

Interviewee(s): David Chalmers (DC)	Interviewer(s): Melanie Chalmers Gibson (MC)
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REGION	East Lothian
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TITLE	<i>David Chalmers interviewed at Lochhill by his daughter Melanie Chalmers Gibson</i>
REGION	<i>East Lothian</i>
SUBJECTS/KEYWORDS	<i>Family life; working life.</i>
COUNTY	<i>East Lothian</i>
TOWN	<i>Longniddry</i>
DATE OF INTERVIEW	<i>20 April 2019</i>
INTERVIEWER	<i>Melanie Chalmers Gibson</i>
YEAR RANGE	<i>2019</i>
SUMMARY	<i>David tells us of his father and grandfather who were market gardeners. His grandfather worked in a market garden in Falkirk before moving to a market garden in Dalkeith. David's father worked in the Carron Iron Works making patterns for shells and grenades. He also played football for Camelon Juniors in Falkirk. After an abortive attempt to move to New Zealand and then Chicago, David's father joined his father and moved to the Gibraltar Market Garden in Dalkeith. Soon, however, David's father branched out and took on the Thorn Hall [Thorny Hall] Market Garden also in Dalkeith on his own.</i>

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**MCG:** So this is an interview of David Chalmers, my father, and my name is Melanie Chalmers Gibson and we're sitting in here at Lochhill where I was brought up and I'm, I'm going to introduce you to David Chalmers my dad and today's date is, is it the 20<sup>th</sup>?

**DC:** 20<sup>th</sup>.

**MCG:** 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2019. Dad when did you move to Lochhill?

**DC:** About 19, well it was in the early 60's we moved here, 1960. I didn't move here until 1964 but we, we bought the, we had the farm before that.

**MCG:** Alright. So I didn't realise that. So you were farming the land.

**DC:** Well it was funny when we got married and we came to stay here.

**MCG:** Wow and so, so the house was empty for a while, the farmhouse?

**DC:** As I was saying it.

**DC:** It was all, it was all getting done up at that time.

**MCG:** Was it?

**DC:** We had the all, all the harling was done.

**MCG:** Oh was it stone before?

**DC:** Some of it was harled and some of it wasn't harled so that it was all brought up just to be harled because the stonework that was there was old fashioned small stone it, it's better to be harled.

**MCG:** Right.

**MCG:** Is that because it would've been such a huge job to get it all, all done?

**DC:** Oh aye.

**MCG:** Yeah, yeah. So that was when you moved here, but can you tell me about where you were born and brought up just. When, when were you born, what year?

**DC:** Well I was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1939 and I was born in Edinburgh, I was born in Edinburgh and I stayed at Dalkeith at, on, in a house at Buccleuch Estates at Dalkeith and I'm the eldest of eight. And my grandfather had the market garden at Gibraltar Market Garden at Dalkeith and he moved there in the 1920's when the market garden at Dalkeith came up for rent. Before that he'd been a market gardener at Falkirk.

**MCG:** You're the eldest aren't you so?

**MCG:** I didn't realise that so grand, my granddad's, your dad's dad was actually there and, and, and market, running a market garden in Gibraltar.

**DC:** He came to the market garden at Dalkeith and my father stayed at Castle Steads in the cottage at Castle Steads and he, in 1938-39 was walking from, he walked from the cottage in Castle Steads up to Gibraltar market garden at Dalkeith and he passed Mr Ormiston who was the factor at Dalkeith Palace. And when he was passing him that, one morning on his way to work,

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Mr Ormiston said that, 'Have you heard that Thorn Hall market garden's coming up for rent?' and he said 'I just wondered would you be interested in it' and naturally my father 'Oh' he said 'Yeah I'd be interested in that', says 'Right we'll get that drawn up'.

**MCG:** Wow. Oh wow.

**MCG:** So, so up until then was he actually helping his dad out and this was him branching out into his own, start of his own market gardening do you know?

**DC:** My father, my father left school in Falkirk in 1917 and he went and worked in the Carron Iron Works in Falkirk at the end of the First World War and his job was making patterns for shells and grenades for the First World War and he qualified as a pattern.

**MCG:** How old would he have been then, och he was to, he was born in 1903 so it's the same a hundred years on for Tommy and Josh that's right so yes he's just been.

**DC:** Well that's right and, and he then carried on working at Carron Iron Works until he qualified as a pattern maker in the early 1920's. And at that time jobs were quite hard to come by so he and his friend who had qualified as well as a pattern maker applied for jobs in New Zealand.

**MCG:** Really! I thought he was doing, was he, this at the same time that he was still quite into his football and?

**DC:** Well he was, he was . . . he was at . . . well the, the, the job he was applying for was in New Zealand and at that time a lot of firms were going bust and the firm he was going to go to in New Zealand must've gone bust so he never got to New Zealand. He then applied for a job in Chicago and it was in, it was then my father played football for Camelon Juniors at the time at Falkirk and on the week he was due to go to Chicago he broke his kneecap playing football for Camelon Juniors and he obviously couldn't go and his friend, Jim MacCulloch [spelling?] went off and went to Chicago and it was at that point that my grandfather heard of the market garden at Dalkeith that was coming up for rent at Gibraltar Market Garden and it was at that point because my father had lost his only brother at the end of the First World War and naturally my grandfather, James.

**MCG:** [She laughs] Brilliant. That's Falkirk.

**MCG:** Aw, what, what was his name? James, James [unclear].

**DC:** And naturally grandfather wouldn't want . . . to . . . lose another son, his only son going away abroad and said 'Well how do you fancy having a go at vegetable growing?' And I think my father was quite open-minded about things and just said 'Why no, let's have a go at it.'

**MCG:** Yeah. Right.

**MCG:** Did he not have, so he joined him, but he, did he also have sisters in Dalkeith as well?

**DC:** And he joined them.

**DC:** He had two sisters and they . . . the, the one, there was, well my dad was the youngest and there was Auntie [unclear] and was, and there was the other aunt up at Doon. Up at Doon and I had two cousins up there, there was David and Billy Black and cousins and, and, and Betty Black and it was then that . . . they moved to Dalkeith and that's when, when they moved to

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Gibraltar Market Garden my father built all the sheds at that time. And they, they work, it was only a small place it was only maybe 20 or 30 acres.

**MCG:** Mer. What was her name? Right. Up at Doon. That's right, yes.

**MCG:** Right, what did, what, what was his main, what, what did he grow, what was his?

**DC:** Everything. He grew all every, rhubarb, leeks, cabbage, cauliflower, any, any vegetable.

**MCG:** Spring onions.

**DC:** Everything, the lot. Every kind of vegetable you could think of he grew, fruit as well, orchards and, and then that as I said to you when he was passing and speaking to Mr . . . the, the factor.

**MCG:** What was his name Mr Oxford or was it, what did you say his name was it Mr Oxford or?

**DC:** Erm . . . gosh I'm, I'm.

**MCG:** No? It doesn't matter about his name. It's just that, that's when he decided to branch out to his own.

**DC:** Well that's when he met the factor Mr York, is it Mr York?

**MCG:** All right, I said Oxford. (Laughing) It's nearby.

**DC:** It's no far away.

**DC:** Anyway.

**MCG:** So the, so that was, he wasn't married at that time, this was, he was young man.

**DC:** Well he was only, he would only be about 20.

**MCG:** Yeah. That's amazing. And then so he, and he had his own cottage there and, and [unclear].

**DC:** And that's when he got the cottage at Castle Steads down passed the palace in Dalkeith and that's as I say.

**MCG:** Right.

**MCG:** I think, I think that the next time we, we do this sort of, we'll follow on from there we'll find out when, when you, when you were born and go through some of those times cos I didn't know any of, a lot of that, the facts about granddad you know in his early years, I've heard bits and pieces but that was really interesting piecing all of that together. So we'll finish here for today. (Chair scrapes).

**DC:** You've seen the pictures of, of my grandfather [unclear] that picture you've seen in there.

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