

ORAL HISTORY  
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I have been excited about writing this paper since the assignment was given . As I expected it has been a learning experience I will never forget, and one I hope to share with my other family members. I viewed this assignment as my golden opportunity to get to know my grandparents. It was impossible for me to only include my Nana, Mary Entwistle, because my grandfather, Norman Entwistle, was such a prevalent part of Nana's life.

After fifty-one years of life together they presently reside in St. Catharines Ontario, Canada in the same home they moved into in 1932 when they were married. Due to the distance between us, they never played an influential role in my life. All I can remember from my Nana's visits in my childhood was when she got upset because my sister, brother, and I didn't finish all of the food on our plates. She used the "starving children in India" as motivation for us to swallow our food. It didn't make much sense to me because I never really knew what an "India" was.

As it turns out, Mary Beatrice Evans was born in Bombay, India on December 14, 1907. She was the third and final daughter of George Vickers Evans and Harriett Beatrice Dominy. Harriett Dominy's family had settled in India in 1835. Remembering her grandparents, Nana boasted that

her grandfather was the engineer that supervised the building of the gas works and water works for the Maharajah of Jaipur. Nana doesn't remember much about her own father as he died in 1910 of cholera.

Although Nana was too young to remember much of her life in India she explained the situation involving the British colonization. The natives' way of thinking was entirely different from that of the British. At one time in India it was even considered all right to kill someone of a different religion. Human life was not considered sacred. As well as value differences, the Indians were poor and had very little or nothing to live on. The British tried to remedy the conditions and succeeded over wide areas, but there are millions of people even now in India that can't be reached. Nana expressed how marvelous Gandhi was, and even he couldn't reach everybody.

An event Nana does remember in India was at age  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . Nana's "ayah" (nursemaid) ran to Harriett Evans screaming frantically. Nana's mother didn't know what exactly was wrong, but she grabbed a gun and ran out to the garden with the ayah. In the garden she found her youngest daughter, Mary, having a tug-of-war with a cobra. The cobra was trying to swallow a frog, and Nana was pulling at the frog's legs trying to save it from its fate. Harriett promptly shot the snake, and Nana survived.

Because Nana's mother was a widow in a poor nation it was difficult for them to stay in India. Nana, her two sisters, and her mother moved to England and settled

in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Nana stressed how difficult travel was at that time, especially when you're travelling with three young girls.

Nana's memory of World War I was vague. She remembers when airplanes were first being used and people watched out on moonlight nights in case a stray plane came around and bombed them, but not one did. Cheltenham was considered a "health spa", and between the years 1914-1918 there were hospitals in every large house for the wounded soldiers. As a child, Nana and her friends would go to the train station and watch the wounded soldiers "unload". She didn't really understand the significance of what was going on at such a young age.

In 1920, her family, along with her widowed grandmother, moved to the United States. They moved to Raton, New Mexico where Nana's Aunt Mary lived. Mary had been sent to Nana's great aunt when the rest of Nana's mother's family moved to India in 1885. Not realizing distances in those days Mary did not see her mother again until they moved to Raton and Mary was a grandmother herself. Mary is the first generation of American relatives.

Nana remembers that it wasn't too difficult to adjust to the American culture. They all knew the English language, and it didn't take long to change her accent.

One thing she did have to adjust to was the presence of boys in her American classroom. She had attended an all girls grammar school in England. It is understandable that the presence of boys would definitely take some getting

used to considering her family was comprised of only women, and she hadn't had much exposure to the male population.

Nana didn't remember the structure of her classroom, just that the children were placed in different age groups.

Nana's family then moved from New Mexico to Hamilton Ontario, Canada. Nana attended collegiate and after graduating went to business college. While she was taking business courses, she worked nights and weekends in a bakery to help take some of the financial burden off of her mother.

After business college she worked in an office where she met the love of her life, Norman Entwistle. Norman was born in 1904 in Lancashire England. His father's people had been farmers for many years in the area named "Entwistle".

Norman attended school in England until age fifteen. In 1919 Norman moved to Canada. He attended business college in Canada. After college he accepted his first position as a staff member with a large hardware company. He was with the company for his entire business life of fifty years. He began with general office work and worked his way into a sales position which gave him control and responsibility for generating sales with large industry.

Norman came from a large family. His father, Richard Entwistle, was from a family of twelve children. He remembers his father's participation in the Canadian army during World War I. He served actively in the war zone in France being injured twice, but not too seriously.

Norman's mother, Martha Ellen Townley, was from a family of five children. Together Richard and Martha had six children. The Entwistles were a close family and were well adjusted to each other. I'm sure Norman's family ties play a great role in his development of an affectionate, loving, and caring personality.

Norman proposed to Mary privately on bended knee. He asked for and received permission from Nana's mother and with the permission came a plea to "Be good to her".

During her engagement she ended her interest in the equestrian life. A lady she knew had a horse and encouraged Nana to exercise it. One day she was riding along the side of a road when some boys shot her horse with a catapult. The horse fell into a ditch with Nana underneath. Two men in a car stopped to help her out of the ditch. Neither the horse or the rider were badly hurt, but Norman put his foot down and ended Nana's riding adventures.

Dating Norman was enjoyable for Nana to remember. When her grandmother was alive she loved playing cards and would capture Norman before they could get out the door. When Nana and Grandpa did make it past Nana's grandmother they went for a walk or to the movies. When Grandpa got his first car they drove around and explored new places. They went to many dances. Nana thinks there were more dances when she was growing up, and people really got "dressed" in evening dresses and all. She expressed her observation that now everyone just wears whatever they like.

For Nana's twenty-first birthday Grandpa gave her a special gift. It was a seed pearl necklace that she treasures to this day. In January of 1982 at her eldest granddaughter's twenty-first birthday celebration Nana gave her necklace as a gift. It was a special time for Nana to share her past with her grandchild. There wasn't a dry eye in the house.

*Was this your call?*

In 1932 Norman and Mary had a formal church wedding. They invited about fifty family members and friends. The soloist in the church choir sang, "The Voice that Breathed O'er Eden". Nana vividly remembers seeing the organist smile and bow to them as they went up to the alter. They could see her reflection in the mirror above the organ.

They honeymooned in northern Ontario at Lake Simcoe. They stayed at the Sanders hotel. The resort had golf courts and tennis courts which was quite unusual for that time.

On June 17, 1937 they had their first child Joanne Mary Entwistle. Nana and Grandpa were very proud of Joanne while she was growing up. She was an "A" student, and an excellent athlete. After Joanne came Norma. Norma was the second daughter and final child. She was also an athlete and excelled in figure skating.

Nana and Grandpa survived quite well during the Depression. They were very thankful that they had work, but along with everyone else their future looked bleak. It seemed easier to adjust to the hardship because they knew they

were not alone. Nana remarked that there was a sense of fellowship between everybody, and there was no more trying to "keep up with the Jones'".

During World War II Grandpa worked in a business that was involved with the war effort. He was given special privileges including an identification card that would permit him to go into restricted areas. He was also able to get a new automobile and the gas he needed. As they lived in peace in Canada they, as well as the rest of the allied public, were unaware of the plight of the Jewish people. As the war went on they felt like they weren't hearing the whole story about the camps. When the news came out about the extermination camps they were shocked and sickened by the awful treatment of innocent people.

Canada's involvement with the United States provided them with first hand information on most events and happenings. Through radio Nana and Grandpa got to hear historical events while they were in progress. They remember hearing President Roosevelt's speech and declaration of war on Japan, Germany, and Italy.

Nana finds it interesting to think back to the times when television was non-existent. She remembers when very few people had a radio, and you needed an ear-piece in one ear to hear anything.

Another radio broadcast that they remember was the description of the battle of two British destroyers and a small cruiser with the new modern German battleship the "Graf Spee". The "Graf Spee" was badly damaged and



entered a neutral port. It was given twenty-four hours to leave port. As the ship emerged into open sea it was seen sinking. It was being sunk purposely by the captain of the ship, sacrificing his life. It was an exciting broadcast.

The interests that Nana and Grandpa have in the environment and society have motivated them to travel. Travelling has been one of the most outstanding parts of their lives. They have driven across the United States many times. They have enjoyed camping and seeing unusual places. Every time they would visit Joanne's family in California they would drive out on a different route. Also, their daughter Norma lives in Yellowknife in the North West Territories in Canada. They have had opportunities to visit her and get a feeling for the culture of the Eskimos. They have also lived in, as well as travelled, Europe and other parts of the world.

In June of 1982 they celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Their family and friends gathered in the North West Territories to share the day with them. Joanne even flew out from California to surprise them. Nana and Grandpa both agree that their anniversary was superb. They had their two most prized possessions, their daughters, with them.

Nana's family has been very important to her throughout her life. I wondered if she would have been interested in pursuing a career while she was raising her family. She doesn't regret that she never worked. She was interested

in the medical field and nursing, but the training took three years, and the pay was low. Another factor that deterred her from a career is Grandpa's firm belief that children demand the full time attention of a mother. If they didn't have children Nana would have only worked if it were financially necessary.

Nana believes that society has had a lot of positive growth. People are better looked after in every way. She has seen us become more aware of each others needs, and she feels that people are more willing to stand by and help each other out.

Nana and Grandpa are presently living in the same house they have lived in since 1932. In retrospect they would probably change very little in their lives. They are active in the church and local country club. They walk daily to keep in shape, and they enjoy each others company. They are happy, interesting, and lovable people, and I'm very proud to have them for grandparents.