

This is Rose Hearn interviewing Mrs. Annie Staddon, 333 Central Avenue, Fort Erie, Ontario, and the date is September 20, 1985.

**R.H:** Good morning Mrs. Staddon, how are you?

**A.S:** Oh, I see, you are recording it. I'm fine thank-you.

**R.H:** Could you please tell me where you were born?

**A.S:** Well, I was born in Liverpool, England and then I married a Londoner and I moved to London.

**R.H:** What is your date of birth?

**A.S:** The 3rd of February, 1898.

**R.H:** When did you come to Canada?

**A.S:** 1927, the day the Prince of Wales opened the Peace Bridge.

**R.H:** Oh yeah, that was the date of the Peace Bridge Opening, did you arrive on that exact date?

**A.S:** Yes.

**R.H:** So, you came right to Fort Erie then?

**A.S:** Yes. When we got out of the train at Fort Erie, it had to go around and down Courtwright Street and along the Boulevard to go up to the West End. So, the taxi driver said "Hurry up, hurry up". I had three youngsters, I said, "What's the hurry?" and my hubby was with me. "What's the hurry?" "Oh," he says, "The Prince is opening the Peace Bridge and they're going to close the road up". He couldn't have got out to come around, you see. I wasn't too interested because just coming from London, in fact, I was a mear 15 minutes from Hyde Park and I used to push the kiddies through there and I remember seeing the Queen married.

**R.H:** So, was there a lot of people around that day when you arrived?

**A.S:** No.

**R.H:** To see the...

**A.S:** To see the Queen?

**R.H:** No, to see the Peace Bridge Opening?

**A.S:** Peace Bridge Opening! I didn't even go down but there were a lot. I bought the newspapers, I think I told you that, didn't I? I bought the newspapers and I used to do Christmas baskets here, I did them for 23 years and...

**R.H:** Who did you do that for?

**A.S:** I did them through the Red Cross. I've been with the Red Cross now for 45 years and I'm still with them. But anyway, I... So, then

when Regional came in, they decided it was a minister's job, after me doing it all these years. Well, anyway I didn't mind, I was getting older and... one winter it was so bad, the police came out and helped me deliver. Yeah, they were very good. Reverend McLarnon of the Presbyterian Church, well, he took over and asked all the ministers for a meeting. There was only two of them turned up, so they called back on me and asked me to help them, which I didn't. Anyway, in a way I was pleased because it was getting to be a bit too much, but anyway that was through Regional that happened. There's a lot of things happened since we went Regional, believe you me.

**R.H:** So, you were involved with the Red Cross for a long time then?

**A.S:** Ever since it started. I was one of the originals with Mrs. Teal, Mrs. Oscar Teal, I mean the old lady. I knew John and all of them when they were kids, they used to live...

**R.H:** When you delivered these Christmas baskets, who were they given to?

**A.S:** I used to have a meeting at the Town Hall and I used to call all the different organizations to send up a representative. My daughter acted as my secretary and I would say further more, people on welfare, you could not get their names, only through the Town Hall. So, this is the reason they cooperated with me because I got the names. I would say for instance, "I have Mr. and Mrs. Jones and two children", and someone would say, "I'll take them". So, my daughter would put that down, which ones had been taken care of. So, I had all this about the Prince coming, in the paper, the newspaper and of course, I bought one. Reverend McLarnon came down and he happened to call at the house one day to see me, although I didn't go to his church, but he called at the house and he was going up to Colonel Weir's, by the river. He got talking and I... we got talking about when I came and when the Prince opened up the Peace Bridge and I said, "I've got some papers on it". He said, "Oh, have you". So, I showed them to him and he went away, visited, and I had a phone call about half an hour later, Colonel Weir wanted to know if I would give him the newspaper with all this proceedings in it. I said, "Sure". So, Reverend McLarnon came down and picked them up and took them up to him. I was weeks and weeks getting it back and when I did, he had cut it all up in pieces. I was so darned annoyed, I've

never forgiven him for it. Well, I think he did that to make copies and I imagine they're in the Peace Bridge now, I don't know but I imagine they are. But it annoyed me to think he did that, that's the same as a piece of music. I used to have a store here you know.

**R.H:** Oh, you did, you had a store?

**A.S:** Yeah, and there was a man came in, I knew him slightly. His name was Asia Hike and he said, "Would you like this Mrs. Staddon". I said, "what's that?" he said, "A piece of music on Fort Erie". I said, "Who wrote it?" It's a piece of music on Fort Erie and I loaned it to... Bert Jepson wanted it, he was the Town Clerk you know. I loaned it to Bert and damn me if they didn't cut some of it off so that they could get it in the... make a copy of it. I'll think twice before I loan anything like that again. Further more, I've got this picture of when the library opened, I wonder if they've got one here? I would give it to them but I just could not find it, I know I have it. I was here at the opening but I'll bring it over for them to... if they haven't got one.

**R.H:** What kind of store did you have?

**A.S:** Well, I was brought up in the bakery business in England and when we came out here... I don't want you putting anything of this down...

**R.H:** So, you were saying Fleet called you up one day and...?

**A.S:** Fleet called me up one day and wanted to know if I would go and see them. So, I went up and he said, "I wonder if you'd go around and find accomodation for some of the girls and men that are coming from Toronto and different places". They had no accomodation, you see. I said, "Sure" so, they gave me a little office up there and they gave me \$20 a week but they never paid for my gas or anything. They built the place over where the Catholic Church is.

**R.H:** Are you talking about Winston Hall, the hostel?

**A.S:** Well, it isn't there now.

**R.H:** I know, but wasn't it on Central Avenue?

**A.S:** Yes, it was on Central and the girls were boarding there. Then after a time when they got them, they told me that was it. I didn't mind anyway.

**R.H:** How long did you do that for?

**A.S:** I just can't recollect but I think about six months.

**R.H:** You said that you had a bus running to Buffalo, was that a local bus?

**A.S:** It was a local bus and Tom Bright drove it, ten cents.

**R.H:** The cost was ten cents. Where did that pick the people up?

**A.S:** It was at the North End. It used to come up Lewis Street to Jennet Street, down Gilmore and down Central to the Peace Bridge.

**R.H:** How often did it do this?

**A.S:** It was two or three times a day.

**R.H:** Was this your idea?

**A.S:** Oh no, it wasn't my idea. It was a local transit bus, their idea.

**R.H:** What year would that be, approximately what year?

**A.S:** Oh, that would be in the early '30s. Tom Bright was a coloured man, very nice man though. The Bright family are an old family here.

**R.H:** When did you start organizing the Senior Citizens?

**A.S:** When did I start doing that? That was 24 years ago. I started off with 12 women and now there's four clubs and there's about 500.

**R.H:** What kind of functions do you run for these clubs?

**A.S:** What do I do? What do all the seniors do? Oh, they have trips and in the winter they play cards and they have entertainment and so on.

**R.H:** You say you worked for the Red Cross, during the war, did you do anything for the soldiers that went overseas? I know the Red Cross did, but was there anything that was done in Fort Erie?

**A.S:** In Fort Erie for the soldiers? Yes. I myself was the only one, I don't think anybody else did anything... apart from knitting socks and things like that, I went around to the homes of the local soldiers and I got their addresses and we filled ditty bags...

**R.H:** What was a ditty bag?

**A.S:** Well, it was a bag about so big and we put pens, notepaper and all that kind of thing in and sent them to our local soldiers. When the war was over, they used to call me from the station and I used to meet the trains coming from Buffalo and oh boy! did they ever shout, the boys. There was only one fellow that got off the train and he rushed at me, threw his arms around me and kissed me, you should have heard the fellows on the train. It was funny. Some of them asked me to make telephone calls for them, to say they were coming home. The train was there for about 15 or 20 minutes.

**R.H:** So, the soldiers asked you to make phone calls for them?

**A.S:** Yeah, I made some phone calls to their homes to say that they were on their way.

**R.H:** You mean you were talking to them at the station and they asked you to make the phone calls and you got the phone numbers right there?

**A.S:** Yes, they gave me their phone numbers at the train station.

**R.H:** Didn't you drive a truck or something during the war?

**A.S:** I drove a Red Cross truck. Yes, I should have brought a picture of it. I drove that all during the war and I had a funny experience. Mrs. Chiswell, her husband was boss at Fleet, well, she came with me and the two of us went out. We used to pick up anything that was saleable and we used to take it down to Jarvis Street to a Mrs. Dawson, she had a store there and they used to sell all these things and the money went to the Red Cross. I went out on the truck this day and we went up near the Old Fort. There was a woman came out, I forget what she gave us. She said to Mrs. Chiswell, "I've got a mattress here", and she said, "I don't need it". She said, "Would you care to take it". Well, Herb Guess was mayor at that time and Herb Guess owned the place across the street...

**R.H:** Was that the place on Courtwright?

**A.S:** No, on the Boulevard, the river side. He loaned us this building and we used to keep all our stuff in there.

**R.H:** I thought it was on Courtwright and the Niagara Boulevard, is that the place?

**A.S:** That's where he lived, on the other side but he had this... oh, no, he lived on the other side, Herb did. But he used to loan us this building and we kept all our goods in there. Anyway, Mrs. Chiswell said, "Certainly". So, she goes inside and I said, "Do you want any help", 'cause it was a big mattress. So, she said, "No, it's full of feathers". So, she came out with it and I'm still sitting in the truck, she came out and she threw it over the truck and I heard such a scream. I got out of the truck and I went around and looked, I thought it was some animal from some weird place. She was covered in feathers, she'd caught it on the top of the truck and I can see her now. There was a wind came up and all the feathers started flying and I thought she was taking off. Oh, we had some funny



funny things happen. It's like William and... oh, the Chinese man... oh, I know him so well... Skippy Wong. Well, Skippy and George had a restaurant just 'round the corner from Courtwright on Jarvis Street, just 'round the corner. I was on the Board of Health also, I was on the Board of Health with Dr. Mulvaney for 17 years and we never got any pay either. Anyway, Dr. Mulvaney, he used to have the truck come up, once a month, they had to come to the stores, take a blood sample and he would exam them and they would get a thing to put in the stores, one two or three. We'd have people from the hotel and he used to go down there and he would find lipstick on the glasses, they'd never been properly washed. He went into Skippy's and George's and he found out that George had T.B. He said, "If I ever see you in a kitchen again, I'll be closing you up the same day". They moved soon after that, down to Queen Street, not Queen Street, across from the Peace Bridge there.

**R.H:** Behind the Peace Bridge? Do you mean George's Chinese Restuarant?

**A.S:** So, anyway they moved down there.

**R.H:** So, they were quite strict then, the Board of Health?

**A.S:** Oh yes, absolutely. Dr. Mulvaney was wonderful, he used to go around and see that everything was okay.

**R.H:** Didn't they have to have their hair covered and everything in restaurants?

**A.S:** Not always, some of them did.

**R.H:** Did the Board of Health give them a sticker if everything was alright?

**A.S:** Yes.

**R.H:** So, each place was inspected?

**A.S:** Yes, the sticker was one, two or three.

**R.H:** What was the best?

**A.S:** Number one, number one was perfect.

**R.H:** But with three you could still stay open?

**A.S:** Yes, well, he told them that they had to fix this or do that. Oh, he was very strict in those days. I worked at the hospital for six months. Mrs. Chiswell and I, she used to live down on Bertie Street right across from where Dr. Mulvaney lived. Well, anyway, she lived across there and I only lived across the street here...

**R.H:** On Central?

**A.S:** Yes, at the corner of Idylwylde and she called me to say, "I'm ready". She'd walk up Bertie Street, I'd walk along Central and we used

to meet each other and then walk up. We used to empty bedpans and make beds and...

**R.H:** Was this volunteer work?

**A.S:** They had no volunteers. We worked there for six months.

**R.H:** Were you volunteers though?

**A.S:** We were volunteers.

**R.H:** Is that when the hospital first opened?

**A.S:** No, it was after that, it was after that. I went up one day... I sang in the choir down here for 35 years and...

**R.H:** Where?

**A.S:** St. Paul's Anglican Church. Mrs. Fitzgibbon, you wouldn't remember her, it's quite a few years since she died. Her sister-in-law was our organist so, I knew her quite well but she had a maid, Jessie Webb, and Jessie was putting curtains up one day and she fell down and broke her leg. So, I used to visit her in the hospital. After she got out of bed, I went up one day and she was pushing two chairs to get around. So, I looked at her and I said, "Haven't you got a walker here?" She said, "I've never seen anything like that, what's it like?" The nurse came in and I said, "Haven't you got any walkers?" She said, "No, we haven't". Well, I had a walker that was given to me by an American gentleman. So, I took my walker up there and when Jessie went home the hospital wanted to keep it. Well, I was in the hospital auxiliary at the time and I was one of the first to be on the auxiliary 'til Mrs.... I can't think of her name now, she started it. She lived at the bottom of... I can't remember her name but anyway, Jessie took this home with her, I allowed her to, knowing her. So, when we had our auxiliary meeting, I happened to mention this. I explained about Jessie, how she had used two chairs and so, they said, "Well, where did you get it?" I said, "I got it from a gentleman in Buffalo, he gave it to me". So, they said, "Well, we're willing to pay for half a dozen, where can we get them?" So, I knew Blair Harbour, he worked at the Fleet before he started his business, and I spoke to him and Blair said, "Bring it down". He just started then, he'd just started in business. I took the walker down to Blair...

**R.H:** What kind of business was he in?

**A.S:** He makes boats. He's got a place on Lewis Street as well as at

the back here. Well, he worked at Fleet and Fleet used to make these boats. Well, they didn't think it paid them so they quit making them and Blair took it over. Well, he left Fleet and started on his own with the boats and he's done alright. Well, anyway, I took it down and Blair Harbour made the first six for the hospital, the first six walkers.

**R.H:** How did the axiliary raise the money for this?

**A.S:** The hospital paid for them, oh yes, the hospital paid for all of them.

**R.H:** Did the auxiliary ever raise money themselves to get things?

**A.S:** The hospital? In those days we didn't very much. But I remember before the hospital was built... Dr. Douglas lived at the bottom of Bertie Street, he wasn't operating as a doctor because he was past it. When he died, he left it in his will, all his money had to go to a hospital to be built here and he left the ground. He left the ground at the bottom of Bertie Street on the right hand side on a bit of a hill. That's where Dr. Mulvaney lived but that belonged to Dr. Douglas. When they looked at it, they said, "It wasn't appropriate for a hospital to be built there," which it wasn't. So, they went around looking and they bought this sight, Mr. Sherk owned it, they bought the ground off him where the hospital is now. It was a much better sight.

**R.H:** Did they sell the other property then?

**A.S:** Oh yes, they sold it. Then there's things... but I don't want that recorded. They needed a home for the nurses...

**R.H:** Did the hospital want a home for the nurses?

**A.S:** A residence for the nurses. So, I said, "Why not build one outside the hospital". Well, they left that... later they bought this one up on Central Avenue just past Bertie Street on the right hand side. It's got a big fire escape on the outside. Well, it didn't pay off because all the nurses were local. They had to pay for a housekeeper, they had to keep the nurses and that and it didn't work out at all, so they sold it.

**R.H:** But the hospital was a good thing for this Town, wasn't it?

**A.S:** Oh, absolutely, because everybody had to go to the Falls and there wasn't the transportation around in those days. You figure, there wasn't the cars that there are today and the roads... oh gosh, when I came here the roads were... Jarvis Street wasn't paved. Jarvis



Street was not paved when I came here and they had hitching posts up for the horses. Mrs. Dawson, the same lady that had used our store for us afterwards, she had a kind of store there where she sold buns and things like that. You could go for a cup of coffee and a bun and things like that and I thought, my gosh, what have I come to? I could have swam back.

**R.H:** Did it look like the 'Wild Wild West' to you?

**A.S:** It did, I'd seen it on pictures, you know the old-fashioned pictures. Then, they had a parade afterwards, after the road was finished and Mrs Wintemute won first prize, I always remember that. I think Wintemute Street was called after her family. She only had a car with a few paper flowers on it and she won the first prize.

**R.H:** Do you mean for the car being decorated, like a float type thing?

**A.S:** Yes, so you can tell what kind of parade it was. I do citizenship and...

**R.H:** What do you mean, you do citizenship?

**A.S:** Well, I'm doing it right now. People call me up and then I arrange for the Town Hall and they come down from St. Catharines 'cause that office is closed now... they just closed it and Judge Wong was the judge and she's left her job. I believe she's got another job but I'm not quite sure what it is. But Hamilton is running it now and they come down or send somebody down, and they question them. You have to pay a fee, it used to be five dollars when I first started it, it's \$40 now.

**R.H:** When did you start doing that?

**A.S:** Oh, some years ago. And then, after they have been questioned, then Judge Wong came down and they used to take the oath. The I.O.D.E. used to... well, they only started coming the last two or three years. The I.O.D.E. started coming and giving them a certificate.

**R.H:** I know you're not a member but do you know anything about that organization, like the background for instance?

**A.S:** No, no. There was no I.O.D.E. when I came here, in fact, there weren't many organizations when I came.

**R.H:** So, you mentioned that you held your meetings at the Town Hall when you were organizing this...?

**A.S:** Citizenship? Well, they won't come unless I have at least 20 names so, I have more than half of them at the present moment. When

I get 20 names, I'll call Hamilton and they will come down and interview them. When the Judge comes, of course I have to arrange for the Council Chambers... so, when the Judge comes, we have a mountie there with the Judge. They all come in and you can bring your... say you were getting your citizenship... you can bring your family with you and we supply refreshments for the families and that.

**R.H:** Have you ever been involved in politics?

**A.S:** Politics? Oh, one time... we had Dr. Hays living here, he was a dentist in the South End and he and his wife... his wife and I were very friendly, so she called me up one day and she was a great conservative, so, she said, "Anne", she said, "We're having a bash, we will go to the arena in Welland. Diefenbaker is coming to speak to us". So, I said, "Oh gee, I don't know if I can make it Florrie". "Oh, come on," she said. I said, "Well, I'll do my best". So, I got dinner ready and I got the bus at the corner here and the women were already in it. We go to Welland, we hear Diefenbaker and he... but anyway coming out after listening to him, they had a tarpaulin over the ice, well I wasn't... they should have mentioned the fact, you know. But coming out, I wasn't on the main floor, on the central floor and the tarpaulin was puckering like that, you know. I stood on it and down I went, on my hip. I broke my hip and they took me to the hospital, they took me in the ambulance to Welland. The doctor said, "Oh, I can fix it for you but it might be a little short". I said, "No, thank-you, I'm going back to Fort Erie". So, they sent me back here and Dr. Mulvaney of course came immediately and took me over to Buffalo. I was only in there about a week and they put a pin in so about 12 months later... when they shipped me back here to Fort Erie, about 12 months later I was in bed and you know how you put your hand down? and, I thought, what's this? I felt this little lump, I thought surely that's not the pin coming out. So, I called Dr. Mulvaney, "No, it's very seldom they come out". He said, "Anyway, come down". So, I went down and he says, "Your right, the only thing we can do, is take it out". So, back in the hospital I went to get this pin out, I should've sued them at the time. I would've done, today they would you know, the arena. But anyway, they paid my hospital expenses, for Buffalo 'cause there was no O.H.I.P. then you know, and I was incapacitated

a few weeks but anyway it's never bothered me since.

**R.H:** Did you ever get involved in local politics?

**A.S:** No. I used to be involved in England and my hubby was interested, it was through him that I got interested. So, we had the three children and he'd go one week and I'd go the next week. Darn me, the week I went, there was so much shouting. Oh, they were shouting and hollering, ready to fight each other. So, they locked the doors, a fellow stood up and he spoke and he said, "I hereby call Marshall Law". So, they sent for the Militia and let all the women out, they arrested those that were in the disturbance. But they have to read it out when they are having Marshall Law and so, I never went again after that.

**R.H:** When you drove this Red Cross truck, where did they keep that?

**A.S:** Well, Herb Guess... oh no, who was it? We kept it on Lewis Street, some house, but we kept it on Lewis Street and different women drove it, I wasn't the only one. We had a garage next door, just where what's his name is now? You know the one that's making the boats?

**R.H:** Yeah, Harbour?

**A.S:** Blair Harbour, and of course the garage isn't there any more. We used to keep it there and one day I went to turn the motor on and it wouldn't work. So, I went into him and I said, "What's wrong with the motor, I can't get the truck going". It turned out somebody had stolen the engine.

**R.H:** Who paid for the gas?

**A.S:** We didn't, that came out of the money that we took into Mrs. Dawson, that had the store.

**R.H:** And of course, gas was rationed then during the war, was it rationed for you?

**A.S:** No, no. I don't recollect any rationing.

**R.H:** Of gas?

**A.S:** No.

**R.H:** Were you ever involved with the Salvation Army?

**A.S:** Oh, the Sally Army, no I never was really.

**R.H:** Can you remember what Douglas Hospital was like when it first opened? Was the area built up?

**A.S:** Oh, no. It was quite small, it was small, you know for a hospital.

It's been built terrifically since.

**R.H:** So, there's been a lot of additions added on since it was built?

**A.S:** Absolutely.

**R.H:** Was there many homes around there?

**A.S:** No, there wasn't and there was no wartime houses when I came here. It was all vacant ground and when I came here, Oakes Park was just a piece of ground and then when Harry Oakes was knighted, Sir Harry Oakes, he gave the ground to the Town, for Town use so that they couldn't build houses or anything on it. To go to the other end of town, you had to go up Gilmore Road, through Jennet Street and down Lewis Street. Most people used to cross over the railroad tracks and then they built Central Avenue right through, otherwise that wasn't there. From here to the North End...

**R.H:** From Gilmore?

**A.S:** From Gilmore to the South End rather, to the South End was not called Central Avenue.

**R.H:** Do you know what it was called?

**A.S:** Yes, I lived on it. It was Kincardine Street and I still live on it.

**R.H:** Did you ever live anywhere else? Is this your first house?

**A.S:** No, we lived in the house right across from Catherine Street. It was the first house we came to and my sister-in-law rented it for me, rented it for us rather. So, we lived there and then we moved to Gilmore Road to open the store. We built where we are...

**R.H:** That was the bakery on Gilmore Road?

**A.S:** Yes, we only rented that and we wanted our own so we built where we are now. Of course it was much bigger and that's why I'm so near the corner. I don't know if you know my house but it's right on the corner. There were no sidewalks or anything so it took quite a bit from me walls.

**R.H:** So, you had that house built?

**A.S:** Of course it was much bigger than it is. It had the bakery around the side, but that's all been pulled down. When we lived upstairs, we had the store all downstairs.

**R.H:** How long were you in business?

**A.S:** Oh, quite a few years, all during the Depression. When Fleet started, they came and asked my hubby to go up there. So, I soon learned I couldn't manage on my own. So, we did without the bakery and

I managed the store and he went up to Fleet. After he got working at Fleet and after all this cruddy business, you know... so, we closed.

**R.H:** Getting back to the hospital, do you remember some of the doctors who were there?

**A.S:** Well, there was Dr. Streets, Dr. Mulvaney and Dr. Derbyshire... I can't think of any others.

**R.H:** Have you any idea where the money came from for the additions that were built on to the hospital? Did it come from any private organizations or clubs?

**A.S:** Well, at the time the auxiliary started, we started a little coffee shop. I used to serve there. We didn't make much money really but otherwise, I don't know who paid for it.

**R.H:** When did the little coffee shop start at the hospital?

**A.S:** Oh, that was started some years ago, I wouldn't really remember. I was the chairman... we had started to show the women first aid and nursing and things like that. So, we used to meet over here where the women used to board. They had all left, it didn't pay off after things got going. They all moved here or something. So, we used to meet there, well, they had a fire and we had a Judy, what we call a Judy...

**R.H:** What's a Judy?

**A.S:** That's a full size women, a figure. They called them Judy's, you know. So, we had her in bed, do you know what I mean?

**R.H:** Oh yeah, you were using this for your training, right?

**A.S:** Yeah, training. They called them Judy's. Well, anyway, we had Judy in bed and I only live across the street and when the fire started, I ran over there. I was running inside and the fireman tried to grab me but I got past him. He said, "Where the h--- are you going?" I didn't answer him, I hauled Judy out of the bed and came home with her. I carried her home in my arms, she was as big as you. Anyway, I took it up to the hospital and it disappeared. I think that it was sold to one of the salesman, in fact, I'm almost sure it was.

**R.H:** Was this Judy used for first aid then?

**A.S:** Yes, to show them what to do.

**R.H:** This was a mannequin you used?

**A.S:** Yes, a mannequin but we called it a Judy.



**R.H:** So, this fire was in Winston Hall then, the hostel?

**A.S:** Yes, over here.

**R.H:** Did it burn down?

**A.S:** Well, it didn't burn down but they pulled it down afterwards.

**R.H:** Did the Fire Department have a lot of equipment then?

**A.S:** No, they didn't. When we first came here, the Town had no equipment. My hubby, somebody had offered him... to sell him, he wouldn't get it for nothing, a billiard table. The Town came along with a bit of a machine to clear the snow and I'm telling you, we had snow in those days when I first came here. When they knew about him having this billiard table, they said, "Could they come in and play billiards". My gosh, instead of doing their work, they were playing billiards all day. There was nobody to watch them, the Town employees.

**R.H:** Well, I think I've just about covered everything, is there anything else you would like to tell me? Do you know who started the Red Cross?

**A.S:** The Red Cross? It was started by Mrs. Oscar Teal and Mrs. Tyrrell, Ted Tyrrell's wife and myself and Mrs. Tyrrell was... I'm an awful one for names lately.

**R.H:** The Red Cross went way back and it was around for a long time wasn't it, during the First World War?

**A.S:** Yes, I worked in the 'munitions during the First World War. It was in Aintree in Liverpool, where the racetrack is. They closed it during the war. They said, "All young women should either go in the Land Army or go in 'munitions". I had rather a strict father and he said, "You're not going in the Land Army," so, my sister and I went in 'munitions. We were filling 6 pounders with T.N.T. and cordite. We used to see the German planes... not planes...

**R.H:** What kind of things were they, what did they do?

**A.S:** They were planes, well, they weren't planes, they were bigger... oh gosh... what were they? We used to see them, I could have shot them down. They used to sound the alarm when these were coming over. They used to sound the alarm and then we'd all go in the shelters.

**R.H:** Did they have the Red Cross then?

**A.S:** No.

**R.H:** So, you didn't get involved with it 'til you came to Canada?

**A.S:** Not until I came here to Fort Erie. I was doing some work for Ramsey MacDonald in his baby clinic and I was telling you...

**R.H:** Did you have any medical background for working there at the baby clinic?

**A.S:** Well, not at that time.

**R.H:** Where was this baby clinic?

**A.S:** I'll tell you. Before I was married, I worked for a doctor on Wimpole Street, a heart specialist. While working there, I gained a little experience but nothing to speak of. I'm not going to boast about that but all the notables used to come there and all we had to do was go outside and blow a whistle for a taxi. It would be there in a couple of minutes and Bob Hope lived across the street. He was born there, Wimpole Street, London. I wish I could meet him now.

**R.H:** You mentioned working for some doctor and he had to do an operation on the kitchen table, where was that?

**A.S:** Oh, that was in England. Yes, that was the Ramsey MacDonald who bought this old hotel and then they used to take tonsils and adenoids from the children on a Monday. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and even Friday, we had four different schools come and we used to cut off their lousy hair.

**R.H:** When you say lousy hair, you mean the children had lice in their hair?

**A.S:** Yes. We used to cut off their hair, honestly it used to sicken me really, although we did it. You'd see nits on the hair, all down the hair and we used to send a note home with them, telling what to do. They were told to wash their hair in hot vinegar water and that used to kill them. You never hear of that today but that's what we used to tell them. We used to cut their hair off, real short, when they came in.

**R.H:** I didn't know this happened in England, I thought you were talking about Dr. Derbyshire and how you worked for him. Did I guess wrong?

**A.S:** Well, I was telling you about the lady when I first came here. She had appendicitis and I called Dr. Derbyshire and he came across at night and he said to me, "Could you go over and see her," and I said to him... you know, she was telling me about the pain she had and I said, "You might have appendicitis," and so I said, "I'll

"I haven't got one," she said. That's how I got to know Dr. Derbyshire, he had just come here and he always sent me a card every Christmas.

**R.H:** So, you sent for him that night to help that lady?

**A.S:** Yes, I called him and we were always friends after that. This is his second wife you know and of course he's dead now. Did I tell you I worked for Dr. Collins?

**R.H:** You worked for Dr. Collins?

**A.S:** As secretary for a time, a short time. He had a wife too, a very nice person and he got in with this other woman and he put his wife in a home. I don't think she needed that, I think it was through him that she got a little upset but anyway she died and he married this other one.

**R.H:** Was Dr. Streets a good doctor?

**A.S:** Yes, Dr. Streets was a good doctor. He lived on Central Avenue on the corner house.

**R.H:** You mentioned someone named Andy Benner who owned a store, can you tell me about him?

**A.S:** He owned a store across the railway tracks in Ridgeway. He told me when he was a boy, he used to hide in the ditches when the Fenians came. They came over from Buffalo. He also told me, that Fort Erie when he lived in it, was bigger than Buffalo, when he was a youngster. They used to bring the grain over from Buffalo to the mills to be ground. When I first came here, old Mr. Barnhart had lived here for years and he told me that they took all our topsoil from 'round here, over the Peace Bridge to make the park on the right hand side of the Peace Bridge.

**R.H:** What about this Andy Benner, did he tell you any more about the Fenian Raid?

**A.S:** No, he was only a boy when it happened and they used to hide in the ditches 'til they all went by. They were only youngsters and they heard them coming.

**R.H:** What kind of store did he have?

**A.S:** I think he had a grocery store. It was on the left hand side just as you cross over the tracks. He had it there when I first came here.

**R.H:** Now, you got an invitation to attend the Queen's Tea Party or... was it a luncheon?

A.S: Yes. We had to wear hats and gloves and no cameras. I have a niece who lives very close, Henley on the Thames and so she called me up... I went to my sisters first and stayed there for two nights and then my niece called me up and said, "Auntie, I want you to come down here and stay, you'd be near the palace". So, I said, "Yes, we are coming down". She had a very large home, I'm the poor one in the family but they had sold it and I'd never been to her new home. So, we went down there to stay and when we got to Paddington Station, she said, "Call me and I'll drive down there and pick you up". Well, there were two phone booths together... I was allowed to take somebody, I took my daughter. So, my daughter said, "I'll call...". She was going to call my niece, you see. So, she put the money in and it kept coming out all the time. Well, there was a man on the other phone talking. So, I said, "We'll wait 'til he's finished, maybe there's something wrong with it". Well, just then a girl came up with a big bag and she said, "I'm sorry, that phone's out of order, "she said, "I'm just going to fix it". I've never known of a woman going out fixing phones before. So anyway, we stood there and when this fellow came out, he said, "I'm sorry I've kept you". I said, "Oh, that's alright, but she can use the phone". So, he said, "What number do you want?" So, she told him the number, I had given it to my daughter. She told him the number and he couldn't get any answer. So he said, "Where are you going?" and we told him where we were going and he said, "Come on, I'll take you". His wife was with him and they were the nicest couple you could wish to meet. He took us right up to the darn door. I said, "Listen, I don't want to put you out," and he said, "I've just been talking with my sister, she's supposed to come here and meet us. We've got to wait two and a half hours for her at the station". She'd missed the train or something and was getting a later train. Well anyway, when we went all dressed up, our hats on, to the party, my niece took us down to the station at Henley. We went on the train at Paddington and when we got out at Paddington Station, I put me hand up and called a taxi. So he came up and he said, "Where to madam?" and my daughter said, "Buckingham Palace". He said, "I didn't need to ask," 'cause we were all dressed up. So anyway, he said, "I hate going there like the plague". So

I said, "For what reason," and he said, "You can never drive up there-there's so many people". "Oh, don't worry about that," I said, "'Cause we got this to give you". [It was a special pass] When we got there, he drove right into the front of the palace you see.

**R.H:** So, did you go right in the front gates?

**A.S:** Yes, and we had to show our pass, our invitation. We got two invitations, that one and another one to go in and we had to show our invitations.

**R.H:** What was the party like?

**A.S:** It was lovely, I enjoyed every minute of it. The day was beautiful, the weather was so hot, unusual for England. All the guards were there and the guard walked up with us and showed us where to go. We went into the palace and we weren't allowed through the main rooms but we went through all the corridors. They were as wide as rooms. They had beautiful full length pictures, lovely paintings, portraits and different things. We went through there and out the other side, down about 15 big steps, big long steps, all carpeted. The band was playing all afternoon in the bandshell at the back. They had a big place for all the eats. They had chairs and tables out, lovely wide table with four chairs 'round each table. And you helped yourself to the food and you brought it back to the table.

**R.H:** What kind of food did they have?

**A.S:** Everything, you mention it and it was there. It was absolutely great. The Queen and them, they had a little place on their own where we could see them eating at the side. It was really lovely 'cause before they came out the band struck up 'God save the Queen' and the Queen Mother came out and then the Queen and Phillip, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and ten other celebrities, I don't know who they were. But Phillip, did he ever laugh with them. Oh, he was having big laughs, I don't know what they were talking about.

**R.H:** Was the Queen Mother as beautiful as ever?

**A.S:** Yes, she was lovely dressed, beautifully dressed. She looked very good. Everything went well and we toured all the gardens and they have a lake there at the back. We were sitting on a seat and one of the... I was tired from walking around and one of the security men came up, they all had tailcoats on and tall hats, came



up and he said, "Excuse me madam but time is up". We were about the last ones there, although there were two or three others I could see around. Oh, I said, "Thank-you," and we came out and we had to go back through the palace again to get out. When we went out he said, "Where is your car madam?" and I said, "Oh, we had a taxi, and we'll have to have a taxi back". He said, "Just a minute," he goes outside and he raised his hand, and up came a taxi. We got in the taxi and went back home.

**R.H:** That was quite an experience for you, wasn't it?

**A.S:** It certainly was. Many a time I only lived 15 minutes from Buckingham Palace and I never ever thought I'd be inside of it. Then we got to my niece's, she had a big home where my sister lives, up north, and they had sold it and moved down there. They had only lived in this new house three years and I'd never been there. Anyway, I'd been up to the other one but when I got to this one, I was amazed, they had the biggest home. They had two maids, live-in maids and they had a big mercedes car at our disposal. It was like being in Buckingham Palace again. We were going to stay two or three days but she insisted and we were there for nine days 'til the finish. They went golfing every day, her and her husband and they had another car there and they had a station wagon. They used to use that for their golf clubs and that. The maid could use the mercedes if we wanted to go out. If we wanted to go out, we'd just say, "We'll be ready for 10 o'clock or 11, pick us up at 6 o'clock," and so forth.

**R.H:** (Mrs. Staddon is showing me some photographs) Is that Princess Margaret in the photograph?

**A.S:** Yes, and that's my nephew.

**R.H:** (Her nephew is in the photograph with Princess Margaret) What's his name?

**A.S:** Peter, Peter Kline.

**R.H:** I want to thank you so much for doing the interview Mrs. Staddon, it's been a pleasure to meet you. I really enjoyed it, thank-you.

**A.S:** It's my pleasure.