

Just Ordinary People?

Farm life

Many remember the times when nearly everything done on a farm was with horses and there were few cars and the only way of travel was walking or horses. Jim Clarke remembers these times well and told me about them in an interview.

When did you come to this area?

I was born at Stayner, Ontario in 1928 but our family moved up in 1935 to Walker Township near Monteith and lived on an eighty acre farm with hardly any land cleared. I went to the Walker School which had just been built then. Before that, the kids had to walk all the way to Monteith to go to school.

Did you have a family?

Yes. I met my wife Marion because she was a teacher and came up to teach at the Walker School in 1947. We were married in April of 1949 and have been married for 64 years. We had three children, Doug, Steve, and Susan, along with nine grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Where did you live after you were married?

At first we lived in a house at Walker Township but then we sold it and lived away from the area for some time. We bought a farm on Cemetery Road near Porquis Junction in 1961 and moved back in 1962. We lived in the old house that was on the property until it burned down in 1971.

How did that happen?

I wasn't home at the time and got the phone call at work. The oil stove leaked oil and when the door was opened, the flames came out and

by Lindsay Noland

spread quickly. We got the fire department to come but when they got there, they realized they had an empty tank so the house just burned to the ground. Marion threw a few clothes and things out of the window but we lost pretty well everything. Afterwards, we built a new house on the property.

What was farming like?

I farmed and worked in construction at the same time. At one point, I had one hundred and fifty head of cattle which kept me busy especially in calving time. For a short while, I planted six acres of potatoes and sold them to the stores. However, the store paid me \$1.59 per fifty pound bag and sold it for \$2.59 per fifty pound bag. I couldn't make much money off of that so I didn't do it for long.

What other jobs did you have?

I did many different things. I was seventeen when I went to work doing logging in the bush with horses. You were in good shape when you came out of there. I worked at the mill in Iroquois Falls for a few years on various jobs. Later when I returned to this area, I worked in construction in addition to running my farm and fixed the fence for the pipeline all the way from New Liskard up through Hearst. In 1972, I was in a construction accident.

What sort of accident?

It was with a big D8 Tractor. A chain fell off the front of it and I went to put it back on when the driver started moving the machine. He



backed me into a set of weights onto my left hip and I can still feel it. My left leg broke completely and there was only skin holding my leg together. I stayed in the Hearst hospital for a time before I was brought back down to the Iroquois Falls Hospital. The doctor said I shouldn't work another day in my life and should stay on compensation. However, the accident happened in the fall and then in about June I went back to work. I retired in my early 60's when my hip started really hurting me and I quit working.



Jim Clarke with his wife Marion.