

Beverly Branton interviewing Mr. John Ruegg on April 29, 1985. The interview is being held at 3801 Farr Avenue, which is Ridgewood Manor in Ridgeway, Ontario.

**B.B.:** Hello Mr. Ruegg.

**J.R.:** How do you do?

**B.B.:** Fine, thank you. Could you give me your date of birth, please?

**J.R.:** I was born in April the 8th, 1905.

**B.B.:** And your place of birth?

**J.R.:** In Chicago, Illinois.

**B.B.:** Chicago. How did you end up coming to this area?

**J.R.:** Well, my mother was born and raised in Stevensville area and she married a man that was working on the boats on the Great Lakes and so they made their home, for a couple of years at least in Chicago and my father was a mate and cook on the steamers on the Great Lakes. And then, about a year and a half after I was...when I was about a year and a half old at least, mother come back to the Stevensville area and we lived here everafter.

**B.B.:** What was your occupation?

**J.R.:** Well, I was a farmer boy. I worked on the farm until I got interested in the meat business, the butcher business and came to town. In fact I was working for a butcher, a farmer butcher and he moved to town and I moved to town with him to Ridgeway. And I worked for him and I pedalled meat with the wagon, horses and wagon, for Mr. Fretz, R.E. Fretz, for a number of years.

**B.B.:** Where did you pedal the meat to?

**J.R.:** I pedalled meat in Fort Erie, Erie Beach, and up through Crescent Beach.

**B.B.:** Can you describe your route? what roads you took and what it was like?

**J.R.:** We usually, I usually went down Nigh Road from Ridgeway from the Ridge Road, down the Nigh Road and in through Erie Beach, through Crescent Beach and Erie Beach. There was no stores in Crescent Beach at that time, there was one store in Erie Beach on Albert Street, at that time only one store, and I use to sell some meat to the store, to the storekeeper.

**B.B.:** Do you remember the name of the store?

**J.R.:** Bob Best was the storekeeper. And then I went down along the lakefront, there was a number of people there that I think their posterity, some of them at least, is living in Fort Erie today. There was Carricks and Eblings, Metcalfs, Ardells, they were some of the old customers we

had. And some of these customers were fishermen. They fished in the summertime, spring and summer, and we would run a meat bill, run a charge account through the winter and they'd pay it up in the spring when they caught some, sometimes they'd catch Sturgeon, and they'd pay up their bills in the spring.

**B.B.:** Where would their fishing spots...did they have favourite spots?

**J.BG:** Out into Lake Erie, I wasn't acquainted with their particular fishing spots. They'd set nets out in the lake, mouth of the river, before it got too swift, where the water was too swift. As soon as the ice was out in the spring they'd put their nets out.

**B.B.:** Was there much of a trade with that?

**J.R.:** Oh, I think there was some of those people made their living, that's about all they did was fishing.

And then from there I went out through the Old Fort into Fort Erie and in Fort Erie there was two, well they called them butcher shops in those days, Frank Kohl and Fred Wolfe, were the shop keepers. And there was one grocery store in Fort Erie that was on Niagara Street. That was run by a Mr. Rung...R-u-n-g. And Mr. Hally, Bill Hally was the hardware keeper and he sold car licenses and I took my first drivers license from Mr. Hally and that's when we started, when we first had to have our drivers license.

**B.B.:** What year would that have been, approximately?

**J.R.:** Oh, what year would that have been...'24, 1924, '23.

**B.B.:** Did you have to take a drivers test?

**J.R.:** No, he said, he asked me how long I was driving, and I told him and he said: 'oh, I think I'll give you about 85 per cent and we won't bother giving you a drivers test. "

**B.B.:** Where was this located?

**J.R.:** I'm not sure of the corner, it was all Niagara Street and just across the corner from him was Sterling Bank, I'm not sure if there is a bank there now or not but there's a little street that runs west from there and there was a livery stable right behind Mr. Hallys store and his store was right on the corner, I can't remember what the name of that little street was. And it was just across the where the old ferry use to dock and the ferry, of course, the ferry boat was the main means of transportation between Fort Erie and Buffalo, there was no Peace Bridge then and that boat use to be covered with cars and pedestrians and I remember one time there was, in the spring there was a heavy flow of ice and

the ferry boat, loaded with people and cars was carried down stream almost to the International Railroad Bridge before it finally broke loose from these ice flows and go back up to the dock. And the dock use to be right back of Agrettes, Agrette's store and parking lot. And, let's see...there was one restaurant I remember when I was pedalling, I always sold meat to this restaurant, it was owned by McKinnon Sisters. And I always use to go in there and have my supper on Saturday night when I was pedalling and I'd put the horses in the livery stable and feed them and give them drink and let them rest awhile while I had my supper. And there was an old Dr. Douglas, he was the builder for the Douglas Memorial Hospital and I use to have supper with him nearly every Saturday night...he would come in there to McKinnons for supper.

**B.B.:** Where did he live?

**J.R.:** I'm not sure where he lived. He lived in Fort Erie somewhere.

He was quite an elderly man at that time and he probably was a widower, 'cause he use to come in, sometimes his brother, he had a brother that was quite an old man too and I'm not sure what his occupation was. Probably they were both doctors, I'm not sure but this one Dr. Douglas gave a very substantial sum of money to start a hospital in Fort Erie. This was a great blessing to the Town of Fort Erie to have a hospital.

I remember my boyhood days before the hospital, a neighbour, a neighbour boy about my age or a little older was stricken with, I think they diagnosed it as appendicitis and he had to be taken to Buffalo, to a hospital in Buffaloby horse and wagon and the appendix had broken and he died shortly after he got to the hospital. Well, if they had a hospital in Fort Erie at that time probably this boy's life could have been saved. But it wasn't as easy in those days to diagnos. They use to call it sometimes, oh, inflammation of the bowel or intestine. So that donation, that first donation for the Fort Erie Hospital was a starting of a great blessings for the community.

**B.B.:** Do you remember when it was opened?

**J.R.:** It probably was in the early 30's or late 20's, I'm not real sure.

Then another thing I remember, even before I pedalled many years, I use to, right at the foot of the Garrison Road, off in toward

the river was a great, huge board sign that said: "This is the sight of the future Peace Bridge." And it was an emblem of peace that Canada and the United States had lived together peacefully for over a hundred years and it was sort of a, to be sort of a covenant for peace in the future. I remember that when I was a boy, ten years old. That sign stood there for many years before the Peace Bridge actually was built. And this of course was another big lesson to take care of the automobile traffic. The automobiles were starting to be more plentiful and the ferry boat could hardly carry them all anymore so the Peace Bridge was another great step forward for the community and for the two countries which I think were very significant. What else...?

**B.B.:** When you were pedalling, you pedalled by horse and buggy...?

**J.R.:** Horse and wagon. And of course, we didn't have any refrigeration on the wagon and we had to have meat really fresh so we always slaughtered our beef and hogs and calves and lambs, whatever, just the day before we pedalled so it would be really fresh. The idea of having meat well hung was, is a good idea to make meat more palatable tender, but when we pedalled it we didn't dare carry meat that was...especially in the summer...it had to be really fresh or it wouldn't save. And then you know what happens when some meat is laying open the flies soon find it so we had to, we carried a fly, not a swatter but a fly shoe, chaser. We'd take some strong papers like a heavy brown bag, and sort of shed the ends and tie it around the end of a long stick and then we'd chase the flies out before we closed the door so there was no flies in there to cause trouble for us and this was something you had to be very particular about because if the flies sit in there while the doors were shut and we were driving down the road they would find a place to crawl in and lay their eggs and there was trouble then so we had to be careful the flies were all shooed out before we shut the door.

**B.B.:** How often did you pedal a week?

**J.R.:** In the summer we pedalled three times a week, every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. In the winter just twice a week.

**B.B.:** How long would it take you?

**J.R.:** Well, we'd usually leave, we'd have some, we'd take some orders

from one time to the next and we'd do them up in the morning, and cut up our carcass of beef, and we'd try to get started about 8 o'clock 8 thirty in the morning and often times we wouldn't get home 'til 10 or 11 o'clock at night. The horses would get tired at night and from Fort Erie back up to Ridgeway, we lived down on the farm out near Cherry Hill at that time, on House Road. And the horses would walk, and sometimes pretty slow, and sometimes they'd go to sleep on the way up the Garrison Road. Sometimes we'd go over to the Nigh Road, we'd go up the Garrison to Rosehill and across to the Nigh Road. One night I woke up and the horses went across the Nigh, Cherry...no..went across Rosehill Road and I was sleeping, and instead of turning up Nigh Road they went straight on out to the lake and here I woke up and the horses were right on down to the waters edge. They wanted a drink I guess. And so I stayed awake for a little while but I think I went to sleep again.

One night on the way home I was sleeping and a couple old friends fo mine, they were coon hunting, and they stopped the horses and howlered: "It's a hold up. It's a hold up." And they scared me pretty well out of my wits. But I never had a real hold up. I'd have a pouch full of money on the way home. Sometimes there wasn't enough money to go around but...It was an interesting but really a dredgesome trip.

And when I'd go from house to house I'd just holler: "Butcher. " And the lady would come out. Sometimes she'd bring a pan or a dish to get her meat in. We always carried butcher paper to wrap it in if they didn't have...alot of the ladies when they came out to the wagon would bring their dish along.

**B.B.:** What were the roads like?

**J.R.:** The Garrison Road was just a stone, gravel road, just a loose stone road and there was a few cement roads in Fort Erie. They were just narrow cement roads. The boulevard from Queen Street, I think it was cemented up Queen Street, up to where the Canadian Niagara office is and the Niagara Boulevard was a narrow cement paving from Queen Street right along down through to Bridgeburg, right along the waterfront. And other than that up through the town was all just stone road. And while I was in the process of pedalling there, Fort Erie, that's Fort Erie proper, Fort Erie south

put in sewers. And it seemed like an endless time that we had to find our way through those roads that were all torn up and there were no pavement of course, up through those roads, up those hills, up Murray Hill and Bertie Hill, they were all just torn up and in terrible shape. And it seemed endless before those roads were levelled off and finally paved.

**B.B.:** You did a lot of travelling then between Ridgeway, Stevensville, Bridgeburg, Fort Erie. Can you compare them?

**J.R.:** The difference in the towns? Well probably Stevensville was the latest to, to get improvement. We lived in Stevensville when I was a boy. I remember going to the bakeshop, where Mr. Baun was the baker, he had a bakeshop. He served bread for five cents a loaf! He use to wrap it in newspaper, which wouldn't go over today, I don't think, in this area. We lived in Stevensville when the Stevensville Planing Mill burnt. That was back in probably 1910. And Ridgeway...oh, I remember when the Garrison Road was just a gravel road. In fact I remember when it was a mud road and I remember when they stoned it. They had a steam roller, they use to put crush stone on, and then roll it and wet it, sprinkle it and roll it some more. That made a pretty nice road for awhile but soon it got tore up again. And of course in Ridgeway, in the early days, the first road that was paved was the main street and that was just a narrow cement pavement and there was a dirt space on either side, on both sides of the pavement to the sidewalk and I think it was in, it was about in '24, 1924 when we came, when we moved to Ridgeway. Roy Fretz bought the store from Hassen Brean. It was a grocery store and of course Roy Fretz was a butcher and he put in a meat market in the, with the grocery store. And I worked for Roy, let's see, until about '20, 1928 and I took over Roy Fretz's butcher business. But I had pedalled, I was pedalling for Roy Fretz up until that time.

**B.B.:** Where was his store located?

**J.R.:** That's where Brodies Drug Store is now. And Dr. Glen Teal had a dentist office above the store. And in 1928 I bought Harry Baumgartel's plumbing shop on the corner of Discher and South Ridge Street. And I opened up the grocery store there. And I was there until 1948. I sold out to Kacur's.

**B.B.:** When you look back to the business street, the main street of Ridgewy, has there been a lot of changes in businesses?

**J.R.:** There sure has. If we start back at Dominion Road, corner of Dominion Road, old Mr. Newman operated that store where his daughter run the shoe store now. Old Mr. Newman run a whole line of groceries; he had a grocery store there as well as shoes and boots. And then going south from there M.J. Smith had a store, operated a meat market and grocery store where there's a restaurant now, I'm not sure of the name of the restaurant is, it's a brick building and it's a restaurant now. Hugh Sherk who was the grandfather of Jerry Sherk, the operator of Crescent Hardwares...was it Crescent Hardware...I think it is [Pro-Hardware]...lived right across the road from, well actually it was right next door to the United Church on the corner. Well for Mr. Smith's on south to the first corner, H. U. Bach's and his sister Heddy Bach's operated a, I guess you'd call it a general store, they had from pitchforks and shovels to boots and a full line of groceries and overalls and men's workshirts and probably a hammer, sledgehammer and tools of every description, garden tools. And then you'd go on from there to Harry Dell's Hardware, yes Sherk's Pro Hardware; Harry Dell at that time just carried furniture and was the undertaker and later they opened a store and time after time improvement was made and the store enlarged until the present time. And then from Harry Dell's, then was Hassen Brean's, grocery store, which Harry bought and there's where I worked for a number of years. Then was Charlie Simmon's Clothing Store. That store has been broken up into two stores now. That was Charlie Simmon's. And then there was a narrow, a little narrow store in there between Stuart's Drug Store and Charlie Simmons and Cap Lamping had a jewellery store and watch, he was a watch repairman, watch maker, Cap Lamping. And then was Stuart's Drug Store and then was Cammarato's, John Cammarata. He use to go to Buffalo to the fruit market and he'd come back with pineapples and strawberries and bananas and oh, that was the place to go for good fruit and they operated that store for many years and were always known for the best fruit on the market. Right directly across the street was Beeshy's well known, widely known china shop. Mr. Beeshy use to go to England periodically to by china and this Beeshy's chinaware was known far and wide.

People use to come for its fine English china. And just north of them there was a lot in between where the Imperial Bank is now, that was just a barren lot. Then there was a Henry Boulding had a meat market, or a butcher shop and he catered to the fine customer, the wealthy Americans along the lake. And directly north, right on the corner, across from Harry Dell's was W.G. Wilson's Ford showroom. He was the Ford dealer and he was very proud of that first Model A, Ford Model A they called it. I remember those. Boy they were a whiz...a gear shift...and I believe they had a self starter and a heater and a few more gadgets that were very modern at the time.

**B.B.:** How many cars did he have?

**J.R.:** Oh, he had sometimes a half a dozen cars. There was a, they had a Roadster with a rumble seat and a Ford coupe and then they came out with a four door sedan. And that new Ford was really a knockout.

When we go on south from Beeshy's and we get Hugh Sherk's Hardware Store; Hugh Sherk was Ward Sherk's father; Ward Sherk followed in his father's footsteps and he carried on the business. And then his son Jerry carried on the business and the next generation are operating the business today. And across the street then, oh yes, right next door to Ward Sherk's south, on the corner was the Imperial Bank. That was the only bank in Ridgeway. They had a branch bank at Crystal Beach in the summer time. And Mr. Collard, old Mr. Collard, was the bank manager in those days. He was the father of Alan Collard. And then Mr. Hamilton...no... yes, Mr. C.A. Hamilton followed Mr. Collard as bank manager. And then just south of the bank was a little alley, that alley is still there, in between the bank, and there was a store there, a Mrs. Stone operated that store and then south right by the railroad was the McLeod House, operated by Percy Rice. Across the road on the west side of the road, next, south of Cammarata store, Mr. Kinsman had a grocery store, D.D. Kinsman and he later went out of groceries and took on more of the clothing line, sweater shop and fancy knit goods. And then was Frank Clark's barber shop and then Ben Zavitz's tinsmith shop and post office. And next south from there was F.C. Brown, he had a store, grocery store and bake shop. He was the THE baker in Ridgeway. Directly across the railroad to the south on the west side of the road was the Queen's Hotel and they use to have a couple of sample rooms for salesmen, dry goods salesmen and what not. These salesmen would come into town and they'd be there three or four days probably and displayed their goods



in the sample rooms and the storekeepers would come and look over their goods and place their orders. This, was operated by, I think Art White's father, I'm not sure what his name was, but later Art White took over and operated the Hotel and sample rooms. And on the east side of the road there was a store, which store, building, is still there. It was operated by Harry Benner. I think the first I can remember Harry Benner was the storekeeper there. A little later had a number of different owners and later Seymour Rubel operated the store there. Then directly south on the corner of Discher and Ridge Road is where Harry Baumgartels Plumbing Shop was that I purchased in 1928. And I operated a store, grocery store and meat market until 1948 when I sold out to Joe and John Kacur. Across the road, on the west side of the road was the old Public School, Ridgeway Public School and I think was occupied by Masons. I believe the Masons have an office and hall there. Probably there's several occupants there. And straight west on Discher Street were was Young's Plane or Young's Building Supply is now, was operated by Will Mathewson, I think that's right. And John Youngs operated a planing mill down a little alley between the Imperial Bank and Mrs. Stone's store. Down that street was Youngs Planing Mill, John Young's who was the father of Harrison and Charlie Young. And just beyond that was Discher's grist mill. And Ridgeway was quite a business place. There was a lot of stores and a lot of businesses in Ridgeway way back in those early days.

**B.B.:** What was the reason for so many grocery stores?

**J.R.:** Well, the people didn't go out of town like they do today for groceries. Today I think you'll find, I'm just guessing now, probably half or more of the people go to Fort Erie or Port Colborne or Welland to do their grocery shopping. In those days there was some cars but people didn't run around like they did, like they do now.

**B.B.:** You had a business during the Depression Years...?

**J.R.:** I did. It was tough. I started business there in 1928 and in '29 the crash came and they were, they were deplorable years to do business. I declared to myself that I would, think I would rather do anything else, or be anywhere else but in the , operating a grocery store, a food store in those days, in the 30's, in the early '30's anyway. In a small town, your customers are all your friends and when they ask for credit I couldn't turn them down and we run into difficulty galore financial difficulty, because my money was tied up on the books and the companies that supplied

me demanded their money and I found it very difficult to pay up. In fact, there was two years that I couldn't pay my meager taxes in those early '30's and they weren't very high, probably less than \$50. But we managed to get through those tough times and in '36 it was a brighter summer, it was a good summer. And '37 was not so good but then when it came along to the '40's it really picked up and it was more of a pleasure doing business. But a great many of our earlier creditors never paid up but there was a few, a very few that came to me years after when it had been, when the debt would have been outlawed; a few customers came to me after they became a little better financially able and paid up bills. There was one bill that was just around a hundred dollars, it had been outstanding probably twenty-five years and while I didn't get any interest I was glad to get the principal and we called it square and thankful. So I hope that nobody has to go through those years again. While today we hear of many farmers and many small businesses are going bankrupt and have to go out of business, I don't know if their...seems to me the '30's were the worst time of business there could be...still there's some bad times for some people.

**B.B.:** If it ever did come to that point what advise would you give to people?

**J.R.:** Well, today far as I'm concerned I'll leave the business for somebody else. I don't think I have the answer for a business that is going bankrupt. I don't have the answer for it.

**B.B.:** Go back to the days when you were pedalling, you went through the Crescent, what now is the Crescent Park area, was that called Crescent Park in those times?

**J.R.:** It was Crescent Beach, it was known as Crescent Beach. It wasn't developed as a Crescent Park then, yet. W.A. Winger developed Crescent Park and named it. That was back in the '20's I believe, and then he experienced very tough financial times and his developments all lay dormant for quite a few years before they finally were aroused and property begin to sell again and it was developed into Crescent Park.

**B.B.:** Were there many people living in the area at that time?

**J.R.:** Not very many, just along the lake. Now from the Garrison Road right through to Dominion Road there was no houses on the road at all. And that whole area of Crescent Park was just bush farm land. Johnny Phillips owned most of that land, well there was LeJuene

and there was Hershey, there was several in there. But that was, that was mostly just farm land all through there. And a lot of that land was purchased by Mr. Winger, W.A. Winger and a lot of it lay wastelands, just grew up with thornbushes and leaves for many years. But there was, along the lakefront, we had customers along there and in, just about one block in from the lake on the west side of the Dominion Roadwell there were some houses that we use to sell to. But there was no stores in there at that time. Just that one store down at Erie Beach.

And the amusement park to my, as I remember when the amusement park was in progress in Erie Beach and there use to be a ferry boat from Buffalo to Crescent, to Erie Beach. There was an Erie Beach boat as well as a Crystal Beach boat; it use to carry passengers. Crystal Beach boat use to go every hour. There was two boats the Canadiana and the Americana, use to travel every hour. And I think there was just one boat went from Erie Beach into the Buffalo harbour and back. I'm not sure at what intervals. But that was finally, when the cars came out, were more plentiful, more people had cars, and the Peace Bridge was built, and these boats had to give up and they quit operation. And then when the boat quit operation, the Erie Beach boat quit operation, then the Erie Beach Co. just closed up the amusement park and that was dismantled.

**B.B.:** Were you ever inside the amusement park?

**J.R.:** Yes, a few times. There was one thing I enjoyed and that was the slide. You'd go up there, sit on a carpet and slide down that bumpity-bump. I remember Lela Fretz, was my bosses daughter, she went along with me one time pedalling and she wanted to go down that slide. and so I gave the horses a rest a little while and we took a few slides down that slide. I suppose that would be equivalent to the water slides today, maybe not quite.

**B.B.:** Did you go into water?

**J.R.:** No, no there was no water.

**B.B.:** What would it cost you for a ride?

**J.R.:** Probably a nickel.

**B.B.:** Were you ever swimming in the swimming pools there?

**J.R.:** No, I never was, no. I don't know if they had swimming pools, they had, they had a swimming beach. I have been swimming a number of times at the Crystal Beach, swimming beach. But I don't know

if Crystal Beach had a pool, I don't believe they had...

**B.B.:** Erie Beach.

**J.R.:** I don't know whether Erie Beach had pools. I don't believe they did, I think they just had the swimming beach in the lake. I never took time to go swimming there.

**B.B.:** What else do you remember about the park?

**J.R.:** Well, the Erie Beach Park? They had a coaster, rolling coaster but I was never on that. When I did go on a roller coaster, when I went to the beach I went to Crystal Beach. The only time I really got down to Erie Beach was when I was pedalling and I didn't have time to stop off long enough there. But I remember when they tore down the amusements I thought, "What a shame". I thought it was just a big waste of money to tear down something they had already constructed, but I wasn't at the business end of it. I don't remember very much more about the amusement park.

**B.B.:** Do you remember the opening of the Peace Bridge?

**J.R.:** Yes, I remember that quite well.

**B.B.:** Were you at the ceremony?

**J.R.:** No, I wasn't at the ceremony. But I remember when they were building it. When I'd get down to Fort Erie, I'd look at those big butmans right out in the swirling water and how in the world can they ever put them in so they stay against the pressure of the water and the ice that comes down there in the springtime. It was a tremendous piece of engineering. And a wonderful time of jubilation and rejoicing when it was finished and opened.

**B.B.:** The other thing I was thinking of...with your business on Ridge Road there was two major fires in Ridgeway on the main street. Was your business affected by that at all?

**J.R.:** No, we were on the south side of the railroad. The fire was on the north side and I was here when that fire, when that big fire took place. There was a fire previous to that, that I don't remember, that was before I came to town. But this fire, I believe it was in the early '40's, you don't have an idea when the date that was, I think it was in the '40's at least and I believe it was on a Wednesday afternoon and I started out with the little truck to pick up some calves and I got up the main road up to Harlow Days. I stopped at Harlow Days and I was talking to him and we noticed a great cloud

of black smoke coming up, down in the Ridgeway direction. And I said I'll have to go back to Ridgeway and see what this is and it was the town on fire. That was a terrible catastrophe. I think there was about four, five, maybe five or six businesses were wiped out... Morningstar, Whitey Roberts, Cammaratos, there was a couple of other little businesses in between, I'm not sure, I can't remember who they were but there was at least five that were wiped out in that fire. It looked for awhile that the whole block from the fire north was going to be wiped out but they managed to get it under control.

**B.B.:** You had mentioned also about the business, the car lot business that was first opened, do you remember when the first car came to Ridgeway?

**J.R.:** No, I can't remember that. It was W.J. Wilson that was the Ford dealer.

**B.B.:** How many different types of cars would have been on his lot?

**J.R.:** You mean of the Ford or in his, well there wasn't many trade ins back in those early days. Most of them were people who hadn't had a car and were buying a new car. Well I think Ford was probably making about five or six different types of car. They made the touring car.

**B.B.:** The what car?

**J.R.:** Touring, touring car...that is with the canopy top. They had the touring car and they had the roadster, that's the one seater and then they made the coupe and the sedan. Maybe there was four, about all.

**B.B.:** What was the difference between the coupe and the sedan?

**J.R.:** Well the coupe was the one seater and the sedan was the two seater. And I think there first sedans only had two doors, were two doors.

**B.B.:** Do you remember your first ride in a car?

**J.R.:** No, I don't think I do. I don't think...I remember the first time I drove a car, a Model T. And I remember my first ride in a side car on a motorcycle. Merl Zavitz was a schoolteacher at Cherry Hill and he had a Harley Davidson, red motorcycle, oh, it was a beauty and he rode that thing to school. And of course, he had to give each one of the kids a, well he took three or four of us in the side car, for a side car ...oh, and that was a thrill to ride that motorcycle in the side car. But my first attempt to drive a car, I thought I'd, I had watched some other guys driving and I'd watch and see how

they would operate...the Model A had three pedals and the middle pedal was a reverse, the left one was the break and the right one was a clutch. Well I knew that. But I borrowed a car to take my girl for a ride one night and I drove into a place and had to back out and I didn't know how to back it up. And I was stuck there and I'd stall every time. And finally some good hearted guy come along on the sidewalk and said: "You have trouble there." I said: "Ya, it stalls on me all the time." So he came back and he showed me what to do and I was very thankful and I backed out. I could go ahead all right but I couldn't back it out. So I learned a good lesson that weekend. I don't think I ever told the guy I borrowed the car from.

**B.B.:** Can you think of anything else as you look back?

Is there anything else on the paper you jotted down...that you think...?

**J.R.:** No, I guess we pretty well covered it. Those were the good ole days but they were, they were hard days. We didn't know any better then but we look back and we wouldn't want to go through them again.

**B.B.:** That's the one thing we didn't cover was, you would have went through two World Wars. How did they affect the area?

**J.R.:** The 1st World War I was nine years old when the war started. I was thirteen when peace was declared. They were very, very tense days. Our boys, not only our boys, our mothers and fathers, were very, very concerned about the boys that had to go to war. Many of them didn't come back. And I know there was many prayers went up on behalf of the welfare of the world and the country and the boys and many prayers were sent up that their boys wouldn't have to go to war. There was quite a number came home, some of them not like they went, and some of these boys suffered the rest of their lives from the experiences they had. And some of them were very fortunate, they came through and escaped. And I remember the terrible stories that would come back with the sinking of those great ships and many men lost and Flander's Fields stories when I was just a boy. I didn't, probably didn't fully realize, what it would have ben like to have been on the front. Well, I counted myself fortunate to be too young, to be enlisted or to be in the draft age. And then when the second war came along I was above the draft age. Many of our boys, I mean, when I say our boys I mean the boys of our church of our faith, excepted alternate service instead of combatent service. And they were made available for useful construction or whatever the government saw fit to put

..but the draft didn't affect me, that is at least I wasn't in the draft age. My oldest son was in the draft age and he was called and he was rejected for health reasons. And then there was a second call just before the Armistice was signed and he was, he went in and was about to be inducted into the army and the Armistice was signed and he was released. So, as far as our family was concerned we were not directly affected by it even my son, through myself, and I thank the Lord for that. Many of our boys fell in the war and they were very tense and dark days.

**B.B.:** Was there much talk on the radio at that time about the war coming? Was it expected, in this area?

**J.R.:** You mean before it actually broke out. Well there was talk of war. I don't recall too much of what the feeling was just before the war broke out. It was vivid things, when the war was oh, like the sinking of the Bismark. That was oh, that was tense! When the Germans had sank a number of the allied ships, the English, British ships.

**B.B.:** Would there be a lot of talk about the war that was going on... your business, being a businessman on the main street there was there a lot of gatherings, talks about it?

**J.R.:** I don't recall too much of that. No I don't recall that. There probably was in some areas, barber shop gatherings and like that. I don't know much about the town talk, I don't know much of that.

**B.B.:** Is there anything else you can think of?

**J.R.:** Can't right now.

**B.B.:** Well, you've done great.

**J.R.:** I probably, I probably will think of some things when I go to bed tonight.

**B.B.:** Well, I thank you Mr. Ruegg very much, very much.