



## Bradford West Gwillimbury Public Library Oral History Collection

**Bill Malcomson**

**Length: 31 minutes and 24 seconds**

### **Transportation**

Starts by describing a picture of a buggy that would be used by a business man to transport goods or for a Sunday afternoon drive in the country. It's neither fancy nor specifically for utility. It had rubber wheels. The low wheel on it was uncommon as normally it is much higher wheel and hard rubber tire. The horse pulling it is standard bred or trotting horse. This is the horse that was developed and bred at turn of century for people that needed quick transportation. Horse was developed for speed, endurance and looks. Was the horse normally used. Each farm had one or a team possibly heavier than this one to do light farm work and pull buggy.

The other vehicle the two wheeled vehicle with high heavy wheels is a dump cart. Used around farm. Had lever at front to dump load. Not many used around here but were used with single horse or ox. It has a quick hitch method but it did require special harness only good for cart work. Harness had wide back pad for horses back and had no tugs but had a chain running from the collar. The back pad kept horses back from being hurt by weight of cart.

Next is a top buggy. This was a common buggy with high wheels, steel rims, and a fold down top. It was by far most common buggy and was used well before turn of century and after as the main transportation vehicle for mother and father or couple. Was as comfortable as could make it. Would sometimes have rubber tires. Usually steel because there was the danger of the rubber coming off. The top folds down and there were two pieces on side that needed to be tied to bring it down. It had side curtains as well. Had knee spread for leg room or carry groceries, umbrella, or blanket. You would travel in this buggy. It would be pulled by one horse. There are cases of buggies like this going from Churchill to Barrie in an hour and that would be very fast for the time. Using a different horse he could go from Stroud to Barrie and have the horse put away and be back inside in an hour and that was also very fast. The other vehicle is a Suri (unsure of spelling) and it is the same as the buggy he just described but can carry more people. It was a two seater and would carry four people comfortably. The other one only carried two. This carriage would need two horses. The top on the buggy and Suri had identical tops to the ones that went on cars originally. They would work the same way and had same arms.

The spring wheel buggy is interesting piece in that cars came out in early 1900s and buggy manufacturers were struggling to show cars weren't that much better. This buggy was made by the Kennedy spring wheel company in Toronto and that buggy was patented on August 29 1910 and instead of wooden or straight steel spokes it had curved metal spring spokes to give a more smooth ride. The axle would move inside wheel circle and then rider would not feel bumps. This is only buggy that has grease cups like there were on cars. This idea did not get off the ground. The way to

get this buggy was that salesmen would go around the country and sell shares or stocks in the wheels and you had to buy the shares or stocks and \$25 paid in deposit to the buggy and then \$100 to get the buggy. There were not many of them made. This particular cutter had doors on it which some did not and would allow for you to stay warmer. There would be many like this as the primary winter vehicle in Simcoe County.

The other cutters on the other side like the buffalo speed cutter was like the convertible of cutters. Someone that was really sharp or thought they had a good horse but was not comfortable and the sides were low and was cold. The one ahead of it is a real fancy cutter because has hand painted sides with a swan neck front and was still uncomfortable. Was not utility but rather a show piece that a young person would have. This is a cutter or two seater sleigh where the driver sat up high in front and carried three other passengers. Now in the back the back rest came off with a wing nut and another pair of wingnuts you could take off backseat portion or could let down tailgate and put a trunk in it. This particular sleigh was used in Penetance to take travellers from the train to the hotel at turn of century and was a utility piece for that. This particular high wooden wheel buggy and cutter were owned by late doctor BB Horton at Thorton and as far as he knows last buggy and cutter used by family doctor in Simcoe County.

The buggy axels and bearings are worn from use. The body of the buggy is narrow. Two possible reasons were the doctor did not carry passengers around and wanted to be quick so made it narrow. Being narrow allowed it to turn around and maneuver in country roads easily. The cutter is very standard and was a thrill that the doctor never parted with the buggy or cutter. The doctor wanted the buggy and cutter to be given to Bill Malcolmson when he died because he knew that it would not be stuck on front lawn with flowers planted in it. The small item was a foot warmer used in cutters. You would have a stone that looked like a sharpening stone that would be heated up on a fire or wooden stove and then put inside it. Or you could fill it with charcoal to make it warm. Then it would be put under feet to keep them warm. The other item is a hook stand which would be found in a harness makers shop. This one comes from the old harness makers shop on Bayfield Street and would hold 50 hooks. They would see men come in and could turn it around and try different hooks until they found one they liked because there was a tremendous difference in the amount of snap and bend in the hooks. Bill compares them to that of a fishing rod. This is a wheel cart and the history was traced back to the Barrie fire brigade with a high iron wheel and carried leather hose and on the side you will notice there's the fireman's axe and crowbar. This cart was pulled by men. One man on either side of the tongue would pull it. If more power needed because of weight or hill there were two ropes that were held by a ratchet and crank that would allow letting pressure off and allow for more men to pull the cart. Up to about 8 men could pull it. The cart immediately behind it was a fish peddlers cart use in Barrie in early 1900s and went out of use in 1912. Now this cart had stand in back where man could stand or sit and a small seat and a fish box and box for the cleanings and a bell to ring to warn housewives he was on his way and set of scales to weigh out the fish. This cart was run by Williams who worked the streets in Barrie.

Banner image from the Bradford West Gwillimbury Public Library Local History Collection depicting cars lining Holland Street East. ID Number 3696. <http://www.ibidnet.ca/details.php?IDnum=3696>