

Clip 3 – Childhood books

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Dur: 51sec.

Jennie Lee: Books have been enchantment all my life. I can smell the dingy little library in Cowdenbeath High Street, with its mouldy books that never had a new one. But I was fortunate because it only took tuppence, two pennies in the tram to take me to Dunfermline, and Dunfermline of course was Andrew Carnegie's town with its magnificent library. I was also fortunate in having a grandfather and a grandmother and four aunts living there, and I used to collect up all their library books. And I used to go on the Saturday and I went home feeling opulent, bloated with wealth. So, I can't remember a time when books – in my student days, in my university days and ever since, haven't meant an enormous amount to me.

Interviewer: I like that description in your autobiography when you were a little girl, and a little bookcase you had at home with 'The Arabian Nights' and 'Das Kapital' sat side by side.

JL: Yes and if you look at my bookshelves in this room, they're still here.