

SDS PODCAST

EPISODE 800:

A TRANSFORMATIVE

CENTURY OF

TECHNOLOGICAL

PROGRESS, WITH

ANNIE P.



Jon: 00:05 This is episode number 800 with 94-year-old Annie.

00:19 Welcome back to the Super Data Science podcast for episode number 800. Today, I've got something out of the ordinary for you. My 94-year-old grandmother Annie joins me to discuss the technological transformation that has occurred over her lifetime and the impact that has had on her. In the recording you may hear me refer to her by the Ukrainian words for grandmother, baba or babcia. My apologies if I create some confusion by doing that every once in a while, but should be relatively easy to follow along with. During the episode, Annie details what work and life were like growing up on a farm with no electricity or running water; how education, communications, security, entertainment, and food storage and preparation have evolved over her lifetime; as well as similarities between geopolitical events in the 1930s and events transpiring today.

01:07 I think like me, you'll find the breadth and extent of the changes that have occurred over her lifetime to be pretty interesting and pretty darn eye-opening. For context, during the episode, Annie mentions some cities like Toronto, Hamilton, Waterloo, and Niagara Falls, as well as some small towns like Wellandport and St. Davids. All of these towns and cities are all within a few hours drive of each other in Southwestern Ontario, where she and I grew up and where she still lives today. All right, let's jump right into the episode, which was recorded during a particularly intense heat wave, and so begins on the topic of climate control.

01:43 It's nice to have air conditioning, isn't it?

Annie: 01:45 Oh, yeah.

Jon: 01:47 When you grew up, you didn't have air conditioning. What did you do in the summer?

Annie: 01:54 Just the heat. Even here, people didn't have air conditioning. We were going to a wedding, even cars didn't have air conditioning. We were to some wedding in Toronto, we were all soaking wet. Even your dad was coming with us. I don't think they were married yet, but he was going to the wedding and we were soaking wet in the car.

Jon: 02:21 Yeah, yeah. That's in Toronto. This week I saw somebody, they were in an old Mercedes without any air conditioning, and this week it's been a heat wave. It's been over 90 degrees Fahrenheit, 35 something degrees Celsius. And the poor guy, he had his windows down, but the traffic wasn't moving, and so he was just soaking wet.

Annie: 02:46 That's how we were.

Jon: 02:47 So you just sweat.

Annie: 02:47 Just sweat.

Jon: 02:49 And even in the house, overnight. I guess you have a fan. You have a fan on you in bed maybe.

Annie: 02:53 Yeah. We did have fans. But on the farm we didn't.

Jon: 02:56 You didn't even have fans.

Annie: 02:57 We didn't even have electricity. They got electricity, I think in... When I got married in 1947. They still didn't have no electricity.

Jon: 03:09 No electricity on the farm.

Annie: 03:11 No.

Jon: 03:13 Yeah. And that wasn't some remote farm. That was in Ontario, near Niagara Falls.



Annie:	03:19	Yeah.
Jon:	03:22	And so what was life like? What was your day like before electricity?
Annie:	03:33	Well, you get used to it. You don't even miss it, really. We just had lanterns.
Jon:	03:41	Lanterns, yeah.
Annie:	03:44	Yeah. And lamps, the kind you bought the little cups over the thing. They were just as bright as electricity.
Jon:	03:52	So you're one of these people that today you watch TV and you're really happy.
Annie:	03:59	Oh, yeah.
Jon:	03:59	When I watch TV, I often, I have a bit of guilt. I'm like, "Maybe I should be doing something else. Maybe I should be working on my next podcast episode." But you, when you're watching TV, you're smiling and laughing. So what would you do before electricity, for fun?
Annie:	04:17	We had the radio on a battery and we had record players. We had different records and we played gramophone.
Jon:	04:28	So you had to turn it?
Annie:	04:29	Turn it, crank it.
Jon:	04:32	So you'd crank it and it would wind up a battery.
Annie:	04:35	Yeah.
Jon:	04:36	And then what about the radio batteries? You would go to a store and buy batteries?
Annie:	04:42	Yeah.

Jon: 04:42 I see, I see.

Annie: 04:42 Yeah. They were big batteries that you bought. They were last for a long time.

Jon: 04:51 And then, so at that time, if you went to Toronto or something, were there streetlights? Did they have electricity in Toronto or no?

Annie: 04:57 Oh, yeah.

Jon: 04:57 Oh, yeah?

Annie: 04:57 Yeah. It just where we were, the line when electricity wasn't going.

Jon: 05:04 Oh, gotcha. Yeah.

Annie: 05:06 Yeah.

Jon: 05:07 And then what about toilets? Was it-

Annie: 05:08 There were outside toilets?

Jon: 05:12 Outside toilets, like an outhouse?

Annie: 05:14 Outhouse, yeah. Oh, yeah. We had two-seaters.

Jon: 05:21 Two-seaters?

Annie: 05:22 Yeah, two holes in it. It was a nice little outhouse.

Jon: 05:27 Where were the two seats? One's for number one, the other's for number two?

Annie: 05:30 No, they were both for one and two.

Jon: 05:33 Just if two people need to go at the same time.

Annie:	05:34	Yeah.
Jon:	05:35	You had two together?
Annie:	05:36	Yeah. Well, there was eight of us.
Jon:	05:38	Eight kids.
Annie:	05:39	Eight kids, and father and mom, so there was 10 of us.
Jon:	05:43	So sometimes two people have to go at once. So you need a two-seater?
Annie:	05:49	Yeah.
Jon:	05:49	Were they next to each other or facing each other?
Annie:	05:51	Next to each other. It was like a board and... Steph took it to her place, but after it got rotten and...
Jon:	06:00	Yeah. Yeah. That's not something you need to keep forever?
Annie:	06:03	No. I guess, she wanted it or it was memory or something, and so she had it for a while.
Jon:	06:14	Nice. Okay. So what about toilet paper? Could you buy toilet paper?
Annie:	06:21	No. We had the magazine, Eaton's Magazine, we crunch it. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. That was our toilet paper.
Jon:	06:31	The department store magazine?
Annie:	06:32	Yeah. Crunch and that's what you use. I don't think there was even toilet paper. I don't remember.
Jon:	06:40	Yeah, yeah, yeah. Wow. And then what if somebody got sick? The doctor came to the house?

Annie:	06:46	Yeah.
Jon:	06:47	So you were lucky to have a doctor nearby?
Annie:	06:50	Yeah. Yeah. In Wellandport, he made house calls.
Jon:	06:55	And how would you get in touch with the doctor?
Annie:	07:00	One of us would have to go on a bike or car to let him know to come to the house.
Jon:	07:06	Yeah. Because there was no phone line.
Annie:	07:10	We had phone.
Jon:	07:11	Party line?
Annie:	07:12	Party line.
Jon:	07:13	Yeah.
Annie:	07:14	Maybe we used the... I can't remember when we put the... No, we had the phone for a long time, way before. Oh, yeah. So we must have, what do you call it? Called the phone. Or a lot of times we just used to go to the doctor's house in town to come.
Jon:	07:36	Yeah. Yeah. Tell me about how a party line worked.
Annie:	07:41	Well, you had to listen for your ring. Ours was too long and one short. And other neighbors was long, short, long. And we knew who was calling who, the neighbors. So sometimes we listen in.
Jon:	08:01	You got to be careful, I guess.
Annie:	08:03	Oh, yeah. We had to be very quiet.
Jon:	08:05	Yeah.



Annie:	08:05	So they wouldn't hear us.
Jon:	08:06	Oh, but I mean, even when you are having a phone call that it's for you, you'd still have to... You wouldn't want to say a lot because anybody in the neighborhood could be listening.
Annie:	08:19	Could listen. Yeah.
Jon:	08:19	Anybody in the party.
Annie:	08:20	Yeah. So they could join in too and listen quietly.
Jon:	08:25	Yeah. It's different now. Not only your own... So you got your own phone number, eventually. And then you got voicemail, so somebody could leave a message. And now you and me, and actually however many people we want in our family, we can have a private video call with our faces. So that's nice. So even when I'm in New York or wherever I am in the world-
Annie:	08:50	We could see one another.
Jon:	08:51	We can see one another and talk to one another and hear about our day.
Annie:	08:55	What a difference.
Jon:	08:56	And it costs nothing extra.
Annie:	08:58	No. And it costs so much before, the phone, before.
Jon:	09:01	The party line was expensive?
Annie:	09:02	It was expensive.
Jon:	09:03	Yeah.
Annie:	09:05	Because operator had to be there day and night.

Jon:	09:09	Oh, you had to have a person.
Annie:	09:11	Yeah.
Jon:	09:12	So you picked up the phone and you said, "Operator, can you put me in touch?" Would you give a number or a name or...
Annie:	09:19	It had to be a number or a name.
Jon:	09:21	One or the other.
Annie:	09:22	One or the other.
Jon:	09:27	Maybe you'd say, "I need to call this neighborhood in Toronto or something, and this is the number there."
Annie:	09:34	Or, "Would you begin..." I think we did have to call the operator and then operator, she can connect you to wherever you wanted to.
Jon:	09:45	That's wild. You'd speak to her, usually a woman.
Annie:	09:49	Oh, it was mostly woman operator. At least in, Wellandport they were.
Jon:	09:56	Were they nice? Would you chit-chat?
Annie:	09:58	Oh, yeah. They were nice.
Jon:	10:01	Would you say, "Hope you're having a nice day?" To the operator?
Annie:	10:04	Yeah. Or if you ask something and she would answer. And if you wanted to know something, she was like a little phone that you phone, like messages. And she would answer you.
Jon:	10:19	She would take messages?

Annie:	10:20	Yeah, she would.
Jon:	10:20	Oh, really?
Annie:	10:22	Yeah. Oh, no. They were nice.
Jon:	10:24	So you could leave a message. You could say, "Oh, they weren't home."
Annie:	10:31	Yeah.
Jon:	10:34	Would they call someone out?
Annie:	10:36	No. If you weren't home-
Jon:	10:38	That's it.
Annie:	10:39	... that's it. Yeah. If you weren't home, then she would call again, say in an hour or so.
Jon:	10:46	I see.
Annie:	10:47	Yeah. I don't think they would leave message. Not those days.
Jon:	10:59	Okay. And so then on the farm, what kinds of animals did you have?
Annie:	11:05	We had pigs, sheep, cows. We were milking them by hand.
Jon:	11:14	Yeah.
Annie:	11:15	Yeah. That was an awful job.
Jon:	11:18	An awful job?
Annie:	11:19	I hated it.

Jon:	11:20	You hated milking the cows?
Annie:	11:25	And too, I must've been milking the wrong way or doing them... My cows would always stick a foot in the pail
Jon:	11:33	In the pail, and then it's ruined.
Annie:	11:35	Then when it's ruined the pigs had to drink that milk, and you couldn't sell that milk. So then they gave me another job. Mom says we have to give Annie another job. So then I was feeding, putting hay in the... What do you call? Where they eat. Because there was a long thing.
Jon:	11:59	A trough.
Annie:	12:00	A trough, yeah. You filled it up for the cows to eat.
Jon:	12:04	Yeah. So that job you were better at.
Annie:	12:07	Oh, I liked that job. When I was milking, even the smell used to make me sick.
Jon:	12:15	Yeah, I've experienced that. It is a funny smell.
Annie:	12:18	Yeah. And especially if they're staying there all night. Like you go in the morning when you open the barn door, it's an awful smell.
Jon:	12:31	So in the winter, they would mostly stay inside, but they have to go outside and eat grass. What do they eat in the winter? Or they have hay.
Annie:	12:38	Hay. Yeah. That's what we used to fill them with. We had huge barn that, so they were all upstairs to feed the cows. I had to go upstairs, get the hay, put it down, and then-
Jon:	12:58	So the animals stayed downstairs. The hay was upstairs. You had a ladder or something?

Annie:	13:02	Oh, yeah. Yeah.
Jon:	13:03	And so all the animals would stay in the barn together? Did they have their own place or they just all mixed?
Annie:	13:09	No, no. They had their own thing.
Jon:	13:12	You had a little wall?
Annie:	13:14	No, they had a neck thing that they were-
Jon:	13:22	Oh, they were held in place by the neck.
Annie:	13:23	By the neck, yeah.
Jon:	13:24	All of them. The cows, the pigs.
Annie:	13:26	Not the pigs. Pigs were loose. The cows and horses. Cow and horses, they were in the same unit.
Jon:	13:36	Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha. So the pigs, they just walked around.
Annie:	13:39	Oh, yeah. And the pigs were very nice. We pour food for them. In one corner they would do their job and poop. In another corner they would sleep. They were clean.
Jon:	13:53	Oh, I see. So the cows and the horses, part of why they have to be kept in one place is because they poop anywhere.
Annie:	13:59	Yeah. See, and they poop too, the horses. It was like a little ditch. So then you took a shovel and cleaned it up.
Jon:	14:10	Well, where would you put it after you cleaned it up?
Annie:	14:12	Outside-
Jon:	14:14	In the soil?

Annie:	14:14	... there was a big pile of manure.
Jon:	14:16	Yeah, because you could use it as compost, maybe.
Annie:	14:18	Oh, yeah. That's what it was used for. There wasn't too much fertilizer in those days.
Jon:	14:25	Yeah. You couldn't go to the store and buy fertilizer.
Annie:	14:27	No.
Jon:	14:27	You had to use poop.
Annie:	14:27	Poo, yeah. And too, you had to spread it first by fork. But after when... I don't know how old I was. Then dad bought a wagon that was spreading manure itself. We didn't have to do it. You just load it on a wagon, or there was a special wagon.
Jon:	14:54	A horse-drawn wagon, or motorized?
Annie:	14:58	It was by tractor.
Jon:	15:00	By tractor, okay. Yeah. So you had a tractor that whole time? You never had to have-
Annie:	15:07	We had horses too. You had to have horses.
Jon:	15:09	For farming.
Annie:	15:10	For the farming. Specially [inaudible 00:15:13] when we plant tomatoes and cucumbers in between the roses, it had to... And then we went with... What they call? A hoe that do around the plant.
Jon:	15:35	With a hoe?
Annie:	15:36	Yeah.

Jon:	15:36	Yeah, okay. So you need the horse for some jobs on the farm, and then other things you could use a tractor.
Annie:	15:43	Yeah. What tractor they used for plowing. And at first when we got there, we just had horses because we didn't have the money to buy the tractor. Yeah.
Jon:	16:04	And so how would you get gas for the tractor? You have to drive into town with a car?
Annie:	16:09	No, they brought gas to our place. We had a...
Jon:	16:17	You had storage, a container?
Annie:	16:19	No, it was like... They have it in the gas stations. They put it in for us. They dig the hole, put the gas tank in.
Jon:	16:33	Yeah. You have a big underground gas tank.
Annie:	16:36	Yeah.
Jon:	16:37	I see.
Annie:	16:38	And then we use the gas, just like in gas stations do.
Jon:	16:44	Oh, you had a handle?
Annie:	16:45	Yeah.
Jon:	16:46	Oh, I see. And it would pump.
Annie:	16:48	Pump. Yeah.
Jon:	16:48	And that didn't need electricity.
Annie:	16:50	No.
Jon:	16:51	Huh, I wonder how that works. I don't know.

Annie:	16:53	That. I don't know.
Jon:	16:57	That's interesting. Maybe it's just like air pressure.
Annie:	17:00	Yeah.
Jon:	17:01	Nice. Now the only animal around is the dog. Don't know if that gets picked up on the microphone, but he came in from a walk and it's hot out, so he's panting a lot.
Annie:	17:13	Yeah.
Jon:	17:14	Okay. So, all right. So with communication, it used to be very expensive and you had the party line. No privacy.
Annie:	17:25	No privacy.
Jon:	17:26	And now for no extra charge, we can be anywhere in the world and have video calls with however many of us we want at the same time.
Annie:	17:37	Same time.
Jon:	17:38	And it's easier for you. Do you remember, it was probably about 10 years ago that we got you your first computer?
Annie:	17:44	Yeah.
Jon:	17:45	An iPad.
Annie:	17:46	iPad, yeah.
Jon:	17:47	And the first few days it seemed like you didn't like it. You weren't going to get it.
Annie:	17:51	You know what? I've never learned. I would never know how to work it. But now I enjoy having it.
Jon:	17:57	It's easy.

Annie:	17:58	It's easy.
Jon:	17:59	Yeah.
Annie:	17:59	Yeah.
Jon:	18:02	Yeah. That's nice. It's nice to see you on there. You like looking at pictures.
Annie:	18:06	Yeah. And that too. Yeah.
Jon:	18:10	And you've got security cameras all around the house. You can see anywhere you are in the world or even in your house, you can see what's on all the security cameras. And the security cameras automatically recognize if a person walks by or a car drives by or whatever, and it saves the highlight reel for you.
Annie:	18:32	Yeah. When I'm like in Waterloo, I could see Oolaf picking my mail, walking through the grass and yeah. It's really, what a difference?
Jon:	18:44	Yeah.
Annie:	18:46	So special now. It makes it easy. I don't have to run to the house, I could just see it on my iPad in the house.
Jon:	19:02	Anywhere in the world.
Annie:	19:03	In the world. Yeah.
Jon:	19:04	Yeah, so that's different for communications. For energy, obviously a lot different now. So instead of... You're not needing to poop in an outhouse next to somebody else, you've got flush toilets and you've got air conditioning. It's over 90 degrees Fahrenheit today, and it's not bad in the house.
Annie:	19:29	Not bad. Yeah.

Jon:	19:31	But, yeah, so that's still... So I guess if it's a really hot night before air conditioning, before electricity, you just have to sweat it out.
Annie:	19:40	You do. You just open the windows and hope for the little wind come through, so make a little breeze and that. But once you get used to it, it's bad but what can you do?
Jon:	19:54	And then in the winter, I guess you would have, obviously you wear coats and you have blankets, and then I guess you have wood fire. Wood fireplace.
Annie:	20:07	Yeah, we use all wood.
Jon:	20:09	That would heat the whole house, and you have to chop your own wood.
Annie:	20:12	Oh, yeah. You have to go to the forest and cut the tree down.
Jon:	20:18	So you'd have to live somewhere where you've got forests, where you've got farmland, and where you've got a barn for the animals and a house.
Annie:	20:26	Yeah. Well, we had the two forests. On both farms there was a forest, 50 acres and 90 acres. Steph has the forest is right behind her.
Jon:	20:45	And then how do you bring the wood back?
Annie:	20:52	We use the horses and-
Jon:	20:52	Yeah.
Annie:	20:52	... put them on the wagon.
Jon:	20:53	You have a wagon behind the horse.
Annie:	20:54	Yeah.

Jon:	20:55	Yeah, that makes sense.
Annie:	20:56	Yeah.
Jon:	20:58	Okay, so you have to grow hay. You have to grow wheat during the summer to turn that into hay, so that you have something over the winter to feed the animals in the barn.
Annie:	21:09	The hay, it comes up every year. The hay wheat, you just cut it and dry it and save it for the winter.
Jon:	21:18	Yeah. Yeah. But first you had to plow the fields and plant the seeds.
Annie:	21:23	Yeah.
Jon:	21:24	But the wheat, you didn't have to plant it new every year. It just always grew? You didn't need to put new seeds every spring?
Annie:	21:30	For the hay, you didn't. But for the wheat, if you plant wheat or oats, you had to put it every year.
Jon:	21:37	Oh...
Annie:	21:37	Yeah.
Jon:	21:39	And then, yes, you gather the hay. And so I guess same thing, either the tractor or horse and wagon. You put the bales of hay.
Annie:	21:53	Yeah.
Jon:	21:54	And how do you make the bail of hay?
Annie:	21:58	Those days we didn't have the bail. It was all loose.
Jon:	22:01	It was all loose?

Annie:	22:01	Yeah.
Jon:	22:03	Okay. Yeah. So you just use a pitchfork.
Annie:	22:04	Yeah, the pitchfork.
Jon:	22:05	You put it on the wagon.
Annie:	22:06	Yeah.
Jon:	22:06	And you take it to the barn and you store the top floor of the barn.
Annie:	22:11	And we had a special fork, and put the wagon with the hay, and then it pulled it up and put it on-
Jon:	22:20	Put it up in the top.
Annie:	22:23	On the top of the barn. The horses were on a lower level and you put the hay on top for the winter.
Jon:	22:34	Explain that one more time, I didn't quite get it. I think you explained it well. I just might not have been listening well enough. This was a machine? How did it get up there?
Annie:	22:41	It wasn't a machine. It was just the horses. You put the thing and then the horses would pull it, pull the thing.
Jon:	22:52	Oh, like the pulley, the horse would-
Annie:	22:54	Yeah. And then the pulley goes up and-
Jon:	22:56	Oh yeah. So the hay is on a rope.
Annie:	23:00	Yeah.
Jon:	23:00	On a platform that's on a rope or something?

Annie:	23:02	No, it's not a platform, it's loose, but when you stick the big fork in-
Jon:	23:09	It just all sticks.
Annie:	23:10	It all sticks together.
Jon:	23:12	And then the horse, it walks away a little bit and it's got a-
Annie:	23:16	A harness.
Jon:	23:16	It's connected to harness, and that lifts up the hay into the top.
Annie:	23:20	Top, yeah.
Jon:	23:21	And then someone needs to be up in the top to move it off?
Annie:	23:24	Well, someone on the bottom, then there was a fork and someone pulls the string and then the hay falls off on a-
Jon:	23:35	I see, I see. Yeah, there's a different. From the bottom, you can just pull the string and-
Annie:	23:38	The string, yeah.
Jon:	23:39	... it releases the hay up into the top floor of the barn.
Annie:	23:43	Yeah. And then you pull it back, and then you do another thing. And then the horses pull another pulley on top.
Jon:	23:53	There you go. Okay. So that allows you to feed the animals through the winter. And the animals, they all just all eat hay?
Annie:	24:04	Yeah.

Jon:	24:06	Pigs, horses, cows, chickens?
Annie:	24:08	Pigs didn't. We just had to feed pigs like potatoes. Mom would cook some potatoes for them.
Jon:	24:19	Okay.
Annie:	24:20	Yeah. And milk, what wasn't used or scrapped.
Jon:	24:24	The ones that anytime you milk the cow, the pigs got some milk because the cow would step in the bucket.
Annie:	24:35	And food too. We didn't have a fridge.
Jon:	24:37	Yeah, that's what I was going to get to next. How did you keep the food?
Annie:	24:43	Where the well was with the water. So mom, they had a special pail. They put some meat or butter or something. They put it in the water.
Jon:	24:53	Oh. It's a watertight, waterproof pail.
Annie:	24:55	Pail.
Jon:	24:56	And the water's cool, even in the summer-
Annie:	24:59	Yeah.
Jon:	25:00	... down in the well.
Annie:	25:01	You put it down in the well.
Jon:	25:02	Wow, I didn't know that.
Annie:	25:03	Yeah.
Jon:	25:04	And then maybe, do you can things or put them in jars?

Annie:	25:07	Oh, yeah. We used to can everything.
Jon:	25:11	And put it in a cellar.
Annie:	25:12	Yeah. In the cellar. Big jars. I was even telling your mom, we work when it's hot like that, when we come home, my mom would open a big jar of plums or peaches or whatever and would give us outside, because we were so hot, like today, under the tree. So we would just drink so much of that with water, diluted. Yeah.
Jon:	25:44	Well, in the summertime you needed to be saving up hay for the animals. And I guess other kinds of food for the pigs.
Annie:	25:54	For pigs.
Jon:	25:56	Yeah, potatoes and stuff.
Annie:	25:57	Potatoes and stuff. And a lot of scrap is leftover from food. Yeah.
Jon:	26:05	And then did you have dogs too?
Annie:	26:08	Oh, yes.
Jon:	26:09	Cats?
Annie:	26:10	Oh yeah, cats and dogs. You had to on the farm because there are rats and mouse. See, they would get rid of it. The cats, they were good of killing them.
Jon:	26:21	So cats would stay in the house and in the barn?
Annie:	26:25	Most of them, they were always outside in the barn.
Jon:	26:27	Yeah.
Annie:	26:28	Yeah.

Jon:	26:29	And then what about dogs? They're always outside too. You didn't have dogs in the house?
Annie:	26:33	Not really. But my dad loved, he thought his dog was special. When he would come for dinner, he would-
Jon:	26:42	When the dog would come for dinner?
Annie:	26:43	Oh, yeah. The dog would come sit beside him.
Jon:	26:47	At the kitchen table?
Annie:	26:48	At the table. Then he would feed them, give them little whatever he would... Those days you didn't buy food for the dogs. They ate whatever we were eating.
Jon:	26:59	And then what would the dog help with on the farm?
Annie:	27:03	Well, they would watch, if the cows were in a pasture far, far from the house. So the dogs would gather-
Jon:	27:13	They'd help shepherd them.
Annie:	27:15	Yeah. And the cows knew to behave. They knew how to cross the road too, because it was on the other side were steps, [inaudible 00:27:28] farm now. They had a pasture there. Because you had to have pastures. Dad used to change it every two or three years. So the grass would grow fresh for the-
Jon:	27:42	Yeah, yeah. You have to alternate where they're eating.
Annie:	27:44	Yeah.
Jon:	27:45	Yeah, you have to move where the cows are going. And so mostly the cows, they could be left to do that themselves. There wasn't a fence.
Annie:	27:51	Oh, yeah.

Jon:	27:53	Oh, there was a fence.
Annie:	27:54	Yeah. Otherwise, they would just...
Jon:	27:58	Go wherever.
Annie:	27:59	You won't find them. Oh, dear. There's one missing, two missing.
Jon:	28:10	Did you have to watch out for things like wolves and foxes?
Annie:	28:13	No, there wasn't any wolves there. Not in our area.
Jon:	28:18	What about, were there mosquito bites or something that people get sick from? Or how would-
Annie:	28:24	I don't remember having mosquito bites.
Jon:	28:26	It wasn't a problem. Ticks?
Annie:	28:29	Or ticks.
Jon:	28:31	Small problem.
Annie:	28:34	I don't know. Or they just was bitten and nobody looked after it.
Jon:	28:41	Yeah. Okay, so that gives us a sense of what life was like on the farm. What about going to school? How would you get to school? You had to walk?
Annie:	28:53	Oh, yeah.
Jon:	28:54	How long did that take?
Annie:	28:56	Well, at least we weren't that far. But there's, people had to walk very far because a lot of times they stop at our house to warm up.



Jon:	29:06	In the winter.
Annie:	29:07	Because we actually, we didn't have that far. When you come I'll show you where school... They did destroy that school house.
Jon:	29:17	But you remember where it was?
Annie:	29:18	Oh, yeah.
Jon:	29:19	And so it was just with a schoolhouse, was it just one big classroom?
Annie:	29:23	Yeah.
Jon:	29:23	And so the teacher had to teach to all of the different-
Annie:	29:26	From grade one to grade eight.
Jon:	29:29	All the same. How many people were in there? Maybe 30, 40 people?
Annie:	29:31	About 40 or 50?
Jon:	29:32	Yeah, 40 or 50. One teacher.
Annie:	29:35	One teacher.
Jon:	29:36	And the kids are any age?
Annie:	29:37	Any age.
Jon:	29:38	Grade one to eight?
Annie:	29:39	To eight.
Jon:	29:40	And then that was all the education that you had to do?
Annie:	29:42	Yeah.

Jon:	29:44	There was no high school.
Annie:	29:45	Not those days.
Jon:	29:46	Yeah, yeah. So yeah, I guess you'd meet some different people there.
Annie:	29:54	Oh, yeah.
Jon:	29:57	And you did everything from textbooks. They had some textbooks. And you do exercise.
Annie:	30:00	And it was amazing how she separated us. Grade one used to do what, the grade two and grade three. And a lot of times she combined one and two together, or three and four. And we used to have spelling bee too, from one side to the other. Which side's going to get better?
Jon:	30:27	Oh, you had two teams.
Annie:	30:27	Two teams.
Jon:	30:29	Doing a spelling bee. That's cute.
Annie:	30:33	It was.
Jon:	30:33	Did she make a competition?
Annie:	30:36	Yeah. It was something she wanted to. We were competing, kind of thing.
Jon:	30:43	And then another place, I guess maybe the only other place, you tell me, but in addition to school, then you would also have... Would you go to church every week on Sundays or...
Annie:	30:53	No.
Jon:	30:54	No.

Annie:	30:54	No. We had to go to, Well, to church.
Jon:	30:57	It's too far.
Annie:	30:58	Too far.
Jon:	30:59	Because you couldn't fit everyone in the car. Just one car, right?
Annie:	31:02	Yeah. It's amazing. We all used to fit.
Jon:	31:07	10 of you?
Annie:	31:07	Yes.
Jon:	31:07	In one car?
Annie:	31:08	Somehow we sat on one another's lap.
Jon:	31:12	No seatbelt.
Annie:	31:14	Those days was no seat belts. So when we traveled, we had friends in Hamilton and in Toronto. Or we used to go like my dad and Jon's dad, they were neighbors from Europe yet, they knew one another. And so we used to go and see them in St. Davids because they first lived in St. Davids.
Jon:	31:41	And so when you leave the farm, all the animals and the house, there's just no one there? You leave the dog or that's it?
Annie:	31:47	Oh, yeah, the dog. Then you have to come home and do the chores.
Jon:	31:51	Yeah. So you can't leave for too long.

Annie:	31:52	You can't, no. Well, we did the chores in the morning, so we used to leave about 10 o'clock or 11:00 and be home by 3:00 or 4:00.
Jon:	32:03	PM in the afternoon.
Annie:	32:03	Because you had milk the-
Jon:	32:07	Because you had afternoon chores too.
Annie:	32:07	Yeah.
Jon:	32:09	Yeah. But you could get away for just a few hours.
Annie:	32:11	A few hours, yeah.
Jon:	32:13	And then what would you do when you meet up with these other families? You have lunch together?
Annie:	32:19	Together, yeah.
Jon:	32:20	Yeah. What did people drink? People would make their own wine and beer?
Annie:	32:28	Yeah. They used to make-
Jon:	32:28	Make their own.
Annie:	32:31	Yeah. My dad used to make big barrels of wine.
Jon:	32:35	Yeah.
Annie:	32:36	They used to get grapes, and buy it grapes and...
Jon:	32:41	What would you ever get from the store? I guess, sometimes you'd have to get medicine, or the doctor would bring medicine?
Annie:	32:47	The doctor would bring medicine.

Jon:	32:51	So you never needed to go to a store for anything.
Annie:	32:54	Oh, yeah. Look for groceries, you did.
Jon:	32:57	Okay, so you get groceries too, so it's not just your... Right, right, right. Because you grow some things and then you would actually take some things to the market. You would sell chickens. You would sell eggs.
Annie:	33:07	Eggs, yeah. That was later. That was later, we're selling it. But at first we had nothing yet.
Jon:	33:14	You just had to have for yourself.
Annie:	33:16	Yeah.
Jon:	33:16	But then, so how would you get money to buy other things at the grocery store?
Annie:	33:21	Well, you would sell stuff, and that's when... We used to go and work on different farms-
Jon:	33:29	I see, you worked someone else's farm and they pay you.
Annie:	33:32	... to get money. Pick apples and cherries. And then we used to go work in the canning factory. The canning factory in Grimsby.
Jon:	33:51	Yeah. So you could do work, make money and then... So what were the things that you needed to buy at the grocery store? And what was the grocery store like? Because they didn't have fridges, or did they have fridges at the grocery store?
Annie:	34:00	They must have had fridges.
Jon:	34:02	Yeah. So they had electricity there.
Annie:	34:04	Oh, they had electricity.

Jon:	34:05	Yeah.
Annie:	34:12	Yeah. Well, like flour or rice, they used to buy a 100 pounds bags they could sell. Mom used to buy and put it in a barrel. One room, it was like a closet. It was dishes and in different-
Jon:	34:30	Like a pantry?
Annie:	34:31	Pantry, that's the word.
Jon:	34:35	Nice. So you'd keep dishes. So it'd be near the kitchen and it would have all of these things you bought from the grocery store. Big bags of rice.
Annie:	34:46	Rice, yeah.
Jon:	34:48	A 100 pound bag.
Annie:	34:49	Oh, yeah. And then used up the flour bags. There was big family. By the time you made bread or noodles and stuff, she used to make pancakes and cook them on top of the stove, bake them on top of the stove.
Jon:	35:12	Yeah. Well, do you miss any of that stuff from then? Or do you think everything's better now, having-
Annie:	35:20	Oh, everything's better now.
Jon:	35:21	Everything's better. You wouldn't go back.
Annie:	35:23	I wouldn't want to go back. Someone said, "You want to live back?" I says, "Oh no, I did it already." I'd rather live this way. You got a fridge and you buy a little bit of stuff and you go to the store whenever you need something.
Jon:	35:40	Yeah, you can go every day if you want. Get something fresh, something different from anywhere in the world.

And you can relax with the TV. You feel safe, security cameras and you can phone-

- Annie: 35:54 No, those days people never even locked. We never locked the door. There wasn't a robbery because people didn't have much. There was nothing to steal.
- Jon: 36:04 Nothing to take. A handful of rice.
- Annie: 36:09 Yeah, unless flour. And yet when mom, and especially in Europe... Well, mom was wealthy, she had help. The cleaning ladies would come clean and do the washing for mom, and do some cooking for mom. And mom would go with the hired help downtown.
- Jon: 36:36 But you had to leave everything behind in Europe quickly, to quickly escape to Canada, because things in the 1930s in Europe were getting scary.
- Annie: 36:46 Yeah.
- Jon: 36:48 Yeah. Hopefully we can... I don't know. You see some things now in Ukraine.
- Annie: 36:55 Now with the war too, look how many people came to Canada. It's amazing. Even our church was almost empty, but now-
- Jon: 37:03 Now there's lots of young Ukrainian people there.
- Annie: 37:06 Yeah. So it's the same thing again, people want to stay alive and have a better life too. [inaudible 00:37:17] They need money.
- Jon: 37:17 Yeah. And they had to leave things behind.
- Annie: 37:18 Yeah.

Jon:	37:20	They think maybe they'll be able to go back to the house, but-
Annie:	37:22	I think so.
Jon:	37:23	... who knows? Depending on how long the war goes on.
Annie:	37:25	Goes on. They never thought it's going to last this long.
Jon:	37:28	Yeah.
Annie:	37:30	It looks like there's no end to it.
Jon:	37:32	Yeah. That's what it looks like right now.
Annie:	37:36	Yeah. Everything's destroyed and it's so sad.
Jon:	37:40	Yeah. In the east of Ukraine now, especially.
Annie:	37:41	Yeah.
Jon:	37:44	Yeah. Well, we still don't know how things can go. We can still have wars and there could still be trouble with food or whatever, but it seems like things are getting better all the time. And hopefully we can keep going in that direction.
Annie:	38:02	Direction, yeah. Especially in Canada. We're lucky here.
Jon:	38:09	Yeah.
Annie:	38:09	Yeah.
Jon:	38:12	Yep. All right, Babcia. Well, I think that's it.
Annie:	38:17	That's it.



Jon:	38:20	I think we covered a lot. It's interesting to get... Almost anything we talked about here today, I didn't know about what your life was like growing up.
Annie:	38:35	Yeah. It wasn't pleasant. It wasn't like when you went to school.
Jon:	38:40	I know. God, I had it lucky.
Annie:	38:45	Yeah.
Jon:	38:46	Yeah. Probably a lot of people who listen to this show, although we have listeners all over the world, there's all different kinds of situations that people could be in. But yeah, probably lucky to be able to have... If you're able to listen to a podcast. And so that means you probably have access to all kinds of learning resources. Now they're shared all over the world.
Annie:	39:09	Oh, yeah.
Jon:	39:10	You can get free access, if you have some internet. And a lot of people use solar power now to charge batteries on a phone or maybe even a laptop computer or something. They could be anywhere in the world potentially, learning things and keeping up to date with news and the latest... We share software for computers and ways of automating things. And hopefully we can continue to figure out how to get energy without needing to make the earth hotter and hotter, climate change.
Annie:	39:51	Change, yeah.
Jon:	39:51	To figure out new ways of creating energy. And then even more and more ways of the way that, I guess, somebody who is your age, you're 94 now. But if you were 94, a 100 years ago, there'd probably still be lots of work you'd have to do.

Annie:	40:16	Sure.
Jon:	40:19	And so hopefully we can figure out more and more how to automate the work that people don't want to do. And leave more and more time for people to do things that they do like to do.
Annie:	40:32	Do like to do, yeah.
Jon:	40:34	Spend time with family and friends. Compete at spelling bees.
Annie:	40:43	Yeah. You're so right.
Jon:	40:45	Yeah. All right, Babcia. Well thank you for taking the time.
Annie:	40:47	Well, thank you for having me.
Jon:	40:49	Yeah. I enjoyed this conversation and we'll see, maybe you'll be back for episode number 900 next year, if I can think of something else to ask you and talk about.
Annie:	41:00	Maybe I'll think of or memorize whatever.
Jon:	41:09	You don't need to memorize anything.
Annie:	41:10	No.
Jon:	41:11	Nice, Babcia. All right.
Annie:	41:14	Okay, Ivanku. Or Jonathan?
Jon:	41:21	Yeah. My secret Ukrainian name.
Annie:	41:23	Yeah.
Jon:	41:28	Thank you so much for taking the time and we'll catch up with you again soon.

- Annie: 41:33 Thank you. Thank you for having me.
- Jon: 41:36 All right. I hope you enjoyed that episode, which is something different for episode number 800. In it, Annie covered things like life on the farm without electricity, how they relied on lanterns and lamps for light. How she had battery-powered radio for entertainment, used a two-seater outhouse, milked cows by hand and fed animals hay and stored food in a cool well. That was something particularly new to me that I had not heard before. She also talked about changes in technology, so things like the switch from party lines to private phone numbers, voicemail and now video calls, her appreciation for air conditioning and modern appliances. She talked about learning to use an iPad and enjoying the ease of modern technology and how she would never want to go back to the way that things were when she was growing up.
- 42:21 She also gave us some insight into what social interactions used to be like. So there was a dependence on neighbors for communication and support, limited opportunities for travel and social gatherings due to distance and time constraints and the importance of church and family visits. She also provided some historical context. What it was like escaping Europe in the 1930s due to rising tension, comparing the current war in Ukraine to what was going on in the 1930s. And overall, we were left with just reflections on how life has improved overall with advancements in technology and corresponding improvements in quality of life. If you'd like to hear more from Annie, you check out episode number 716, which I recorded with her last year, and which includes a pretty cute video version, unlike today's episode. In that episode back in episode number 716, we had tips from her on how she stays so serenely happy, 24/7.



43:15 All right, that's it for today's episode. If you enjoyed it, consider supporting this show by sharing, reviewing, or subscribing. But most importantly, just keep on listening. And until next time, keep on rocking it out there and I'm looking forward to enjoying another round of the Super Data Science podcast with you very soon.