

Conversation with Uncle George – January 23, 1980 Lebret SK (Rev. George Salamon OMI, Eileen, Lorna Mae, and Mom)

[This transcript was done in 1980 and there is a notation that it is not word-for-word. I probably transcribed only the most relevant genealogical information.]

UG Here, you want to know about Dad—my father Michael Andrew Salamon—born on February 6, 1866 in Trebišov. That was at that time called Stolica Zemplinska. Now in the modern division, it's called Župa, Košicka. Now, when it was under Hungarian power, Trebišov was Töketerebes. That's for Father. Now, Dad's father was Michael Salamon Too. In Slovak, it would be spelled "Michal". His mother was Anna Brindzak. Here you have "Brindzakova". (That's always when they mention the feminine—like Clara Salamonova. If you take the "ova" off, the rest of the name is the surname.)

Dad came to Johnstown, Pennsylvania in 1890. Mother was Anna Tomečko, and she was the daughter of George Tomečko and Anna Lisčak. Dad died on the 9th of March 1957 at home in Lebret, and Mother died November 15, 1938 at home. They were married on May 2, 1893. Mother, by the way, came in 1891 to Johnstown too. They came singly; they never knew each other in the old country, because they were in different parts of the country—although only 30 miles apart. At the time of their marriage, Dad was 27 and Mother was 22. They were married in Johnstown, Pennsylvania in the Slovak church by Rev. Francis Horvath.

Now, that's as far as Dad and Mother are concerned. How many sisters Dad had, I don't know. He had two brothers—John and Andrew. Anna was one of his sisters; there were at least four sisters. *[My research has identified six boys and five girls.]*

Mom Wasn't there an "Elizabeth"?

UG Yes, Elizabeth (Borka). Borka means Elizabeth. Mrs. Ondic *[Mom's first cousin]* would be able to tell you that. Her mother would have been one of the sisters.

Mom But that Andrew, the brother of our Dad—he had no children, did he?

UG No, he had no children. He stayed in the old country. He was married twice *[This is an error; it was Grandpa's Uncle Andrew who was married twice—not his brother Andrew who was single.]* Dad's brother John had five *[living]* children—John, Mike, Mary, Veronica and Joe.

LM Joe. Was that the Salamon we met from New Jersey?

UG Yes, he was from New Jersey. Those were John's sons—Joe and Michael.

E When your Dad came to the States, how old would he have been?

UG Well, he was born in 1866. He would have been 24. His parents in the old country were weavers, and he was supposed to be a weaver too, but there were too many weavers around, so he learned the shoemaker's trade. He was a licensed shoemaker. And his brother Andrew was also a weaver and took on the father's business. And of course, John was a weaver too before he came to the country here. In Johnstown they both worked in the foundry—the steel mill in Johnstown. And Dad worked also one time as kind of a hotel clerk too, temporary. Then he was a miner in Pennsylvania before he was hurt.

E When they came to Johnstown, did they know anybody?

UG Well, when they came to Johnstown, they had friends. Dad had friends. And when Mother came to Johnstown, Uncle Tomečko was there, and Auntie Korhnak, the doctor's wife, was there. *[her siblings.]*

LM Which Tomečko was that?

Mom The one you called Grandpa..... *[Stephen Tomečko 1861-1953]*

UG Yes, Uncle, up here. He was there already, he had preceded them. And George Tomečko, the brother of Uncle was there. So Mother came to family; she had two brothers—George and Steve.

Mom And one sister.

UG She had more than one sister. *[Actually, she (my grandmother) had three brothers and five sisters including a set of twins.]*

Mom In the States?

UG All told. I don't know what there were. Those Hrushnaks who came to Mary's place, you remember?

So when he came to Johnstown, he got work in the foundries—the steel foundry in Johnstown. From there he moved to Moyer, Pennsylvania. And Uncle Tomečko moved to Moyer too. And we were in Moyer, except in 1905 *[sic]* when Agnes was born in Braddock, Pennsylvania. We were all born in Moyer with the exception of Agnes. Braddock is now incorporated in the city of Pittsburgh—it's a part of Pittsburgh. Moyer is no longer on the map, it's 33 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, about 25 miles from Fort Necessity—which you hear of up in Washington. And Braddock is the place where General Braddock was killed. He was wounded and he was carried off and that's where the battle was fought.

E And why was she born there?

UG Because we lived there at that time. We had moved there. Uncle George had started a store – George Tomečko—and he called Dad. It would be easier for him to work in a store. But when we had that store, when the people didn't have cash, they came and bought on credit. When they had cash, they went to Pittsburgh; it was cheaper. And when Dad asked them to pay up, they got angry, and as a result Dad went bankrupt. And we went back and Father got his job back in Moyer. But when the mines played out, well, of course he was a cripple. He was crippled in Moyer. He was crippled in the mine before I was born. That's all I know. It was born in 1896 and he was crippled before that so it must have been around 1895. That was an accident, coal mining, the roof caved in and it took all day before they got a doctor, by the time they found a doctor, the damage was done to the shoulder. They couldn't set it. He had trouble with it all the time.

E But he had come for steel work first?

UG Steel—in Johnstown. When he came to the United States, he took the first job that he could get. And there was a group of Slovaks in Johnstown, and he found employment in the steel mill. Uncle Tomečko was working there too. And that's where dad met Mother and that's where they were married in 1893.

E So, after the store folded....

UG He went back to work in the mine. He got his job back either late in 1905 or early in 1906. No, that was 1903 rather. Agnes was born in 1903. It was Mike that was born in 1905 in Moyer. It's 1903 not 1905. So they were back in Moyer again, working in the mine even though he was crippled. He had a special job underground, but he didn't actually have to mine anymore. He saw that the track was in order and he dispatched the trains up and down that were hauling out the coal. That was his job. It was a lighter job. He used to dispatch them and survey the line to make sure that everything was in order and examine if there was another cave-in somewhere, or something like that. But when the good coal went out, they opened another mine, but that coal was inferior. They had already taken the good coal from that part, and the coke was refused at Pittsburgh. So they eventually closed the mine down and Dad was without work. He couldn't find work elsewhere with some other company, and he was crippled and we were in trouble and so we wrote to Uncle and Uncle found him a job with Father Hugonard *[in Le Bret, at the Indian Residential School]*. Uncle was already here. They came in 1905—farming. They came in 1905 to Lipton. And we came in 1908. Uncle found a job for Father with Father Hugonard, and Father Hugonard actually advanced the money that we needed to transport the family. Of course Dad paid that back. And when we were coming out, the two fellows—Mr. Borsa and Mr. Dynko—came with us. They notified us at the last minute. Otherwise we could have brought much more with us of the baggage. But those fellows came at the very end, so we had to leave most of our belongings there.

We left Moyer on a Tuesday—that was in April. The 19th was a Saturday. Tuesday would have been the 15th. Something like that. We stopped over in Pittsburgh. And we were in Chicago. That was the 14th. I know it now, because I celebrated my 12th birthday between Chicago and St. Paul, and the people on the train bought me a bag of candy.

E And you were the oldest, and there were...

UG No, Mary was the oldest. They was Mary, myself, John.

LM Everybody but Mom and Uncle Mike....

UG No, Mike was there too. He was born in 1905, and there had been Cecilia born—stillborn—in 1907. So Mike, Agnes, Veronica, Annie, John, myself, and Mary. And [7-year-old] Veronica got lost on the train. When we went on the train at Chicago, instead of going to the right where we went, she went to the left. And she was crying and when Dad started counting us up there, you know, she was gone so he sent Mary to the other car and there she was crying and she brought her back. And when Dynko and Borsa bought me the candy, and they were teasing Mike "Don't give that little blondie a single one of them" and [3-year-old] Uncle Mike started crying and Dad told Borsa that he ought to know better than that—to tease a little one. And we shared them out, of course we shared them out. We landed at St. Paul. We stayed there for the night. Then we came to Winnipeg and stayed the night at the Immigration Hall and that was on a Thursday we landed. And on Friday or Saturday we left Winnipeg—I think it was Saturday morning—and came to Lipton on Saturday night, the 19th.

Mom Would those have been "colonist cars" you were travelling on? You made your own meals and all that?

UG Oh, I imagine, yes. Yes, oh yes. We couldn't afford anything else.

E When Grandpa came to the States, did he ever become an American citizen?

UG Yes. He was an American citizen after the time required. Now I don't know whether it was 5 years or 3 years, but I know he was an American citizen as soon as he had the right. So we were all American citizens.

Mom Do you know what year he got his Canadian citizenship?

UG 1913—five years after we arrived—a naturalized Canadian in 1913. And so we landed at Lipton. There was still snow on the ground in some places. And Uncle Tomečko and Steve came for us and they took us home in the sleigh. And then there was another incident there. As the train was slowing down, Uncle and Steve were there and Uncle had a great big red beard at that time. And I said to John "Look at that Jew!" And then we found out that it was Uncle Tomečko, every time I got "into dutch" with John, he said that he would tell Uncle what I had called him!

And [9-year-old] Annie wouldn't get off the train. She didn't want to get off the train. It was pretty dark—late at night—and she said "No, I don't want to get off." She was pretty used to the train. And finally we got her off and we huddled up there and we stayed at Tomečko's for about 10 or 12 days. They rigged up that Seymour house for us. You know, that Boy Scout camp there. It was a big house. A big place and the cellar was full of those grey gophers. Anyway we had the time of our lives killing them. We used to drive them around to the window, send them down to the cellar and then go down and kill them. It was just infested with those gophers. It had been a vacant house.

Then after the summer was over, we could not possibly have heated that place in the wintertime, so we came to Sworder's house—a log cabin there—right in the bend of the railway—where the Girl Guide house is, just west of the Indian School. That's where we were—a log cabin. It hasn't been there for years. It was torn down when the railway came. The railroad survey went right through the window. The surveyors were camped right along our place there. We always used to get pies and all that kind of stuff from the cook. He always used to give us stuff. That was in 1910 and 1911. We had fun with them, only Mary didn't like it because she was a growing girl [15 years old] and they were always teasing her and whistling at her and she didn't like it. So they were there in 1910. First they were camped right in the coulee there back of the School because that's where the railway was supposed to run but then Father Hugonard objected—that's where his gardens were. So, the Oblate Fathers gave the land all the way from the LaRocque coulee all the way through town here. They gave the Grand Trunk the land

for nothing and Grand Trunk gave passes to the Oblate Fathers to use from Winnipeg to here—free railway passes. Until the Grand Trunk went bankrupt and then that was all cancelled.

E So, it was first supposed to come through the back coulee and instead they came through the LaRocque coulee?

UG Yes. Well, first the Fort Qu'Appelle people wanted it to come directly to Fort Qu'Appelle and avoid Lebret altogether because they wanted exclusive.... So that's the early history of the railroad. In 1911 on Good Friday, it came to Lebret.

E So, then you had to get out of that house?

UG Well, they had to get out of the house before that. And they came to the old convent. Then it was divided into three apartments and we had the east apartment at the back. After a year or two at the convent we went to the Richet house. It was at the corner of the street right opposite the Indian School—the wooden one that burnt. That's where Clara was born. And they didn't tell me when she was born. I was coming home from College in 1912.....

E Well, let's go back a little bit then. When did you leave Lebret?

UG 1910. I went to study but I came home for the holidays—to Juniorate at St. Boniface. And the first year, Father Hugonard drove me to Balcarres to take the train in September 1910. The second year, he drove me to Indian Head. It was only in 1912 that I came back by train.

E What would he drive you in?

UG A democrat.

E It would take a long time?

UG Well, of course it would—to Indian Head. Well, the connections were better. The train there was direct whereas through Brandon, you had to stop in Brandon.

LM The democrat ride from Lebret to Indian Head would have been a slow ride?

UG Oh, yes, it was a slow ride. Well, we were used to that—in a democrat—that's two horses, a two-seater. Sometimes they would take out the second seat. In 1915, then I left for Novitiate down east—at Lachine near Montreal—right on the St. Lawrence River near the rapids there.

E Was that just a village at that time, or has it always been part of Montreal?

UG No, it was a village—a separate municipality at that time. Anyway that's where the Novitiate was—right near the Caughnawagua Bridge. The Indian Reserve was south of the river and we were right on the north.

Now in 1912, they didn't tell me she was born—on June 10th. And I came and Mother said "We've got a nice surprise for you." And I said—of course Cecilia had died right around that time, or maybe a little bit later. Let's see..... 1909 to 1912.

Mom I was about six months old when she died.

UG Well, that was a little bit later. Anyway she was sick already, so they showed me Clara. And when Clara started climbing up the steps the next year, I was there. You know in the old house and when she got to the top, there was a turn and the steps got pretty narrow at the time, and Clara wasn't supposed to go up the steps, but she did, and she fell down. That was in 1913 I think just when she was learning to walk. And Mother screamed (in Slovak). She screamed and poor little Clara didn't know what to do and she looked for a friend, and I was there and I took her and I soothed her. She was afraid of Mother. She was sure she was going to get another spanking. So I was her friend from that time on and she was with me all the time. That happened in 1913, I think.

[I have to comment here! Mom was a one-year-old baby—and afraid of “another” spanking! Says something about parenting 100+ years ago, I guess.]

So then I went to Novitiate in 1915, and finished in 1916 and went to Ottawa, and I was in Ottawa from 1916 to 1917. Then I went to Edmonton in 1917 and finished there and was ordained in 1921. Finished in 1922.

LM And Grandpa's first job at the Indian School was?

UG The one and only job—he was first the assistant shoemaker there. They used to make all the shoes completely there at that time. Then when Richet left, Dad became the boss and Jimmy Condon was there, and old man Braden there. Then Bruno Skalski came later on. And Dad worked until Father De Bretagne became Principal and that's when he was retired. When Father Hugonard left.

LM And Mr. Condon worked under Grandpa?

UG Yes, as an assistant. Oh yes, he was very friendly with Dad. Now, I'll find that date in a minute...

LM I want to backtrack and find out about that mining accident. I don't know if I made this up or if Grandpa was telling us; one time we were making fun of Indians and he told us not to do that because it was a negro that helped him out of a jam he was in. Is that correct?

UG Yes, we had neighbours who were negro and they were very nice people.

Mom That's correct. He was a very strong man and apparently he put his shoulder to one of the beams that had Grandpa pinned down. That's the way I remember the story anyway.

UG Oh, yes, we had good friends. Those negroes were very nice people. There were two families of negroes there.

Mom And Mother always said how clean the children were. They wore white dresses and their hair was always braided with a ribbon, even if it was just a piece of material or cloth.

UG There. Maurice de Bretagne 1935-1943. So Dad retired in 1935. And we stayed there in that house and after Mother died in 1938, Dad went with Clara.

Mom He stayed with us until we moved to Victoria in 1950.

UG And then he went up to Mary's.

E Mom, did he live with you right from the time you were first married?

Mom Yes, shortly after. After Mother died.

LM Would there have been pensions then in those days to retire on?

UG No! No! No pensions.

LM What did he retire on?

UG They told him that his time was up and I remember I pleaded with the Provincial and I pleaded with Father De Bretagne but he was going to save the Congregation a lot of money and Bruno Skalski was going to be the shoemaker and he was going to be the caretaker of the Indian house and he was going to be the caretaker of the fox ranch and the mink ranch and he was supposed to do it all. And Bruno just kicked up his heels and went.

E Well, Mr. Condon would have been there then?

UG Mr. Condon left and he went and opened a shoe shop. They all lost their jobs at once except Skalski.

Mom But he only stayed a little bit longer.

UG Yes, I know, he didn't stay very much longer. That was in 1935. Mr. Condon put up a little shack there and he had a shoemaker and harness shop. And later on that became the bank. It was right near the convent, right north of the track where the hotel is. That's where it was. Now, how long he kept the shop I can't exactly recall. And anyway that's when he had his shoe shop.

LM We were talking about Grandpa retiring. I was just asking if there was a pension or anything.

UG No, No, no pension.

Mom I'll tell you. Uncle Mike kept us going because he was teaching. And he kept the place going and we were supposed to get free rent.

UG Yes, well we had free rent during the time that Father Hugonard was there.

Mom No. No. After Dad was let out, we were supposed to get free rent. And then when we got married and moved in to take care of Dad, he charged us rent. He said that that cancelled Mr. Salamon's..... So that miserable money that Bill was getting, some of it went for rent.

UG There was no recognition. I think if I hadn't been in the Oblate Order and if I hadn't seen the Provincial, they would have cleared Father out of that house right away. Anyway, that's that. He's dead now.

E Well, let's go back a bit. When we were talking about Grandpa in Europe, he learned the shoemaking trade?

UG Yes, he was a licensed shoemaker. He went through his apprenticeship and journeyman and he was a licensed shoemaker, but he didn't like it. But previous to that he had gone to the army. He had to give his service. He attained the rank of Corporal in the Austro-Hungarian Empire under Franz Joseph, the Emperor.

Mom And was he not an interpreter?

UG Yes, he was. He worked in the medical corps—sanitation, and he also was asked to train recruits. He was very good at that—the foot training.

E At what age did they have to go into the army?

UG I think it was around 20 or 21 years old.

E So that was roughly 1886.

UG I think he had to stay one year, a little over a year.

E So that was before he was a shoemaker?

UG Yes, before he went and learned the shoemaking trade.

E So he would have had to save up a lot of money to get to the States?

UG I don't know. He must have had money from friends who advanced the money to him. And that's how he got it. Things were arranged in such a way and they were taxed so much, they were slaves of the government—the Count.

LM Was his family poor?

UG Well, they were considered well off. They were weavers. But they did piece work—a cottage industry. They worked in their houses. The same thing for a shoemaker. If people wanted a pair of fancy shoes, well they made a pair of shoes and put a few brass nails in them and charged them a little bit more. That was when he was

working as a shoemaker. But Dad never liked that job and he swore up and down he would never teach his sons the shoemaker's trade. So at that time, things were arranged in such a way that the poor Slovaks were either serfs of the Count who owned the land, or they had to emigrate. And that's what they did. They came to America in hordes.

[This was the second time Uncle George mentioned that Grandpa didn't like shoemaking. Sad that he spent almost thirty years working at a trade that he didn't enjoy.]

E So would it have been hard to get out of the country at that time?

UG It wasn't hard to get out of the country, it was hard to get enough money to get out. But if they had friends in America, well, sometimes their friends in America would pay the ship passage.

E Where would he have sailed from?

UG He sailed from Hamburg in Germany to New York on—I think I remember Dad saying he sailed on the "Bremen"—the Hamburg-American line. That's what it was. *[Uncle George was mistaken here. Grandpa sailed from the port of Bremen on the "Saale".]* And Mother came from Hamburg too, but I forget the name of the boat. Now, Dad—they were almost shipwrecked when Dad was coming across. It took them, I think, six weeks to get across. They had a storm—I suppose it was in the rough season anyway. *[He arrived on February 24, 1890.]* He said they had a very rough passage and they almost despaired of ever landing. I think they were six weeks. They were adrift for awhile until they were able to fix the rudder on the boat. That's for the passage.

LM Let's go back to Grandpa's accident. I remember Grandpa reprimanding us for making fun of the Indians and he told us never to do that. Because a negro had saved his life when the white men all ran away. I just wondered if that was a valid story.

UG Yes, that's true. There were two negroes at that place and they were very good friends. As children we often went to play with them and they often came to our house and played with us. One of them worked in the mine with Dad and the other one was hauling coal and delivering things for the Company. And any time we wanted some coal he would bring it to us.

E What about the Johnstown Flood? Does that come into this at all?

UG Yes, that comes in. But the Tomečkos were involved, not us. I had a book about the Johnstown Flood—perhaps Lawrence has it. But Uncle Tomečko was in it and George and Steve were born already. *[Actually only Steve was born before the Flood. He was 11 months old. George was born in 1890.]* And Aunt took the two *[sic]* children and ran up on a hill. Uncle stayed with a few working men. They had taken a few drinks. They used to drink a lot in those steel mills. And the whole house moved, was carried off and they were all up on the roof, on the gable. And there was an eddy somewhere in their way and they came near a tree. And so Uncle and the man or two that were with him climbed out on the tree and stayed there until they could come down.

Mom And Aunt Tomečko was up on top of the hill with the two boys and took her big apron—you know how the ladies all wore those big aprons. She tied them to a chimney, tied them to something with her apron. I remember Grandpa Tomečko telling us that story.

UG Yes, Steve was the older one and George was younger.

E What year was that?

UG Around 1890. You could find that out from the library.

[It was May 31, 1889. Much has been written about this event; the best book in my opinion is "The Johnstown Flood" by David McCullough, published in 1968.]

E That was the year Grandpa came to the States. So maybe he wasn't even there yet?

UG I don't know whether he was there or not. Now, what else?

- E** I wanted to know when they lived in Europe, was it just a small village?
- UG** Well, Trebišov was a fairly large village. I don't know the exact population. It was kind of a prosperous village.
- E** Would that be in a mountainous area?
- UG** No. That was in the southeast part. Mother came from the mountainous area, from beneath the Tatras. I forgot to mention that earlier. For Mother, the modern way for the county is Podtatranska. She was born in Bijacovce. That was the former Spiska Stolica. Then it became Podtatranska.
- E** What were her family?
- UG** They were smiths and carpenters and cabinetmakers and so forth. Uncle Tomečko, you see. They all worked for the Count as far as that's concerned. The Count owned the whole area. They were practically serfs. In the summertime, even the women had to work in the fields and so forth.
- E** Did anybody every know the names further back than his parents?
- UG** I don't know. I know Cousin John went to Europe in 1930 and he said he saw the register of his father's baptism but whether he went any further back, I don't know.
- E** Mary Nobili [*Grandpa's niece*] in her letter says she got her mother's birth certificate and marriage certificate in 1946.
- UG** Yes, you pay a fancy price. Jim [*Tomečko*] got it for his Dad too and he paid, I don't know how much for it—through the consul. You pay a fancy price.
- E** Now, let's go back to you. You were ordained in 1921 in Edmonton and finished in 1922, then where?
- UG** My first assignment was Holy Ghost Church in Winnipeg—assistant—for one year July 1922 to 1923. Here we are:
 I left home for Novitiate July 25, 1915
 Received habit August 2, 1915 Ville LaSalle—that's part of Lachine
 First temporary vows August 2, 1916
 Second temporary vows Edmonton September. 12, 1917
 Tonsured Edmonton May 19, 1918
 Third temporary vows St. Albert September 12, 1918
 Perpetual vows St. Albert September 12, 1919
 First two minor orders March 20, 1920
 Second two minor orders March 25, 1920
 Subdeacon Edmonton May 21, 1921
 Deacon Edmonton October 9, 1921
 Ordination December 17, 1921
 First mass Edmonton December 18, 1921
 Holy Ghost Parish Winnipeg July 16, 1922
 Gravelbourg College September 1923
 Scholasticate Lebreton January 20, 1927
 Obedience for Gravelbourg August 15, 1935
 Assistant Lebreton June 17, 1936
 Obedience International Falls, Minnesota January 18, 1937
 Obedience for Duluth, Minnesota July 30, 1941
 Assignment for Northome, Minnesota September 6, 1944
 Assignment to Fort Frances, Ontario September 19, 1945
 Assignment to International Falls, Minnesota September 6, 1948
 Assignment to Kenora, Ontario July 17, 1960
 Assignment to Fort Frances, Ontario July 14, 1969 (to write the history of Fort Frances)

Assignment to Lebret. I arrived here on November 11, 1969. And here I am!

E Now, what else didn't we cover?

Mom Wasn't there some story about Mother having paralysis of some kind?

UG Well, she had an accident when we at the Seymour house.

Mom No, I mean when she was a child. She didn't walk until she was four years old.

UG Well, I didn't know that. I don't know anything about that. I do know that I was very sick when I was small—about five months old. I was very sick and they had given me up as gone. One of the neighbours even made the dress that I was supposed to wear in the grave. Then all of a sudden I got well. In those days, children died very often. This neighbour was kind enough to make a dress for Mother.

Mom Tell her a little bit about the company stores—in the United States.

UG Oh, yes, well they charged their own prices; you weren't allowed to go elsewhere. You had to go to the company store, so the whole cheque Dad earned, we were given a credit slip as long as some of Dad's salary was left, we could get credit, if not, and we were not allowed to buy elsewhere, couldn't go to Connellsville and get it much cheaper. Couldn't even get things from Uncle when he was sending us things from Minnesota. He sent us some bacon and he sent us some beans, and we had to smuggle them in. We had to hire a farmer to go to Connellsville with Dad and bring them back and we couldn't bring them into the village. They had to go and hide somewhere and Dad had to cart it across on his shoulders.

E Was that with the coal-mining company or the steel?

UG The coal-mining company—the name of the company was Rainey. They were a big coal and steel company in the States. The same company probably in Johnstown. The houses belonged to the company, the common pasture belonged to the company.

LM You could never get cash into your hands?

UG Well, very little.

E What kind of a house would it be?

UGtwo bedrooms.... Heat used to go up...but we had all the coal that we needed though

E So would it have been big enough?

UG Big enough for us; we had 3 or 4 beds in the bedroom. Dad and Mother slept in one bedroom and they had the babies. The others were in the other bedroom with the oldest one—Mary—looking after us.

E And what about school? Would the company run the school?

UG There were three schools. The village was divided into three schools. We went to one school to the west, a portion of the village had to go south and a portion of the village had to go north. They divided the pupils, instead of having one school in a mining place, the farmers all around—the mountain Hoosiers we used to call them—couldn't afford their schools, so the company supported three schools that way.

E And churches?

UG Church, we had to go three miles to a church—to a Slovak church. There was a streetcar line that went all the way through those mining towns, but most of the time we walked three miles. In the summer time, we used to take off our shoes and come back barefoot.

E In that are of the town, would there have been a lot of people from the same area of Czechoslovakia?

UG From Slovakia—not Czechoslovakia! They were all Slovaks and part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. We had all but about five families that were Slovaks in Moyer, that mining village, and all around there, there were countless Slovaks, there still are in all of Pennsylvania. It was pretty clannish at that time and even marriages were arranged by the parents. I remember one time when Mary was about 13 a fellow wanted to propose and wanted to have Dad make her marry him, but Mary wouldn't have anything to do with it, and Dad didn't want it either. But we had to go to that church formerly used to be New Haven. There was a river between—the Youghiogheny—one side was Connellsville, the church was in New Haven on the other side, south of Connellsville. Eventually they amalgamated under the name of Connellsville. That's where Johnny Lujack [*Heisman-winning quarterback for Notre Dame and Chicago Bears*] the famous football player came from—Connellsville. When I visited back again, the Baltimore and Ohio now has an elevated railroad which runs right by that church—it makes a horrible noise. When I visited there, the train came through, everybody stopped talking until the thing rattled by!

[Jim and I visited this area in 1992 and, thanks to the excellent memories of both Uncle George and Auntie Annie, we were able to locate the places involved. Moyer had been a mining "patch". These settlements were not meant to be permanent, and the only evidence left are the former dirt streets—which can still be seen. We visited the church, school and cemetery. From there, we phoned Auntie Annie and she asked us to bring back some soil—which we did!]

E Is that the church where you would have all been baptized?

UG That's the church where we were baptized. Mary was baptized in Braddock; I had the time of my life trying to find the church. They were looking in Slovak churches. It wasn't a Slovak Church, it happened to be an Irish church—St. Vennes' Church in Braddock.

E And what was the name of this other one?

UG Oh, I forget the Slovak church, but I know Father Kozinsky?

Mom Didn't Mary Spisak have it there?

UG I don't know whether they would have it. The Spisaks never lived in Braddock. Rankin is not far from Donora, Monangehela and all those places

LM So did all our aunts and uncles get their Grade XII?

UG No No. Mother.... They had to learn Hungarian, they wouldn't teach them in Slovak. [*He's talking about his aunts and uncles*] Mother could write dialect, and Dad had a little bit more. No, No, they didn't go to high school back then; they had to work.

Mom Mother learned English when I started going to school.

UG Well, Mother learned English when all the others were speaking English. Dad learned English a bit sooner.

Mom She learned to read... she admitted that she had never learned in Slovakia.

E You spoke Slovak at home until when?

Mom Well, it was pretty well English in my day, but before that...

UG Dad spoke German and Hungarian besides Slovak. That's why he was an interpreter in the army.

LM But Uncle John, did he finish school?

Mom Oh, you mean our family. Oh, No John didn't go to high school.

UG No, No, Mary stopped in about the sixth grade in the States. She was already working out trying to help raise the family. Especially when the strikes were on and they closed the mine. Well, we went here, but I don't know. I finished school here and went to Juniorate for junior and senior matriculation.

Mom And Uncle Mike went to school in Balcarres. He stayed with Aunt Mary. Auntie Aggie went back after she had been out working for years. She took her Eleven when I took mine—in '34 or '35.

E Now can I just ask you a couple of questions about Mr. Condon. Do you know how he would have been hired. Would he have been hired by Father Hugonard?

UG He was hired by Father *[illegible]* from around Belleville, Ontario, and he was already working here when we landed. Shoemaker, yes, we always knew him as a shoemaker

E So he would have been recruited by the Indian School?

UG Well, he came out west you see. There was a group came from the East. Mr. Chisholm came from East, from down there. Charbonneau too; they were great chums. They came from the East and they wrote back to their friends and they were gradually coming that way. And when the School opened here, Father Hugonard was always looking for working men, and shoemakers, well, they were making the shoes here. Condon was already working here when we came.

E Do you know who Brother Donnelly was?

UG Yes. Donnelly was a tinsmith at the School here. And he left here....

E *[showing him something]*. See, this was in Mr. Condon's possessions. And I know they were friends.

UG They were friends, they were great chums. Donnelly—he was born in Tweed, Ontario—as a young man he came to western Canada. He was a tinsmith at Qu'Appelle Industrial School, came into contact with the Oblates, especially Rev. Joseph Hugonard. Another priest who encouraged Fr. Donnelly to join the order was Father Joseph Carrière *[this is Jim's great-uncle]*, the same priest who directed me to the order. The example of the excellent lay brother, Bonaventure Doyle, helped Edward Donnelly to make up his mind. He began his novitiate in 1909 at St. Charles, Manitoba, made his first vows in 1910. He renewed these vows in 1911 and 1912 and in 1913 he made his vow for a 3-year period. Finally on June 5, 1916, he made his profession as a lay brother of the Oblate order. One of his first assignments was the Oblate Fathers Juniorate House of Studies, but his stay here was quite short. Then he was assigned to St. Mary's Church in Winnipeg where he was gardener, janitor and sacristan. Then his transfer to International Falls in 1919. Here he laboured for 34 years as sacristan, janitor and on occasion as cook. In his later years, his eyesight often failed him, and I often helped him with tasks that required good vision. As he became weaker, he asked me to help him with some manual work such as snow shovelling keeping the property neat and clean, in dreadful fear if he owned up to the fact that the work was too hard, he would be taken from International Falls. He was deeply attached to the parish and declined appointments elsewhere. He was a fine, gentle, humble man dedicated to his work and true to his vocation. Died on Jan 26th. Funeral Jan 28. Rev. Father Paul Piché officiating. I was among those present. Interment in St. Boniface.

E He would have known Mr. Condon in Ontario?

UG Oh, yes, they came from the same place—Tweed, Ontario.

E Does the name Mary St. John mean anything to you? Is that a Lebret name?

UG That might have been before he came out here. That is not a Lebret name or Indian School name.

E I want to ask about the Carrières.....

UG The Carrières were here around 1912. Cléophas Carrière was the blacksmith, and he had Germaine, Agatha, Charles, George and Armand. That's all. Father Carrière was parish priest and his brother. He *[Cléophas]* didn't work at the Indian School. There was no blacksmith here and he started a blacksmith shop of his own. Both

Mr. and Mrs. died here and are buried here, as far as I know. Germaine [*Jim's mother*] wasn't born here. They came with the family.

Mom They were younger. Germaine was one of the oldest. Agatha was quite young.

UG Yes, they were all younger. She was in the convent down east somewhere [*Montreal*] with the Grey nuns with Mrs. Bedel. She was thinking about becoming a nun but she didn't like it and she came back.

Mom Mrs. Bedel. That's where she became such good friends with Mrs. Bedel.

UG No, the Carrières were from Valleyfield, Quebec, not far from Montreal near the American boundary. They were from there.

[tape off]