

G'day eh? And all that stuff: Dialects in Ontario

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Working on the river

• It was a very bad thing on the river. Ah like when you would get center jams. And like some guys were good at it, other ones couldn't stay down. 'Cause when you had to wade out in that swift water to get to a center jam to break it. Why I tell you it- it took a good man to wade. Because some men could wade right up to that in fast water. And other ones couldn't wade up to that. Was the way that they waded, you know. Yeah, with your peavey. You use your peavey like and then put your peavey up the stream. And press on it and then wade across like that. And then move your peavey quick and then go again.

- Roderick Charles, 75
- Interviewed by John McFie



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Old preterits

• And, so, anyway the jam started. And the boys *was* down below at- there. And I *run* down on the rocks and I *seen* him. And they couldn't reach him. He just *come* up like that and back down again.

- Roderick Charles, b. 1905



Words of local industry

• Skidding

• Ah, Donald Collins had *skidding gangs* going from place to place doing *skidding ah*, down the log roads.



Words of local industry

• Butt log

• And the *butt log*, two teams couldn't put that log up over that slope.



Words of local industry

• Threshing

• Well had the *threshers* come. It got that there was *threshers* went around to different farms and you paid them so much and they come and threshed your oats..



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Olden Days

Maude Schiff, age 78

- Well there was couple of times we had enough oats to have the threshers but we didn't have a very big farm. And uh- um then uh of course I was going to school there, I went there until I was into the fourth reader and all ready to try my entrance. Teacher went away and that was the end of my education. But um my father then was trying to be a farmer. Guess he had got all the timber cut around the place so he was trying to farm. They did grow a lot of strawberries and peddled them to town



The Family Cow

William Landon, 80's, c. 1982

- Now ... when I was runnin'- I was runnin' the mail out here one winter ... and when I was coming back, there was a fella out there at the Tallyhoe Road with a cow. He was gettin'- he had two cows and the feed was gettin' scarce. And he come out there. He owed me a bill and- and turned it in on the- on the bill, you see. Well, I just tied her to the horse's collar and brought her home and put her in the stable. That's that one we kept- we kept her until she was only three years old. We kept her there for at least ten or fifteen years, you know. Oh yeah. Keep the calf in the barn, you see. In the summertime, and she just went where she liked. And most of the time it was down the railroad track. ...And ah, you know, you took a chance of her getting killed on the railroad track. But ah, she didn't- she never walked on the track. ... Ol' [name] said she seemed to have ah- ah- just down long the side of the track. And the trains run past here all the time and everything. But you needed milk. So, the only way you could have fresh milk was to have a cow. And if she got killed, well, that was just too bad. You'd have to get another one. But she never got touched. Run up and down there all her life.



Ontario Dialects Website

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A Grassroots Perspective on History, Culture and Change

Why does language change, and how?

Language change tends to start in urban centres and spread out to rural locales. This means that: 1) we may find many interesting dialect features in Ontario's hinterlands, and 2) changes underway in Toronto may not have yet reached outlying areas, particularly small Ontario towns that are far away. In this project, we are documenting words and expressions of Ontarians. We hope to discover Canadian dialects and uncover the roots of Canadian English.

— Prof. Sali A. Tagliamonte

As this research project develops, we will report new findings. Stay tuned!

Search for dialect words and expressions

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- Altona
- Beaverton

Thanks to:

*Local community organizations around Ontario
All the people who shared their stories*

Thanks to all the people who shared their stories

This work is dedicated to them

If you know of a place with interesting local words, expressions or stories

Contact me:

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