	I started work as an apprentice painter in a firm. When I finished my time I was only taken on temporary basis, because they had their ain men and it was only when they were rushed and what not. Eventually I worked a bit in Edinburgh for two or three different firms, and then I came across and I worked in Broxburn.
Broxburn	In Broxburn I worked on different jobs. I had been in the Co-operative for about thirty five years until I was retiring age. So I haven't done anything since then.
Wages	I got the going rate of pay. In fact as an apprentice I had a wee bit above the

union rate because we were doing mair than we should have been, we were working in Kirks and picture houses. I didn't get paid. Well, it wasn't so much that.

Military Service I'll tell you one thing about the shale miners when the war was on the miners were excused any military service. And, when they came in to pick paper, instead of the papers that was in stock they had to get a pattern, and they paid a bit mair for the pattern, because it was in a pattern book, and then the slump came.

Domestic Life The houses were rooms and kitchens
Housing in those days. We were in that house for a couple of years, then we went away to a lodge up at Binny Craig.

Marriage I got married when I was twenty five, and the idea of moving to another house was so that the

wife could care for livestock
it was cats and dogs.

Children We only had one son after we
were married.

Electricity We did not have electricity
at that time. It was oil
lamps, though gas and electricity
was in the town at that time.

Gas We had a gas works up at the
work that was produced from
shale oil.

Baths There wasna baths in the ordinary
houses, a bathroom was an
exclusive item in those days.

Oil Workers Baths The oilworkers they had baths,
ken, spray baths, I went to
them sometimes, other times
you just washed yourself in a
hot tub or something like that.
the baths were really meant for
the oilworkers only.

Poverty I wouldna say there was a lot
of poverty at that time. There
was the parish Council of
course, if they were hard up
they got their boots and so

forth. But it didn't matter
how good conditions are, there'd
always be the odd ones that
didn't care for themselves.

Doctor As far as my mother was concerned
she was a private patient. But
if you were working in the oil-
works you paid through your
wages for the doctor.

T. B. (Mumps) I had mumps and swollen glands.
The swollen glands was T.B., ken.
The doctor lanced it when I
was in the hospital with fever
and it came back, so I was
booked into the Sick Children's
Hospital for an operation.
After that I never had anything,
except flu.

Transport to I must have been taken in, but
Hospital I ken I didn't get a car
back home. I had to come
back by tram then a bus.

Social Life The community spirit was there
at that time.

Drunks There were always plenty drunks

going about. There was always
money for that.

INDEX

GF AA

business 1,3,4
childhood work 1,7
community 7
cooperative 2,3
doctor 5,6
drink 7-8
electricity 3,6

family 2,3,4,7

- size 2-3

farms 3,8

holidays 6

housing 3,4,6,7

illness 2,5,6

marriage 2,3

migration 8,9

miners - shale 2

oil works 3,7

pollution 7

poverty (lack of) 2,5

- 5

rents 4

sanitation 3

schools 9

shops 3,4,8

sleeping arrangements 4

smoking 8

strikes 1,5

TB 5

wages 2

washing 4

work - non shale 1,2,6

hours 6

PLACES

Armadale 6

Broxburn 1,4,7,9

Edinburgh 1

Glasgow 9