

INTERVIEWEE: Emmy WENT

1.6.93

INTERVIEWER: Patrick DENNEY

NAME: EMMY ETHEL WENT

BORN: 3rd September 1899 93 yrs

Born in the reign of Queen Victoria

TAPE 1 SIDE 1

021 Born in Regents Street, Fern Cottage, Rowhedge. Father had cottage built
No Maternity Homes in those days; Midwife would come - local person. Always
knew if the Midwife turned up another baby was coming. Widowed now.

HUSBANDS NAME : Albert WENT

050 **MARRIED** : 1926. Just turned 40 years (married when husband died)

070 **PRESENT ADDRESS** : 13 Parsley House, Balkerne Gardens, Colchester

074 **BROTHERS & SISTERS:**

7 boys and 5 girls including herself

Horace was in the First World War; served 4 years in Persian Gulf

Alfred torpedoed once - picked up from the water

Elsie

Florrie

Emmy

Jack

Cliff

Winnie

Arty

Basil

Norman

Marjorie

124 **STILL ALIVE** - youngest and Emmy

Marjorie probably in her 80s and lives in Worthing, don't see each other much
now. When they could use the car they met but not now.

137 **FATHER:**

153 Local person: Was a Yachtsman in Summer time _ racing - in Winter time he
worked in the shipyard at Rowhedge ; he was a Rigger. Not his own yacht-he
crewed for someone (London man) he went on several yachts.

As far as she can remember he always did this; sometimes he may have gone on the Smacks, fishing. Lot of men did fishing.

180 Was 74 yrs when he died - died of a heart attack.
Lived in Rowhedge all his life

187 **MOTHER :**

Josephine BROWN
Local family

191 Mother a Rowhedge girl. Died when she was 54 yrs

204 General size of families at that time. Don't know anything about her Mother's work

220 **GRANDPARENTS**

Remembers Grandfather Wilkin and Grandmother Wilkin and Grandmother Brown.

Grandparents Wilkin were very kind.

Grandmother used to be dressed in black with a little apron and little cap on her head and her Grandmother Brown.

237 When Grandfather Brown died her grandmother had a little black bonnet with black and white streamers, tied under the chin.

Used to visit Grandparents. Used to go to Grandmother Wilkin, on the way to school. There used to be little packets of peardrops on the Sideboard in the Kitchen, one each for them, as they went to School. She would say 'there is no need to count them'. Had these every Monday morning.

256 Grandmother Brown was a different type of woman altogether, but very good to them. -

258 **CHILDHOOD HOME**

Cottage.

6 rooms; 3 downstairs and 3 upstairs - Front Room, Living Room and Kitchen
Only used Front Room at Christmas time - Front Room for special occasions.
Children had to share a bed. The oldest boys had grown up and gone to sea when the youngest ones were born. The youngest one was born while her oldest brother was in The Gulf. Probably about 6 or 7 at home when she was young.

No bathroom - had a bath in long tub in front of Living Room Fire.

Bath night was Friday, always the same.

Would have a bath and put clean night clothes on, say prayers on Father's knee then off to bed.

311 Think the water was heated in the copper which was in the Wash-house outside (extra to the 6 rooms). Heated by coal.

Water came from pump in middle of yard. Pump was used by them and the people next door. Occasionally ran out of water if pump went wrong. Got water in buckets. All the water they used came from the pump.

343 Toilet at bottom of yard. Wooden affair - all they had in those days - one larger seat and one small one. Their own toilet. No flush Toilet

Someone came round once a week to empty it.

"You are asking me questions I forgotten long ago" !

369 **WASH DAY**

Mother had 2 days for washing - On Monday she did the sheets and white stuff and the coloureds on Tuesday— would be done in the Wash House.. Long job; one of the girls didn't go out to work but stayed at home with Mother and helped her with the housework.

379 Had a scrubbing board and a bath, used a scrubbing brush - hard days those. Had to fill up the copper, boil it up and then put the clothes in, rinse them, put them through the Mangle - big Mangle with a big wheel. Had a nice long washing line.

Ironing used to be done on Wednesday or Thursday if it hadn't got dry before. Very hard life. If weather was wet would have to dry indoors; in Kitchen had string from one corner to the other and would hang the things across the Kitchen when they went to bed at night.

400 Had ordinary flat irons.
Had a Range in the Kitchen - coal fired.

420 **LIGHTING**

When she was little they only had lamps; had a swinging lamp in the Living Room, hanging from the ceiling over the table and ordinary oil lamps until the gas came.

Used to get the oil from the shop.

428 Can remember the gas coming. Much better than the oil. Used to take a candle upstairs.

439 **HOUSEWORK** - no carpets, lino everywhere, except the Front Room, which had a carpet, think it left a space round the edge. Can remember the carpet going out on the line and beaten with a stick or a special thing to beat the carpets with - Carpet Beater - once a year

452 **HEATING**

Only had coal fires - 3 downstairs and 1 up in the Front Bedroom

2 were lit regularly - 1 in the Kitchen and 1 in the Living Room.

In Winter houses were very cold.

Coal was delivered.

Had someone in to sweep the chimneys - think it was 1/- a time. Had to clear the room.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE 1

TAPE 1 SIDE 2

003 **TRADESMEN**

Can only remember the Postman coming round - came from Rowhedge. The Doctor came, Wivenhoe doctor - Dr. Squires. Can remember the Doctor coming when Mother was having a baby. He had quite a lot of patients in

Rowhedge.

Don't know how they called the Doctor - no telephone

- 053 There was a Scheme for the Doctor - probably about 2d a week
Parents never discussed Insurance with them, never brought into those sort of things at all. Children should be seen and not heard.

Sat around the table for meals and not allowed to talk. Had to come to the table when the meal was ready, behave ourselves while we were there and not allowed to leave the table without asking. Thanks were given and they had their meal. That was how she was brought up. Mother or Father would say Grace.
- 086 Father always carved the meat

Mother was a good cook. Favourite meal - the good old Sunday dinners - Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding. Had Yorkshire Pudding and gravy and then the Veg. afterwards. She can't make the Batter Pudding so good as her Mother. She doesn't do any now anyway.
- 121 Mother did her own baking but not Bread. There was a Baker in the Village - Mr. Isome. People used to take their Puddings down there and when he took his loaves out he would put the Puddings in and then the people would go and get them later. Don't know why they did that, maybe for convenience. Her mother never did that.
- 153 Always had something for Breakfast - never went hungry.
- 157 Father had his own garden and Allotment - had plenty of vegetables.
- 163 Children had to help - all had their separate jobs to do on Saturday mornings. One to clean the cutlery, someone to take the baby out, someone to clean the front steps. Mostly had the same job.
Cleaned the cutlery with brick dust - don't see that now.
- 188 Don't remember having pocket money - could spend a 1/4d in those days - could get sweets, or toffees; for 1/2d could get quite a bit of 'port wine toffee'. Heard of 'stick jaw' - sticky toffee - 'tiger nuts'
- 217 Used to go to the farm for milk - up Battlesbrook - skimmed milk - suppose that was cheaper than the other. Carried it in cans with a lid.
Don't know how they kept food fresh - they had a cold slab in the cupboard to stand things on - marble slab.
People would boil the milk at night to keep fresher.
- 249 Mother had to do sewing. Had someone come to make their dresses - came in take measurements and make dresses. A Mrs. Cranfield was one.
- 267 **SHOES** - had good shoes - had a special pair they had to keep for Sundays - all cleaned up on Monday morning and put away for the next Sunday; then had the shoes they went to School in. Father repaired shoes at home, he had a Last. Used to put blakeys in heels for the boys; had button up shoes and a button hook to do them up with when she got older.

They kept a few chickens - for the eggs.

Someone people kept a pig in back garden, thinks they had one once.
Could do that in those days but wouldn't let you do it now.

- 299 Parents quite strict, father was. Had to be in by a certain time at night right up to the time she married. Had a time to go to bed.
Might be sent to bed if misbehaved but don't remember anything else.
Never any cruelty in their house.
Brought up to respect authority.
Had to respect Policemen and School Teachers.
Had a Policeman in Rowhedge - Mr. Broler.

334 **FIRST WORLD WAR**

Think it was on a Sunday morning the news came that War had broken out and her brothers had to go; neighbours getting together and helping each other, putting buttons on here, and gathering things together - had to go off and be at a certain place at a certain time. 2 brothers went to War – Sailors went in the Navy. Some soldiers camped up on Middlewick - not in the Village.

- 360 Can't remember any bombs in the Village but remembers the Zeppelins going over. Went and got some pieces from the Zeppelin that came down at Wigborough. Police kept them away from the field were it was. Went out on bicycles - took time off from work and cycled out to Wigborough - saw the wreckage in the distance.

392 **SUNDAYS**

Sunday was a special day. Went to Sunday School and Chapel in Chapel Street - 3 times, with the family. It was a regular thing in those days
Mother and Father always went Sunday evenings. 3 times - 11 o'clock in the morning, 3 o'clock in the afternoon and 6.30 in the evening.
Had special clothes for Sundays. Dresses - nice velvet dresses.
Parents did not do any work on Sundays. Always brought up not to do work on Sunday and doesn't do it to this day. Don't believe in Sunday shopping.
Suppose she is one of the old-fashioned ones. She is a christian and that is the way she was brought up.
Always went for a little walk after Chapel on Sunday night. Sunday afternoon

- 429 would just sit indoors and read a book.
Would take a walk into the Woods - Donyland Woods and meet different people out on their walks who had been to Church on Sunday nights.
There was also a Methodist Church in Regent Church - that wasn't built until about 1912 - can remember that being built.
Little rivalry between denominations.
- 455 Monday nights she had Choir Practise, Tuesday nights had a Meeting for Missionary work. Wednesday evening had a Bible Class
Thursday evening would often go out and sing at other Churches
Friday - nothing

Remembers Old Heath— would go and sing there on a Thursday nights sometimes.

On Practice night would practise what they called a Service of Song - a story with hymns in between. Would go out to the Villages around.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE 2

TAPE 2 SIDE 1

22.6.95

001 SCHOOL

- 020 5 yrs old when started School at East Donyland School - Church School
Schoolmaster was Mr. Barker - Mr & Mrs Barker
Another Teacher was Miss Lock who later became Mrs. Winkle
13 yrs old when she left School. Stayed at that School all the time.
Had Standards 1, 2, 3, etc
- 040 Sometimes enjoyed school - not very good at anything.
Didn't do Cookery or Laundry at School.
Think they had slates to write on
- 073 Boys and Girls mixed
Went to the Factory when she left School at 14 yrs. Nearly everybody went there. Colchester Manufacturing Company; in D?? Lane
(Showed picture in a book of her sitting there)
At that time only as many as you saw but later on had a bigger Factory built
- 101 About 20 in the picture, more later on.
Stayed at the Factory until she married aged ? 26 yrs (12 yrs)
- 116 Didn't have any special training at Factory. Had done Needlework at School
patchwork so knew a little about needlework.
Made coats - Alpaca Coats - Officers tunics. Didn't do any Trousers there.
Each had separate parts to do; she was a pocket hand. With the Alpaca they had more to do but with the Officers tunics they were a different shape pocket altogether. Pockets were all cut out - she had to sew the pockets on to jackets.
- 150 She went back to work there during the Second World War for a time (women had to go out to work)
Can't remember about wages. She started at 3/- a week
- 170 They had a Forewoman in charge; she checked all the work - Emmy did her work well. If Forewoman found something wrong she would give the work back and they had to unpick it.
- 180 You clocked in and clocked out; very strict regarding time-keeping really.
Were allowed to talk and sing.
Some earned more than others because they were much quicker than others.
Scissors, cotton, needles etc. were provided - you had your own scissors.
- 211 Think there was only one Toilet - very primitive really.
Went home to dinner.
Can just remember one man working there, but he was something to do with

the Engine Room - Maintenance man.
242 Think the time she spent at the Clothing Factory was a help to her later on because she made dresses etc.

TRAMPS

- 255 Remembers a couple called EMMA & GRIMES, but they were Colchester people.
There used to be one who went about the Village called Emma; sometimes the Village pump would break down and Emma would go around the Village shouting 'Emma the pump is broken again'
- 273 Had to make their own games at home; weren't allowed to play cards:
Not a card playing family.
Used to read - probably prizes from School or Sunday School.
- 293 When a teenager - nowhere to go only for walks -had very simple amusements and were happier than they are today.
Wasn't brought up to go to the Pictures.
Would walk to Colchester from Rowhedge sometimes, towards Christmas time
- 305 No dances
Entertainment was mainly walking or events involved with the Church - that was her main life.
- 317 No motor cars when she was young - horses and carts
Buses later - Fayles bus until the National took over from a Mersea firm.
- 333 Suppose she rode on a tram
Had a bicycle - would cycle to to see her husband to be; sometimes she went across the Ferry and up through Wivenhoe.
- 353 Met her husband on the Elmstead Road, somewhere near the Beehive;
Courting about 4 years.
Got married at East Donyland Church - 8 o'clock in the morning; had only just lost her mother so really in mourning for her mother. Had a very quiet Wedding. No honeymoon because there was a Railway Strike. Were supposed to have a honeymoon.
- 373 First set up home in Regent Street, Rowhedge. Rented the house.
Didn't have anything until they had the money to pay for it. Furnished rooms as they went and only spent what money they had got. Waited until they had money to buy things - no Hire Purchase in those days.
- 384 It was a 6-roomed house - 3 bedrooms; think they had running water inside the house. No Bathroom - tin bath in front of fire .
- 395 Gas lighting.
Had one daughter - Pearl - think she is 67 in August -lives on the Old Heath Road - Cottage Drive - married name - TARBIN; she has 2 children so Emmy has 2 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren
- 412 Thinks Colchester has changed over the years - the little shops were much better. People were more polite to you in those days - would give you a chair to sit on and open the door for you when you went out - bigger stores like

- Luckins and the High Street stores. Remembers Pipers.
- 426 Would do their shopping at Co-op in Regents Street; had a Co-op Number, think it was 2569.
- 443 Vaguely remembers the Colchester Pageant but did not attend
- 453 Had to go to work during the Second World War for a time but eventually she took in Evacuees from London - had 5; think they had a little payment for this but not much and their rations. Just before Dunkirk they were moved from here to somewhere in to the Midlands.
- 467 Remembers the planes going over to London.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE 1

TAPE 2 SIDE 2

- 001 Didn't have an Air Raid Shelter - didn't have any protection during a Raid just used to stay indoors
Had to black out the windows. By that time her husband was in The A.R.P. so he had to be out every time there was a raid on.
- 020 Think the nearest bomb dropped was in Scarletts Road, remembers that; we did think there was one dropped in the River one night.
The night St. Botolphs corner was hit they saw the sky lit up from Rowhedge
- 064 Remembers food rationing - queuing up for it.
Friendly spirit amongst the Villages during the War; it was a friendly little Village - everyone knew everyone else.
- 092 Remembers several floods in Rowhedge in the High Street, remembers going down to see how high the flood water had come up to the houses; doesn't remember the big floods of 1953 particularly; they were alright because they were up the hill.
- 102 Saw the Rowhedge Regattas; all the Village used to turn out for that to see the yachts and boats coming up.
- 115 Has a faint recollection of someone trying to fly an aeroplane from Rowhedge Marshes about 1910 or 1911
- 127 When she was young there were no aeroplanes but now there are many aeroplanes and they fly to the Moon - doesn't think it is for the better. The Moon was made to be up there but not down here and if there is any money to be spent it should be spent here - not in getting to the Moon.
In some ways they were the 'good old days' when she was young. Some things today are for the better; the old days were happy days. People were more ready to help one another in Village life.
Prefer the modern days to have a Bathroom and running water.
- 158 **CRIME & VIOLENCE**

Years ago you could go to bed and leave your door unlocked and open and nobody would come in. She has been to bed and left the door open, forgotten it. Could send the children out to play in the evenings; they used to go up into the Woods and take their lunch and be there all day, come home at teatime - nothing happened to them.

Used to be some beautiful walks round Rowhedge where you can't go now.

178 Think she left Rowhedge about 20 years ago - has been in here 20 years.

185 Used to knit a lot, read and sew and now can't do any of those things because her eyes are bad.

Days now are very boring now unless she can sit in the garden.

Please yourself what time you get up, about 8 o'clock. Gets her own Breakfast and Tea. Buys her lunch from..

Sometimes days drag more than others, depends on how you feel.

Makes one or two friends.

221 Still goes to her Church - her son-in-law takes her - the Emmanuel Church in North Station Road - goes every Sunday mornings, Tuesday mornings to a Womens Meeting and the luncheon Club.

Watches T.V. but not a lot as her eyes are too bad. Can see but not clearly.

Tell her the ducts are blocked and don't advise an operation at her age.

242 Has been away on holiday but not for the last 2 years, but now doesn't want to, has no desire to go away anywhere. Those days have gone. If she goes out for a day she gets very, very tired.

Thinks her faith has got stronger as she has got older. Brought up that way, but there comes a time when you have to make a decision for yourself as to how you are going to live; I was converted at the age of 18 and by God's Grace has sought to live the life I should with her ups and downs.

282 When she was 18 a Missionary came to the Village, some ladies, and she was brought to see herself a sinner, as we are all born in sin; hadn't realised that before. She gave her heart to the Lord Jesus Christ at the age of 18 She has lived a quiet healthy life and maybe that is why I am as old as I am and as well as I am.

299 Most of her family share her views; in fact at the time this happened 2 or 3 of her brothers and sisters did the same thing; we were all in the choir in the Chapel and all took part in the activities and were very happy.

309 Thinks that is what is missing in young people today; whatever they have they are always wanting something else; no contentment; what somebody has they want the next best thing.

Think T.V. is a lot to blame for that.

Sundays is still a special day for her. Now at 93 all she is waiting for is the Call All she knows of the hereafter is the God is there and Jesus is there who died at Calvary at Easter. Doesn't worry about it, she has the Bible to read - there are many promises in there from Him to us. There are only 2 places to go to - Heaven and Hell. She believes in John 3-16, 'God sent his only Son to die for me'

Thank you very much for sharing you memories and beliefs.

END OF TAPES