

Transcription: Anne Pritchard Oral History Interview (Part Two—Who was Teddy Ryder?)

PK—Patrick Kinghan (Interviewer)

AP—Anne Pritchard (Narrator)

00:00

PK: And I think this is the really interesting thing about oral history, is the idea that, you know, all the artifacts that listeners will be seeing in the exhibit (when they go online to it), all the artifacts tell sort of like more of an official story, or a story without the personal connection to Teddy himself or Ted Ryder himself. And so, oral history is a really great way to just sort of talk about the person behind the exhibit, as it were. So, who was Teddy I suppose? When you knew him—however you knew him.

00:37

AP: He was very very smart, you know, very intelligent, very well-read. He lived mostly by himself his whole life. He, you know, he had some friends, but he, it seems like his early years sort of (when I look back I can realize) that he was really an independent person who lived on his own. We all thought of him as a bit quirky. And part of it was maybe from living on his own. And he was slow and methodical in things like, well he loved to stay up late, then he would sleep late in the mornings. And when we were gathered as a family, sometimes like at Christmas or Thanksgiving or something like that, you know, we kids would have to wait because Ted was sleeping late. We couldn't do Christmas or we couldn't, you know, do these various things, because he was on his own schedule. And he played the piano. He was a very avid bird watcher and he kept a life list—he and his mother really were into bird watching, and my mother to some extent, so the whole family was into that. But, let's see, he also was a stamp collector. He had quite a few different interests like that.

02:09

PK: Yeah.

02:09

AP: His diabetes was pretty brittle, as I learned as I got older. And I'm a nurse, actually, so the more I had medical training, I realized that his diabetes was always kind of hard to control.

02:26

PK: Sure

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AP: To my knowledge. And so he would actually have incidents where he would have...he'd fall sick, on the side of the road, like if he was walking somewhere. He held different jobs through the years, like a librarian and different jobs, but he was...that was difficult too, because he'd have these, you know, reactions—

02:55

PK: —Yeah—

02:55

AP: —or for one reason or another, he couldn't continue working.

02:59

PK: Yeah, that, yeah, that's really interesting honestly.

03:02

AP: One of the things that, in later life, it was really delightful for Ted and for my grandmother (she was still alive at this point) when they got some notoriety. And I can't remember how it all happened, but I think it was through the Joslin organisation and they recognized that this man was living, you know, the...like the longest living person having received insulin. So this is after all those other people that had gotten the experimental insulin had died. And so they started...he went on a little talk circuit.

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PK: Yeah!

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AP: And, you know, he was written up in newspapers, and he got awards and things, which had never come to him during his earlier life.

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PK: Sure.

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AP: You know?

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PK: Yeah.

03:50

AP: He sort of...he just sort of plowed on with his diabetes and tried to make a life for himself. And then in his golden years, he got sort of found and—

04:02

PK: —Yeah.

04:02

AP: You know, they made that little colouring book—

04:04

PK: —Oh yes!

04:06

AP: You know, that, and that kind of stuff which, you know, had never happened to him. But he really got it, he got really pleased and tickled by that—

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PK: —Oh I'm sure—

04:17

AP: —notoriety or whatever that positive. And my grandmother was really happy.

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PK: Yeah, no, absolutely.

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AP: Because, I think that Ted got some positive strokes for all that he'd been through.

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PK: Yeah. Absolutely.