

The following transcript of
Mary “Ivy” Reynolds’s interview

on

Memories and Music

(broadcast between 1974-1976)

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE: Mary Ivy Reynolds TAPE NO: 54
POSITION: Nurse for Inco TRANSCRIBER: Wendy Mayhew

DATE: DATE OF TRANS: August 1982
INTERVIEWER: Don MacMillan SUMMER CANADA PROJECT

THEME: A young girl's reminiscences, re: growing up at the turn of the century; about training as a nurse, and working as one in Copper Cliff from 1913 to 1935.

D.M. Now friends and neighbours we have a real treat, we're going to talk to Miss Mary Ivy Reynolds, who believe it or not retired from Inco on the first day of 1935 and is the longest living Inco pensioner. Now Miss Reynolds is a, you were telling me something about people calling you Ivy Reynolds but you prefer or your name really is Mary, is that right?

M.R. Yes, my name is Mary . . . Ivy Reynolds, correct name.

D.M. But how a, how come you get called Ivy then?

M.R. Because my grandmother, was English and she used to call me the Clinging Vine, the Ivy.

D.M. Well now Miss Reynolds let's . . . start right back at the beginning. About when and where were you born, Miss Reynolds?

M.R. I was born in Uxbridge.

D.M. Do you recall the year now?

M.R. Yes I was born in 1887.

D.M. Well now 1887 is a long time ago and things would be very different then.

M.R. Oh yes.

D.M. A, tell us something about a, Toronto and Uxbridge and that part of the world in, in 8, well you wouldn't know it in 1887 but you would know something about it, about 1903, or '04, eh, would you?

M.R. Well I couldn't tell you very much about it because a, I left there while I was quite young and a, . . . I know we

were just playing around and didn't . . . nothing like, it is today you know. You didn't have the amusements you just played with dolls out on the lawn and like that. But I had, there was a blind couple lived next door to us and I used to help the blind lady around some times and if my mother was going out, she'd leave me in with them and they would fix a tent with sheets and a, give me things to play with and look after me 'til they came home.

D.M. That's a, that's a good story a, can I call you Mary or Miss Reynolds?

M.R. Whatever way you'd like.

D.M. All right. Do you remember any music or anything of that era, any of the songs or music of that era?

M.R. No I don't remember any music. I wasn't very musical, and a

D.M. Were there any people who . . . any statesmen or people like that whom you can remember from that time?

M.R. I don't remember anyone's name in Uxbridge.

D.M. Well now you . . . did you travel to a, well you still lived in Uxbridge did you travel to Toronto at all?

M.R. No not that I know of. Excepting I did, they would take me to Brampton to visit my grandparents and a, we'd spend a little more out there then go back to Uxbridge.

D.M. A, well now, what a, what did your father do in Uxbridge?

M.R. Well he was a hydro man, too.

D.M. A, was he a, born in Canada?

M.R. Yes.

D.M. And your mother?

M.R. Yes.

D.M. And well then did your father, or your mother ever talk to you about the older days when they were born? They would go back almost to the, the MacKenzie Rebellion, wouldn't it?

M.R. Yes. They didn't tell me very much, but they were too busy working.

D.M. I see.

- M.R. But a, . . . I, I know I had a . . . some aunts that were married in Brampton and when I'd go there, they would tell me about different families that have so many children. There'd be 12 or 14 children and then they'd tell me all their names and they used to call us the ant hill.
- D.M. Right. Well now, you said at about the age of 7 or thereabouts your family moved to the Sault, is that right?
- M.R. No they moved to Orillia.
- D.M. To Orillia, oh yes.
- M.R. Yes.
- D.M. How long were you in Orillia?
- M.R. Was in Orillia, until I was about, let's say 17 or 18 years of age.
- D.M. Well now a
- M.R. And then
- D.M. Well now if I might findly interrupt here just for a second. Now let's, what can you remember about Orillia in those days. I mean going to, to school any of the music, dances or anything in, in those days.
- M.R. Oh no we didn't go to any things like that. We had to be home at 9 o'clock we had to be home and a, when I first went to Orillia and we used to just play around and have concerts and some other little children we'd just play in on make up plays and, and a, . . . we
- D.M. Well I imagine that is fun now I don't know if you would know but was not Steven Leacock did he not live in Orillia about that time.
- M.R. Yes.
- D.M. Do you remember anything about him?
- M.R. Yes. I don't remember anything about him but I remember he lived near the doctor's office where I used to go.
- D.M. Were there any other people living in Orillia at that time that you can since remember as becoming prominent in any, any field other than Mr. Leacock?
- M.R. No I can't, I've forgotten about, of people in Orillia. I don't

- D.M. All, all right now. We're doing fine Mary. Now you . . . lived with your family in Orillia until you were about 17 is that correct?
- M.R. Yes and we moved to the Sault and I was still living with my people.
- D.M. Had you any brothers or sisters by this time?
- M.R. Just the two you see.
- D.M. You had one brother and one sister.
- M.R. One brother and one sister.
- D.M. And a, what prompted the move to the Sault, for bad business reasons?
- M.R. A, my father . . . got a new job and he moved to the Sault and then he went in sort of in partnership with another man and then they dissolved partnership and my mother and father later moved away from the Sault. But a, . . . when I was going in Nursing and everything, my father and mother were living next door to the hospital.
- D.M. Well that a, that made it handy had, had you wanted to be a nurse, had nursing interested you?
- M.R. Well that's what it says in that paper.
- D.M. Well now folks the Friday, the paper that a, Ivy Reynolds is talking about is the Sault Daily Star and here is a story about a, something that happened a way back about 1905 or thereabout it, abouts and maybe I could read it to you.
- M.R. 1908.
- D.M. Pardon me 1908. "Sister Theresa Agatha formerly administrator of the General Hospital now retired, remembers that the first hospital with it's friendly (unintelligible) and Sister Mary Dorothea, one of the most stalwart pioneers of the hospital. In 1908, Sister Mary Dorothea . . . excuse me, founded the St. Mary's School of Nursing virtually over night." Now listen to this, this is a direct quote, "A girl who lived nearby approached her one morning as she sat on the veranda and in the course of the conversation she told Sister Mary Dorothea that she wished to become a nurse. At that time there was no training school for nurses connected with the hospital. So Sister Mary Dorothea being a nurse herself agreed to tutor her individually. "Come back tomorrow morning and we'll start a school in nursing," she said. The girl's name was Ivy Reynolds and three years later she became the first graduate of St. Mary's School of Nursing." And Ivy Reynolds, as you know friends is the

charming lady that we have with us as our guest here today. Well now Ivy I wonder if you can tell us something about what it was like living in the Sault, in Sault Ste. Marie in 1908. Now . . . something about a, some of the fun you had, parties, things like that.

M.R. Well we just, we didn't have too many parties but we used to go berry picking a lot. We'd take a, . . . big pail and get on the train and go up a, a line that was being opened up and a, they're working on it. And they'd take us up and let us off any place we wanted to, to pick berries and then on the, late in the day they'd be coming back and they'd pick us up and bring us home to

D.M. Now these berries, would these, these be blueberries or choke cherries or what?

M.R. Raspberries.

D.M. Very good and what did you do with them?

M.R. Blueberries.

D.M. Blueberries, yes.

M.R. But a, mostly raspberries.

D.M. Well now a, . . . 1908 in the Sault were there any . . . movie pictures, telephone what was it like then?

M.R. Not that I know of. We weren't very well off. The salaries were poor and I didn't have too much money to spend on anything. And us children we were supposed to be home not on the streets like they are today.

D.M. Well now Ivy did you . . . did you nurse in the, in the hospital then in Ste. Marie after you a, graduated.

M.R. And no I stayed for a little while, not very long and I had a typhoid and I was off for a year and then I got the word to come to Copper Cliff.

D.M. Now you say that you got the word to come to Copper Cliff how, how did this come about?

M.R. Well I got a letter from a, a, a nurse in Copper Cliff asking me if I'd come and relieve the nurses while they'd have their holidays. I'd be there for 4 months, so I said, "Why certainly I would." And then I came on the train and the, a mail man was there waiting to pick me up. He, he used to go to the train and get the bags of mail and put them in the back, he put me along in with the mail and drove me to the temporary hospital in Copper Cliff.

- D.M. Now what year was this again, did I ask you what year it was?
- M.R. 1913.
- D.M. Now a, . . . describe Copper Cliff, your first impression of Copper Cliff in 1913 if you will?
- M.R. Well as we drove along from the station, it was quite a little drive because it was horse and buggy days and a, there wasn't any grass, no trees and I thought, oh will I ever be glad when the fall comes and I can leave here. But nobody's going to hear me say, make one complaint about it.
- D.M. Well now a, well now a but you, but you did stay you changed your mind, eh?
- M.R. I can, I can, I, I, I can go on and tell you more.
- D.M. Well go ahead.
- M.R. Well then I . . . I started to work and everyone was so kind. All the people were just wonderful, if they, if you had a little time off they'd invite you for bridge in the evenings and if you happened to be off for a little while in the afternoon, they'd have you for supper and a, I got so that I had so many good friends there, that when it came time for me to leave, they were building the new hospital when I, I started to leave I said if you need another nurse I'll be glad to come back.
- D.M. Well then, go ahead
- M.R. So
- D.M. Ivy tell us more.
- M.R. So it went along for a little while and they were, well they were building this new hospital and everything. Then I got word to come back on duty on the staff. So I went back and a, we worked in the temporary hospital which was a big brick . . . boarding house I think on, on Parks Street and a, then a, they had built a little house along the side of the building for the nurses to sleep in and then the front of that was a, the . . . drug part and the outdoor and then Dr. McCauley's room and then to the right as you went in the side were 4 or 5 rooms for the nurses. Each had a room and we a, . . . didn't, couldn't talk very loud because the building was so . . . frail, of course you could hear everything.
- D.M. Right.

- M.R. Well then, in the main building, in the basement they had fixed it up temporarily with the . . . dining room and kitchen and supply room and a, the furnace room and everything like that. And on the ground floor of, they had on the right hand side of the hallway was a, operating room and back of the operating room was a large room for supplies for the, all the instruments used, and the treatments and everything and all the dressings, sterilized dressings and things, were all there ready for us to work with. Well then when the . . . left of the, as you went in the, the hallway the, there was a room with six beds in, and there was a man in each bed lying down in the bed, they were all sick men. And then there was a bathroom at the end and that was that. Then if you went upstairs another flight there was a, no less 6 more beds for men and then there was one little room that they had in case of an emergency and on the right hand side of the hallway, the cook and her assistants slept and . . . that was our living quarters and everything. Until in 1914 we moved into the new hospital which was a blessing to everybody, it was so wonderful, so up-to-date. Every nurse had a beautiful room, beautiful clothes cupboard and everything you needed, all well-furnished and so comfortable and nice. We'd just loved it and we were all single girls and we all lived in the hospital and we had beautiful meals, just wonderful meals.
- D.M. Well Ivy if I may interrupt, was there any, is there any. . of, of the nurses you were with, nursing with then. Your friends or companions alive today or, and in Sudbury or Copper Cliff.
- M.R. I don't know what their, any of the first nurses are alive today. But there's some of the nurses . . . I think are alive but I don't hear from them at all.
- D.M. But you, can you remember the names of any prominent people in Sudbury or with the nickel company or anything at that time.
- M.R. You mean of Inco
- D.M. Yeah
- M.R. Of, of Copper Cliff?
- D.M. Right.
- M.R. All of the, well I remember when the . . . tore down the old building across from the corner, across from the hospital. It was a big boarding house and they tore it down and built a beautiful bank and a
- D.M. Is that bank standing today?

- M.R. The bank is standing today and it was just a picture at that time and the . . . manager and his wife lived upstairs and then it went on and they tore down some more building and the Cochrane Dardware, Cochrane Hardware had a beautiful store and the pos, the post office was a wreck and they fixed it up as best they could. Of course, later they built another.
- D.M. Well I'm going to interrupt you again Ivy, if I may. About what is the population of Copper Cliff at this time? (unintelligible)
- M.R. I've no idea, no idea.
- D.M. 300 or 400 or
- M.R. No I haven't any idea at all.
- D.M. O.K. and a, what about Sudbury, about this time?
- M.R. Well Sudbury was a . . . wasn't much good, it a, was pretty muddy.
- D.M. They tell me that to get from Sudbury to Copper Cliff you had to a, walk through the mud or hire a, or go by a little streetcar or tram or something or how was that.
- M.R. Well there was a little streetcar they got running and a, they used to go some times in them. We'd go in there to shop maybe Saturday night, but a, we didn't go too much to Sudbury because we had everything in Copper Cliff. They a, . . . see I was there when they . . . they moved the houses off the hill and a, built the . . . beautiful, big a, . . . Copper Cliff . . . Club.
- D.M. Copper Cliff Club, you were there at the time, eh?
- M.R. I was there at the opening of the Copper Cliff Club.
- D.M. Now that might, must have been quite an impressive affair (unintelligible)
- M.R. Oh yes, it was
- D.M. Who were the people there at that?
- M.R. I don't know, 'cause then the doctors' wives always went with us and took us and were so good to us and everything and in those days they didn't allow any liquor to be taken and there was a policeman in the Copper Cliff Club and everything like . . . that in the evenings. Big dances and everything.
- D.M. These dances were completely dry, eh?

- M.R. There was no, no. Yes dry. You could have a drink before you went but you couldn't have one when you got there. And the . . . oh it was really a wonderful, clean place to be and we had lots of fun dancing.
- D.M. Now I'm going to ask you about some of the, some of the music that was popular about that time. Can you remember any of that?
- M.R. No I can't remember music.
- D.M. O.K. Any of the artists . . . Caruso does that ring a . . . mean a thing or any of the orchestras. None of those things you can remember now, eh?
- M.R. No I can't remember those things. I'm older now you know.
- D.M. You're, you're young in heart and you look, you look beautiful.
- M.R. No.
- D.M. Yes you do. Now what dances did you do? Were these, would these be dancing to the, sort of the old time fiddlers or would this be the fox trot or what?
- M.R. Oh Captain Hamley used to like to dance the, the waltz with me and he was always coming getting me to drink, to dance the waltz.
- D.M. Now that's beautiful, now who was Captain Hamley.
- M.R. Hamley.
- D.M. Hamley, who was he?
- M.R. Oh I don't know.
- D.M. He just, you remember the name, is that right?
- M.R. Yeah.
- D.M. Now friends and neighbours we're, we're chatting with a, Ivy Reynolds who is probably Inco, Inco's oldest living pensioner. I, Ivy retired from Inco in the first day of 1935.
- M.R. Yes.
- D.M. Which is quite a few years ago. Well now Ivy you were telling us something about a, some of the problems in the hospital in those days with sulphur fumes and what not, is that, is that so?

- M.R. Yes there was, it was very hard to breathe and even to walk on the sidewalks out of, they were wood and they were built up high and if the sulphur smoke was too dense you had to be very, very careful you didn't fall off into the ditch.
- D.M. Now Ivy on your a, on your holidays and things, did you travel back to Uxbridge or Toronto or anything like that.
- M.R. No some times I'd go to Toronto and a lot of relatives down there. But mostly it was to the Sault because I loved my mother and father and I liked to spend what time I could with them and my little sister.
- D.M. Ivy let's get back now to around the 1920's and so on. Did you have any hobbies or anything back then?
- M.R. Well just a, I liked playing cards and I liked embroidering and doing all kinds of fancy things and then a, I a
- D.M. Ivy there was something about your sister you were going to tell me.
- M.R. Well my, my sister who was a great deal younger than I was, was married and when her, her baby was born she only lived two weeks and after that my mother being a widow looked after the little boy and brought him up just like a mother would. He's wonderful you know.
- D.M. Ivy what is his name and, and is he still, where is he now?
- M.R. Peter J. Evans and he's working here. He's a specialist in English and teaches and corrects any different copies that the different schools have, he has to go and straighten them out as well as his own work
- D.M. Well, now Ivy I gathered that you retired early you had, you had a heart problem or something, is that right?
- M.R. Yes and I was sick most of the time, I had coronaries and, and was in the hos, in and out of the hospitals alot so that I couldn't do very much. I used to help my mother and, and
- D.M. This is (unintelligible) . . . the Sault
- M.R. Help look after the baby and
- D.M. Oh yes.
- M.R. Things like that, but I couldn't do much lifting or, or any heavier work at all.
- D.M. Now a, where, where's it your living now a, Ivy?

M.R. I'm living at Pioneer Manor The Home for the Aged.

D.M. You were telling me that there were people very, very, very kind to you.

M.R. And people are very, very kind to me. All the nurses they can't do enough for me. They're so nice to me and I always so thankful that I came in here.