

ANN HILL BEQUEST

Nelly Miller

Interview with Mrs. Lorraine
(and daughter Mrs. Coupland)

1st December, 1986

Mrs. Coupland had read about our activities, and 'phoned Mr. Dobie, who referred her to me. Her mother is related to Mrs. Lorraine, the Dumfries Academy Physics teacher, and they (Mrs. Coupland and Mrs. Lorraine) combine to research the family history. Mrs. Lorraine (Senior) was brought up at Cove Quarry Cottage (m.s. Miller, Nelly) and her father was probably the last man to work it legally before its first closure. Mrs. Coupland had made a map, based on her mother's recollections.

School

Mrs. Lorraine liked school. She recalled Mr. Mckerchar, the Headmaster, when she left about 1913. He had a big family and always seemed harassed, as if they were too much for him. He was often cross, but she used to take him a rose from the Cove Cottage garden. His house was next door but one. While she was at school a cookery room extension was built on, which was used to start a soup kitchen - 1/2d a plate - great! They all got cookery lessons, but she can't recall who taught. When she wasn't buying the soup for lunch she would go down to the railway crossing to meet the baker.

Miss Graham was the infant teacher, and also took private pupils for music - piano. (I've a note about her teaching 'Hill girl' piano, and also 'Ella May Irving' - as if she was also a music pupil) - for music.

The teacher before Mr. Mckerchar's class was Miss Horn.

Another who gave music lessons was Mary Wilson, whose father, she thought, was a porter at the station - and taught Nelly's sister piano.

After School it was common to attend night school (same place, I think). Her brother Dave's comics were burnt by her mother because he wasn't at night school. Eventually he took an International Correspondence course and qualified as an Engineer.

She took me through her old school photos, and a separate list is available. Roughly going left to right from back:-

Douglas Hind, son of plate layer; John Hastie, son of groom/chaffeur to Dr. Carruthers; Joe Pask, who lost an eye - thorn in it. Lived Railway Cottage, and father worked on railway; George Johnston (son farm worker), Dave Rogerson (Wm. Field - born same night as Nelly Miller), Jim Mitchell; John Mackie (Redhouse - there was another John Mackie in the class, but not in the 'photo); Mary Davidson (stayed with her granny); Violet Richardson (had an English mother, always dressed up, lived in wee cottage next George Moffat off Station Road end, 'pretend to be fore(man) mason (or free mason?)'); Willie Kennedy (village); Georgina Turnbull (beadle's daughter). In World War 1 Nelly Miller met her with three young bairns. She married John Johnston, the clogger at Toppinghead, and said it's better to be an old man's darling than a young man's slave).

Nelly Miller's sister (Dressmaker, to munitions works - where she got Nelly Miller in); Liz (?) Duff (to Dumfries); Winnie Richardson (sister of Vi, possibly went to Gretna Hall, had aunts in Southsea who had tea-rooms and possibly took over Gretna Hall as hotel); Mary Jane Murray (North Angle, daughter of farm worker); Mary Carlyle (whom she kept up with all her life). Her mother was a widow and supported the family by washing at Robgill Tower. 'Family ages with us'. Her father, stone mason at Cove Quarry, was killed in an accident there in his 40's.

She recalled no pupil as outstandingly clever or boisterous. Perhaps Joe Park was the liveliest - he ran about a lot with her brother. He used to stay with them a lot in holiday time. She thinks he became station master at Locharbriggs.

Later she added more about the teachers. Mrs. Horn was nice. She hardly recalled Misses Reid and Graham, except as a memory of getting straws to make things with in infant class.

I have a note 'other Anne Finlay' - could she be another girl in 'photo whose name she at first couldn't get?

The School had an outside tap in the playground.

Night School - The teacher (i.e. head) took it. Anyone who wanted to get on went.

The previous head was Blackie Broon, who taught her two older brothers. A worthy. He could give you the strap and then be nice to you. In Nelly Miller's day she didn't remember getting the strap much. She and Mary

Jane Murray had very long hair, and she recalled the boys behind her (Park?) getting into trouble for putting their hair in the ink wells.

She now moved to a second 'photo. 1st, Finlay (nice, wee, quiet); Rogerson; Jim Mitchell; 2 Mackies (nice); May Davidson; Irving (better dressed than most, an only daughter, parent married late); Richardson (pal). Possibly Jessie Scott next, not sure. Then maybe Jeanie Black - wee one. Big Mary Sword at end. There was also the Nicol girl (daughter woodcutter at Calavertsholm) and a Saddington (father in sawmill at Beltenmont). Next row Dougal Hind; George Davidson (awful nice, nice family, Hayfield). There should be a boy Steel from Hollee, and someone from Jolly Buildings (which she never heard called 'Nelsons') at the back.

I think Annie McCormick and Lizzie Rae were from the School. Lizzie Rae lived at Moorend.

She thinks Miss Horn never married.

Church

She showed a Sunday School Attendance certificate for 1911 (and also for another year). She recalled being taught by Miss Reid, who was also at the School. Therese Graham also taught, or possibly her sister, Violet. She mentioned someone who was the ladies maid at Mossknow sewing for the cantatas.

Her sister was nursemaid to the Walkers at the Manse. She says that a close relative of Mr. Walker, his brother she thought, won a lot of money on the pools which helped the Walkers educate their children.

She showed me two large volumes, one for the 'Boys Paper' and one for 'Chums' which were awarded in 1907 and 1908 for Sunday School attendance (possibly not for herself?)

She had no recollections of the previous Minister, Mr. Graham, but knew that she was christened by him, and that her mother liked him.

They were brought up in the Church, as people then were - Sunday School at 10, Church 11 and Bible Class at night.

She was in the junior choir, as was Jean Turnbull - a grand singer - and, she thinks, Georgina. Mr. Turnbull was beadle.

Occasionally School outings were to the field opposite Beltenmont.

Sam Wallace and Mr. Turnbull were elders.

Sport and
Entertainment

She recalled otter hunts and fox hunts, which she associated with the Nugents of Cove. She remembers the gamekeeper following a fox, which had 'stolen' their hens to the railway bank.

She didn't play/remember badminton. The choir social and the Bowler's social were occasions. Her parents weren't in the choir, nor went to the pub, but her father occasionally played bowls, latterly. There was carpet bowling in the Hall, and a bowling green in the village.

She never knew card games played.

Men played quoits, and there was wrestling in Peel Hole Bridge (through railway crossing, don't go for house, make for Shawrigg).

And, of course, Soirees.

The Mary who taught the piano was maybe not Wilson, but Richardson, and sang in the choir.

Other outings (Church) - to Springkell, Castlemilk, once to Silloth by train.

Economic

Her father, and her mother's father both worked at Cove Quarry. Her father had left Fife, served in an iron works (?Lochgelly), went to railway, to the quarry, where he drove the pug.

She claims that the stone can be recognised.

In the 1890's (I think this is a bit muddled) - they were hit by the Development of a special sort of brick.

The Manager she seemed to call 'Johnny' Lamb - (should be Tom?)

There was a bridge outside their cottage, even then said to be unsafe, since pulled down.

In the course of the morning she mentioned 3 fatal accidents at the Quarry. One above, another was her grandfather.

