

This is Shelley Richer interviewing Mr. Fletcher Teal in his home at 94 Belvedere Road in Crystal Beach on September 13, 1985.

**S.R:** Hello Mr. Teal, and how are you today?

**F.T:** Pretty good, pretty good.

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

**F.T:** April the 3rd, 1903.

**S.R:** Where were you born?

**F.T:** Right where I am right now, except that it was Bertie Township I believe.

**S.R:** Bertie Township... what street?

**F.T:** Oh, I wouldn't know.

**S.R:** Where did you grow up?

**F.T:** In Bertie Township.

**S.R:** Do you remember the street you grew up on, the name of the street?

**F.T:** No.

**S.R:** What school did you attend?

**F.T:** Now you got me. Here, you see, my folks moved around alot. Now, I'd say, my years of accountability was the Bertie, say, Bertie Township, Burleigh Road at Lakefront. Now, that's the first I can remember of things. I was born in Ridgeway, but I don't know what street or where.

**S.R:** What about your school?

**F.T:** Public School... I had several.

**S.R:** You had several. You moved around alot.

**F.T:** Yes. I had started out at Ridgeway, and then went to #10 Bertie Township.

**S.R:** And that was on the Garrison?

**F.T:** That's on the Garrison. Then from there, I went to Haileybury, Ontario, up near Cobalt. I was there for a year, and then back to Ridgeway #11.

**S.R:** Is that the one that's on Ridge Road?

**F.T:** Yes, the main street there in Ridgeway.

**S.R:** Is that the end of your schooling then?

**F.T:** Well, I went there. I did intend to go to high school, I passed everything and I was going to the high school, but that's another story...

**S.R:** Do you remember any of the teachers that you had when you went to school, or the principals?

**F.T:** Well, I remember in #10, Ernie Bowen. He was a good friend of mine. I had Maggie Disher in Ridgeway. She was mediocre. Well, that there would finish that part of it up, because I wouldn't be able to tell you the other people's correct name or anything about it.

**S.R:** Do you remember any interesting stories from school or anything that happened?

**F.T:** Oh, nothing much.

**S.R:** Nothing interesting comes to mind?

**S.R:** Have you, or were you... are you a member of a church?

**F.T:** No.

**S.R:** No, you never attended church here?

**F.T:** No, my father was a Free Methodist, and my mother was... Church of England. There was always a conflict of...

**S.R:** Which one to go to?

**F.T:** ... so I left that alone. I think that between the two... this one having this thought... you see, I spent a year up at Hailebury, or New Lisheard, or Cobalt, whatever you call it... they were great Catholic communities. Between the French and the English up there, there was always a conflict, and I watched these and I thought ugh.

**S.R:** You said that's not for you, right?

**F.T:** If the good Lord is causing this to happen on Earth, what's it going to be after? What's it going to be after? So, I more or less left that alone.

**S.R:** Who was the first political representative, the first Reeve, or the first political representative that you can remember?

**F.T:** Oh, Alf Wil son up at Ridgeway. He used to run the bus line between Crystal Beach and Ridgeway. He had a small farm north of Ridgeway.

**S.R:** What were his duties? What was he?

**F.T:** He was a Reeve of Bertie Township for years.

**S.R:** Do you remember any of his accomplishments?

**F.T:** I don't know, other than, I thought he was a friend of everybody.

**S.R:** He was a really nice man then was he?

**F.T:** Oh, wonderful. Him and his wife, they treated me...

**S.R:** They treated you very special, did they?

**F.T:** Yeah, I always liked the two of them.

**S.R:** What were your jobs... you had to quit school because you had to get a job to help the family?

**F.T:** Yes.

**S.R:** What kind of jobs did you get then?

**F.T:** Well, Rebstocks was putting in a new subdivision, west of Schooley Road, and I cut trees out by the roots and got the lumber, got the log ready for the mill, and burned brush and everything else. That was my first real job.

**S.R:** What mill did the trees go to?

**F.T:** Scott Sherk.

**S.R:** Was that around here?

**F.T:** Yeah, just down on the Dominion Road there.

**S.R:** Could you tell me anything about that mill?

**F.T:** Nothing, other than that they sawed the logs into... sawed the trees into logs, or timbers.

**S.R:** Is that where most people went to from around here?

**F.T:** Well, Rebstock used that to build cottages, and...

**S.R:** Lakefront cottages?

**F.T:** No, the streets running off of Erie Road, north.

**S.R:** And that's where they put the cottages then?

**F.T:** They built cottages.

**S.R:** What job did you have after that?

**F.T:** Well, my dad was a carpenter and that's what I fell into line with, carpenter work.

**S.R:** So, you just did jobs with your father then?

**F.T:** Yes, as I say, when I quit school I went to work for them, but that didn't last forever. I naturally went with my father and my older brother, but, that didn't work out very good.

**S.R:** Why not?

**F.T:** I was taking the short end of the rope all the time.

**S.R:** Because you were the youngest?

**F.T:** Yeah. They didn't treat me right.

**S.R:** Oh, so then what did you do, go into business for yourself?

**F.T:** No. I had an old friend down at the Beach, we built his house for

him... an American guy... and he was a very friendly guy and he could see what was happening. He said, "Anytime you want a job, you come to me in Buffalo, and I'll see that you get a job".

**S.R:** So you worked in Buffalo then?

**F.T:** Yep, I worked in the steel mill in Buffalo for three years.

**S.R:** Then where did you go after that?

**F.T:** Well, another year, over a year, I went with the chemical company over there. They offered me a job while we were working at the plant, a better job, and I took it. About a year and a half I worked there. I didn't care for the job because, around where chemicals are, two or three times I had to run for my life, and all that kind of stuff. I quit. I was straw boss when I quit.

**S.R:** You were a what?

**F.T:** Straw boss, yeah, that's just above the workmen.

**S.R:** Then where did you go after you worked there for a year and a half?

**F.T:** I come back to Canada.

**S.R:** Where did you work here?

**F.T:** I worked at the nickel plant for a short while, and I quit there. They were building the canal.

**S.R:** In Welland?

**F.T:** You know, from Port Colborne right straight through, you see, building new bridges and that. I worked on two bridges on counter weights. After that... oh, let's see... I worked for a time with a contractor in Port Colborne. I worked on the Peace Bridge when they built the Peace Bridge.

**S.R:** Oh, you did?

**F.T:** Yeah. Just before the war started I went to the Thousand Islands for a fellow to fix over his, a home his mother left him. She had three sons, and she left him the homestead and five acres. To the other brothers, they each got five acres.

**S.R:** Oh, so you did carpenter work then?

**F.T:** I went down... I had worked for this fellows daughter, and made her a house... and he wanted me to go down there and fix that house up. I wanted him to supply plans, but he told me, he said, "You know better than I", and all this and that, and he says, "I want it fixed, and fixed good". He says, "I know you can do it". So, I went

down there for about three months and fixed the house all up. When the house was done his brother wanted a house built, so I built him a house.

**S.R:** And this was in Port Colborne?

**F.T:** No, in the Thousand Islands.

**S.R:** Did you stay there for very long?

**F.T:** Well, when I got this second house, well, quite a way along, an American came over... he was a friend of this second guy... nothing to do, I had to go and work for him. Then the war broke out.

**S.R:** Were you in the war?

**F.T:** Yes, I was four years in the war.

**S.R:** Did you come back to Crystal Beach after the war, Ridgeway?

**F.T:** I owned this place.... I built the house across the road...

**S.R:** So, when you came out of the army, where did you work when you moved back into your house?

**F.T:** When I came home I didn't...

**S.R:** You had mentioned something about lots?

**F.T:** The Town... when the returned soldiers... when a fellow come home out of the army, had been overseas, the Town, they had lots. The people would... they had gone back to the Town you see... quite a few of them were summer cottages.

**S.R:** For unpaid taxes?

**F.T:** Unpaid taxes, so the Town gave them to these fellows that wanted a lot, they gave them a lot or two.

**S.R:** And they didn't cost anything then? They just had to pay the taxes?

**F.T:** They just had to start to pay the taxes and they got the deed to their lot.

**S.R:** When you got back then, out of the army, and you moved back into your house, did you work in Ridgeway after that?

**F.T:** No, I worked... let's see, I built quite a few summer cottages, and I went to work in Port Colborne. I worked in Port Colborne for about four years.

**S.R:** Did you ever work in Ridgeway after that?

**F.T:** Yes, I built the odd place here in our...

**S.R:** All private?

**F.T:** Mostly.

**S.R:** You mentioned that you had worked at the Peace Bridge when they were building the Peace Bridge. Could you tell me what you did there?

**F.T:** Oh, I was a carpenter. I was a carpenter building forms for the cement.

**S.R:** What do you mean by forms for the cement?

**F.T:** You see, they've got to pour the cement, and then they've got to... when they're building the forms, they've got to be there for when they pour the cement into the forms, and then you take the forms off after it's hard.

**S.R:** Oh, and then you already have the shapes all made?

**F.T:** You have all your different shapes and railings and...

**S.R:** Could you tell me a little bit about how the Peace Bridge was built? Okay, I heard that they started at each end and it actually joined in the middle, and stuff like that. Could you tell me about the building of it? How they... you know, with the tugs and all the different things involved. Do you remember all that?

**F.T:** Well, you had to build all the different forms, and being a bridge, there's no two pieces alike. It slopes up, up to the, over top of the bridge, and then curves and slopes down on the other side. It was quite a feat.

**S.R:** So, the forms, those were for the pillar part that went right into the water too?

**F.T:** No, the parts that went into the water, you see, that was built like a scow, like a boat. The sides were high enough to reach higher than the water level. Well, that was filled with concrete and things. Then the parts that your bridge was bolted fast to was put right in with that building. Then a post and then parts of the roadway... roadways and sidewalks on the sides, and everything.

**S.R:** Could you tell me how long it took to build the Peace Bridge?

**F.T:** Gosh, I don't know, quite awhile.

**S.R:** A year, two years, months?

**F.T:** Oh, I wouldn't say. I've forgot.

**S.R:** Do you remember any people that worked on the bridge with you, or foremans or anything?

**F.T:** Well, most of them fellows are dead.

**S.R:** Just for history, do you remember any of the names? Who was your boss?

**F.T:** Archie McGlashan.

**S.R:** Were you at the opening of the Peace Bridge?

**F.T:** About 15 days before the opening, I was laid off.

**S.R:** So you never attended the opening then, to see the Prince of Wales or anything?

**F.T:** I wasn't idle for, I would say two or three days, and I was working.

**S.R:** Oh, so you couldn't take the time off work to go and see it?

**F.T:** No.

**S.R:** Okay, so you said that basically you've lived in Ridgeway-Crystal Beach all your life, except when you were in the army, you lived here.

**F.T:** A year in Haileybury.

**S.R:** Do you remember who your neighbours were? Could you describe the area? You live on Belvedere here, and I notice on Belvedere that the houses are really close together and it's just a small side street type of thing.

**F.T:** When I moved here, there was only one other family that lived here year 'round. That was the Lewis family down the street. The rest were all summer residents. Then most of them, about all of them, have been picked up and made into winter residences after that.

**S.R:** Were there this many houses before?

**F.T:** No, it all built up afterwards. This was about the third house on the street.

**S.R:** Could you tell me a little bit about how the rest of the town has changed? How do you remember it many years ago compared to the way it is now? Do you recall any changes?

**F.T:** Oh yes, yes, yes.

**S.R:** Like what?

**F.T:** Complete.

**S.R:** What do you mean by complete?

**F.T:** In the last, say since '64, the village has changed completely. It isn't the same village at all.

**S.R:** How do you mean?

**F.T:** The spirit is gone.



**S.R:** When the Crystal Beach Amusement Park opened, did that help with the spirit of things?

**F.T:** It first opened when I was a boy only this high.

**S.R:** Do you know why the spirit would have left the Town?

**F.T:** Oh, well, our Town in the last 10 years, since I left being reeve and the government ordered it into the Town of Fort Erie, killed it...killed it dead, as dead as a doornail.

**S.R:** Do you know why?

**F.T:** Definitely. It killed the town spirit, and the people that used to have... Crystal Beach this summer didn't have one quarter of the people here as what's usually here in the summertime.

**S.R:** Why would becoming Fort Erie make the spirit leave?

**F.T:** Well, we had a community spirit here, and that community spirit...

**S.R:** You aren't a community then anymore, right?

**F.T:** We weren't a community anymore. One of the first things they done was to tear down our waterworks. Our waterworks here was \$10 a year, each cottage paid \$10 a year. Now do you know how much we pay?

**S.R:** \$70-something dollars every three months?

**F.T:** Yeah. Well, that's just one thing, but people won't pay it.

**S.R:** Oh, they won't pay it?

**F.T:** They don't want to pay it. They used to go here and do this, groups would do this and that and another thing, and the Town was alive. Now you can go down here, from here to the post office, if you pass three or four people from here down to the circle you're doing good. Then... where you'd pass, I'd say 30-40 people between the post office and Erie Road, sometimes you'd go and you don't see one person.

**S.R:** People are moving out of their houses then? Or what is it, they just stay in their houses now?

**F.T:** The people who are here... there's nothing. The... look at the Ontario Hotel, and the Bennett Apartments, and all of them, they all closed down this summer. They weren't opened at all.

**S.R:** Where is the Ontario Hotel?

**F.T:** Right on the corner of Derby and Erie.

**S.R:** It was just closed this year, or was it closed before?



**F.T:** It just closed this year for the first time, completely, and Bennett's Apartments just closed completely.

**S.R:** Where is Bennett's Apartments?

**F.T:** On Erie Road, just between here and Ridge Road.

**S.R:** That's because nobody lived there, nobody wanted to live there anymore, or what?

**F.T:** They couldn't rent enough rooms to make a go of it. Before, they had to turn people away. That and the company changing their policy. They want so many dollars for you to go in on the grounds, and the whole thing. Look at that thing right there. (showing me a typed booklet) That was one thing of several, that I sent out to the government to try to build up...

**S.R:** Build up the area again? Oh, this is ideas?

**F.T:** What?

**S.R:** This is telling them what happened and some ideas to get it going again?

**F.T:** Yes, that's what the... the Prime Minister got that.

**S.R:** Did it help?

**F.T:** No. That's one reason why I've given up practically, and I can show you right here now why our ideas are no good.

**S.R:** Why?

**F.T:** By taking you and showing you the actual facts.

**S.R:** When did you submit this to the Prime Minister?

**F.T:** That was '64, wasn't it?

**S.R:** I don't see a date on it.

**F.T:** I had that dug out with some of my old war things the other day. If you want, I can show you certain things to look at.

**S.R:** Around here you mean?

**F.T:** Right today.

**S.R:** What would they be? What for?

**F.T:** I can show you where the Canadian is cut short.

**S.R:** How is the Canadian cut short?

**F.T:** Cut terrible. To me it is disastrous.

**S.R:** I don't understand what you mean though. How are they cut short?

**F.T:** Well, for instance, you go from here... say you go up the main road here to Point Abino Road...

**S.R:** What's the main road called?

**F.T:** It's the first road north of us right here now.

**S.R:** Derby Road?

**F.T:** The main road is the main road to Port Colborne from this part. You drive as far as the Point Abino Road, and just take your time and drive as far as you can, all along the Point Abino Road. You'll see... if you take that route you'll see boulders that narrows our road up, and trees planted, so that the road ain't 30 feet wide.

**S.R:** Why?

**F.T:** Boulders this big around. Because a Canadian could park there on a Sunday, and go out to the lake.

**S.R:** And the Americans don't want them to? Is that what you mean?

**F.T:** Why-the Americans are... go and see and you'll see. Our Fort Erie Council has gone along with them. On every telephone pole there is "NO PARKING", every service pole between here and the lake, between... the Point Abino Road. You go out to the point where you'll be stopped there, you've got a man at the gate, and we've got the government property out there and everything else, and the Canadian can't go out there.

**S.R:** Oh, by the light house?

**F.T:** Yes, definitely. What's the matter with the government owning the property there? And then they're squawking about the Russians! You turn and you come down the Erie Road, down the Schooley Road towards Crystal Beach, and you will see strips as wide as this house, outside of their property...

**S.R:** The Americans?

**F.T:** Outside of the American's property, where they've got white boulders planted right alongside where you've travelled out that far. You'll find... do you know what bedrails are? That 3/4 that runs alongside of your bed. You'll find a lot there that your road is only about 22' wide. They've got them planted so that people can get off the sides of the road to stop there. Now, further on down... I haven't recorded it... we lived at Burleigh Road for years. I'm so disgusted with it that I won't go near the place, from there to Fort Erie. The Americans shouldn't be allowed in this country as long as we exist. As poor as the Canadian can be, he shouldn't allow Americans

here on this land, as long as that kind of feeling exists. Go and look for yourself and make your own opinion.

**S.R:** The Americans are basically only summer residents too, aren't they?

**F.T:** Now listen, half way between here and Point Abino, Schooley Road is the last road to the lake outside of Point Abino. What happened to the next road that runs clear over at Cherry Hill, right straight down through, and ends at the main road, what we call the main road? From there to the lake, who owns that property? That's a road that's been there for, every since any road was. Why isn't that made public property? Right here today, now you take my word for it, you take any Canadian trying to go to the lake... now here you are here in a country as big as Canada, and as free as it could be, you're tied up and you can't go to the lake without being harassed.

**S.R:** All the beaches with all the Americans, is that what you mean?

**F.T:** They made it so that it's impossible. And they're hollering about the Russians! I haven't had a Russian say anything to me.

**S.R:** What was it like then when you were younger, around here?

**F.T:** Well, we had more freedom. The American owner wasn't near as close. I lived alongside of Lake Erie for 15-16 years, and nobody bothered us at all. Of course we lost our home... my brother with his furniture deal... we backed his note at the bank... we lost everything. There was no jobs to be had, so what are you going to do? The piece of property at that time, I'd say is worth \$25,000, and you couldn't borrow a nickel onto it. You had to mortgage, and 10 days after that darn mortgage was due, they clamped down. They knew a good thing when they seen it.

**S.R:** And you said you had 10 acres?

**F.T:** We had 10 acres.

**S.R:** How much would it be worth now?

**F.T:** \$100,000, the property alone.

**S.R:** Did they go for very much money back then, for the lakefront property? Say in the '20s, before the Depression.

**F.T:** In, even the Depression, it was worth a lot of money. It didn't lose it's value during that time so much. It was one thing that had held up.

**S.R:** Does Crystal Beach have a Fire Department?

**F.T:** Oh yes.

**S.R:** Where is it located?

**F.T:** It used to be on Belfast Road, down here just off of the main... just off the circle. But then, we moved it over on Ridge Road. It's over on Ridge Road yet. We made the library and the Town Hall.

**S.R:** They're on Ridge Road?

**F.T:** No, down here. And then when they moved that, still the library... but the Town Hall went to Fort Erie.

**S.R:** Do you recall when the Fire Department started up in Crystal Beach?

**F.T:** Oh, when I was a kid. They had a hose and reel that they used to pull by hand.

**S.R:** Oh, not even by horses, by hand. Do you recall who the first Fire Chief was?

**F.T:** Oh no, I don't know.

**S.R:** Do you recall any of the first Fire Chiefs.

**F.T:** No.

**S.R:** Do you know when they first started getting their machinery equipment?

**F.T:** When the Town was incorporated. I don't know when that was. I know they held dances and everything else to get money to get it started.

**S.R:** Where did they hold the dances?

**F.T:** They held street dances and things like that.

**S.R:** Oh, right in downtown Crystal Beach?

**F.T:** Yes.

**S.R:** If you want to go shopping in Crystal Beach, where would you go?

**F.T:** Today?

**S.R:** Back then.

**F.T:** Back then?

**S.R:** In the '20s and the '30s.

**F.T:** Well, Rebstock was really the founder, and then there was Charlie Shepherd. He was in with them. The first stores I remember in Crystal Beach was Bucks, and Rebstock & Shepherds.

**S.R:** What is Rebstock?

**F.T:** He was the founder... was on the farm...this was part of it. It was laid out in lots.

**S.R:** Oh, so he's the one that started selling part of his farm away to form Crystal Beach?

**F.T:** Hmm?

**S.R:** He's the one that started selling his farm, the lots, to make Crystal Beach?

**F.T:** Yeah.

**S.R:** Was the amusement park built then?

**F.T:** Well, the amusement park was part of the get-up. You see, it started down there at the amusement park. This here lot lay-out and house building all come after.

**S.R:** So, who built the amusement park?

**F.T:** Rebstock.

**S.R:** Rebstock built it?

**F.T:** I think so.

**S.R:** It was on his property?

**F.T:** Yes. Part of it, you see... there's some Americans involved in it too... I wouldn't know. I was too young.

**S.R:** Would you know about when the park was built?

**F.T:** You've got me?

**S.R:** Was it before 1900 or after?

**F.T:** I believe it was after.

**S.R:** Before 1910, in the early part of the 1900s? Somewhere in there?

**F.T:** It would be... now the... around 1900, I would say, because the... I can remember, the one old steamboat was called the Osifridge, I think. And then in 19, about 1908 or 9, that was when the Americana and the Canadiana was built. They run for years and years.

**S.R:** Did you go on them very often?

**F.T:** Oh yes, I had lots of rides on them.

**S.R:** What were they like?

**F.T:** A beautiful ride from here to Buffalo and back.

**S.R:** Did they have any entertainment, or food, or drink, or anything?

**F.T:** Oh, on certain rides they had entertainment. Like, the Sunday night cruise, they'd have entertainment and dancing. Every evening they'd have dancing on the main decks.

**S.R:** Was it local bands then during the week?

**F.T:** Yeah.

**S.R:** What's the Sunday night cruise?

**F.T:** Oh, a Sunday night cruise, it'd be three hours.

**S.R:** Where did they go, just across the lake?

**F.T:** Just cruise up and down the lake, and the band played.

**S.R:** What else was there to do for entertainment around here?

**F.T:** Well, there was always the band shell on Sunday nights.

**S.R:** What was the band shell?

**F.T:** That was a... different bands would play from the big band stand.  
I don't know if it's still down there now or not.

**S.R:** Oh, the ballroom at Crystal Beach?

**F.T:** No, over in the woods, half way between there and Erie Road.

**S.R:** Was that at Bay Beach?

**F.T:** No. Do you know where Derby Road is? The next one east is Ridge Road, and the rides used to come out to the Ridge Road. The rides used to come out to the Ridge Road.

**S.R:** The rides did?

**F.T:** The rides, like the roller-coaster and that... well, that was between there and Derby. There was a big band shell there. They used to hold band concerts there, and different singers from different places come and sang there too.

**S.R:** Do you remember any names?

**F.T:** No, not off.

**S.R:** Is that all they had there? Was anything else held there?

**F.T:** No, that's all I was...

**S.R:** Interested in?

**F.T:** At the time.

**S.R:** What else did you do for entertainment, like if you were on a date when you were younger and stuff?

**F.T:** Well, lots of times there was other places to go other than Crystal Beach. I went on a night when Crystal Beach rides... several times you'd start one a three-hour run and you'd come in at 11 o'clock at night, and you could take dancing, or a group of you could go and you'd have a good time.

**S.R:** Were you ever in the ballroom at Crystal Beach?

**F.T:** Yes, yes, lots of times.

**S.R:** Could you describe it for me?

**F.T:** Which one?

**S.R:** The one at Crystal Beach in the amusement park. Where is the other one? Is the other one that one that you were telling me about?

**F.T:** The first ballroom was... did you know where the Roller Coasters...?

**S.R:** ... are at Crystal Beach right now?

**F.T:** Yes. Well, that way was the Midway Restaurant. Right between the Roller Coaster and the Midway Restaurant was a big ballroom there. There was Crystal Beach's first ballroom.

**S.R:** When did they build their new one?

**F.T:** Well, that's... a long time afterwards, a long, long time. You see, there used to be a hill there too, where the one that sits there now is. There was a hill there, and cottages on the hill, and they took the hill down.

**S.R:** How did they do that?

**F.T:** They washed it down. It was a sand hill and they washed it all down. Up on top of that hill was a big skating rink, a roller skating rink.

**S.R:** Oh, so when they took that hill out that's when they put the skating rink on the other side of Crystal Beach, across the road?

**F.T:** The skating rink was moved first, to the ballroom.

**S.R:** The old one?

**F.T:** The old ballroom. Then when they built the new ballroom, the skating rink was across the road from that. It wasn't for years later that the one that they got there now, on the north side of Erie Road, was built. The second skating rink was the old ballroom.

**S.R:** Could you describe for me what the old ballroom was like?

**F.T:** Very common.

**S.R:** Just plain?

**F.T:** Just plain.

**S.R:** They didn't have any crystal balls or big bands?

**F.T:** Oh yes, they used to have big bands there. The crystal ball, all it was as I... looking glasses with lights shining on them. The balls, they went around.

**S.R:** It left bright spots everywhere?

**F.T:** Yeah, they moved it to the new one, and I suppose they changed it, I don't know.

**S.R:** You don't recall anything else about the interior or the outside of it at all?



**F.T:** No, nothing in particular, outside of, instead of using white paint they used whitewash.

**S.R:** What's the difference?

**F.T:** Well, did you ever use whitewash? Paint is paint and whitewash is... if you rub up against it you come away white.

**S.R:** Oh, it doesn't dry?

**F.T:** Yeah.

**S.R:** Is there anything else that you can remember about the amusement park that you'd like to mention?

**F.T:** Nothing much, nothing much. But the people... of course, you didn't have automobiles as much as they do now.

**S.R:** How did people get there?

**F.T:** Oh, the two boats used to carry 3,500 people apiece.

**S.R:** That was from the States?

**F.T:** They'd come down the Commercial Street and take the boat to Crystal Beach. They were almost confined with no great distribution of people all over the country... like the automobile. The automobiles quit the boats.

**S.R:** You said the Americana and the Canadiana went to Commercial Street?

**F.T:** The foot of Commercial Street, yeah.

**S.R:** Then what boat took them... all those people to the Beach?

**F.T:** The Americana and the Canadiana.

**S.R:** Oh, the Commercial Street's in Buffalo?

**F.T:** Yeah.

**S.R:** How did people from other places, like in Fort Erie and places, get to Crystal Beach?

**F.T:** Well, they used to have... if Fort Erie had a picnic around, they used to come from Fort Erie to Ridgeway by Dummy. They had a train and they had four or five coaches, and they'd come there and then they had busses that you go up steps in the back and then you all sit along the sides.

**S.R:** Drawn by horses?

**F.T:** Drawn by horses, and cars later on, yes.

**S.R:** So that's how people got to Crystal Beach then?

**F.T:** Oh yes, they'd haul all day and all night.

**S.R:** When did Halls buy Crystal Beach? Did Halls buy it from Rebstock?

**F.T:** I never knew.

**S.R:** You don't really know? What about Erie Beach?

**F.T:** I knew... well, Erie Beach had small boats that run from Buffalo too.

**S.R:** Oh, they did?

**F.T:** Yeah.

**S.R:** Did they ever have names?

**F.T:** I don't remember the name of the boats. They were smaller, the boats. They carried in the 100, about 100 would be the most, and the Americana and the Canadiana, they carried 3,500.

**S.R:** What was the Erie Beach Amusement Park like?

**F.T:** It was... it wasn't bad at all. I used to like it down there. You know, there was more shade trees, and more walk... place to walk between the rides, where Crystal Beach is pretty crowded.

**S.R:** Even back then?

**F.T:** Yes.

**S.R:** What attractions did Erie Beach have? What big things brought you to Erie Beach?

**F.T:** Well, they had a nice ballroom. I don't know... management more than anything else, I think.

**S.R:** Why?

**F.T:** Well, one guy ain't afraid to spend a dollar, and the other guy is going to live within his means. That's the way it looked to me.

**S.R:** Oh, so Erie Beach was lavish, and Crystal Beach...?

**F.T:** Crystal Beach was more lavish than Erie Beach.

**S.R:** Oh, Crystal Beach was better than Erie Beach?

**F.T:** It was more lavish. You know, the showmanship.

**S.R:** So Erie Beach was plainer and simpler but really nice?

**F.T:** Yes.

**S.R:** How did people get to Erie Beach from Fort Erie?

**F.T:** From Fort Erie they come across the ferry. They come across the ferry and went to Erie Beach, because it was only a mile or two over there, and they had the bus, you see. From Erie Beach, right from the ferry to Erie Beach. They would come across the ferry to Fort Erie, and they had transportation from Fort Erie to Erie Beach Park.

**S.R:** Was that the Snakehill & Pacific? Was it that little train?

**F.T:** Well, they had a train there at one time, yes.

**S.R:** Did you ever hear of the Peg-leg Railroad?

**F.T:** Yes, you can see marks of the Peg-leg Railroad yet.

**S.R:** Where did it go to and from where?

**F.T:** It went from Ridgeway to Crystal Beach.

**S.R:** What was it like?

**F.T:** You'll see a fence of all the old posts onto it... well, that was all it was. It was a whole row of fence posts and a rail on top of the whole thing. Half of the car was down below the center of gravity. Do you understand what I mean?

**S.R:** The center of the car... half was above the line of the track and half was below the line of the track.

**F.T:** That's right. That way it didn't tip, and they only had the one rail.

**S.R:** Was it very safe?

**F.T:** I can just remember a shadow of it.

**S.R:** So you don't know if it had any accidents or anything?

**F.T:** I don't know.

**S.R:** Do you know who owned it, or who the conductor was, or anything else about it?

**F.T:** No, I don't really know.

**S.R:** Do you know how it was powered?

**F.T:** Yes, they had a generator. It was powered by steam and by gas. These big gas engines run the generators, and the generators run the motors that... like a street car, they...

**S.R:** Did you go to Ridgeway very often?

**F.T:** When I was younger?

**S.R:** Yes.

**F.T:** Oh yes, Ridgeway was the main go. I helped build the community store here, their first one here where I.G.A. is now, it's just down across the field there.

**S.R:** Is that in Ridgeway or Crystal Beach?

**F.T:** It's in Crystal Beach.

**S.R:** Could you tell me... when I had mentioned stores you said something about Charlie Shepherd, Buck something, and Rebstock. What kinds of stores were these?

**F.T:** Rebstock and Shepherd was a grocery store, a general store.

**S.R:** Where was that located?

**F.T:** Up one street up Derby Road, from Erie Road.

**S.R:** What about the other one? You said Charlie Shepherd and Buck...?

**F.T:** And Bucks?

**S.R:** Yeah.

**F.T:** Bucks used to have the post office. It was on the side street, it's on Lincoln Street.

**S.R:** What other things did Crystal Beach have to offer? What other stores were there? Was Rebstocks the only store?

**F.T:** Rebstocks and Bucks, in conjunction with the post office.

**S.R:** If you wanted to buy clothes or anything else you went to Ridgeway? Where did you go in Ridgeway?

**F.T:** Oh my gosh, you've got me now. There was old man Box, he run a drygoods store. There was Beaman Krafts.

**S.R:** Is that any relation to J.L. Kraft the cheese man?

**F.T:** I understand it was.

**S.R:** Where else would you go shopping? They were the main ones?

**S.R:** Oh, getting back to Crystal Beach, when you were a carpenter, did you basically build cottages or were there any big things that you have built?

**F.T:** As I said, I helped build the Peace Bridge.

**S.R:** Did you build any special stores, or anything like that, any buildings that people would know about?

**F.T:** Nothing that anybody would be much interested about.

**S.R:** It was basically cottages and homes then?

**F.T:** Yes.

**S.R:** Going back to Ridgeway... Ridgeway had two fires, am I right?

**F.T:** I don't know.

**S.R:** Town fires, where part of the main street burnt in Ridgeway a long time ago.

**F.T:** Oh yes, I don't know nothing about it though.

**S.R:** Did you go to Fort Erie much, or wasn't there anything to attract you to Fort Erie?

**F.T:** There basically wasn't anything.

**S.R:** What did Crystal Beach have for sports?

**F.T:** Not a great deal.

**S.R:** Did they have any baseball teams or hockey or soccer?

**F.T:** Oh, later on, but nothing mattered very much.

**S.R:** When you were younger there weren't any sports really?

**F.T:** Not a great deal.

**S.R:** What did they have, or you just don't recall any?

**F.T:** Let's say nil as far as I'm concerned.

**S.R:** You had to go to Ridgeway then, if you wanted anything for sports?

**F.T:** Well, even Ridgeway didn't have very many. They only had a ball team and they were fighting amongst themselves more than they were playing ball.

**S.R:** Did Crystal Beach have any industry at all, or is the big thing the amusement park? Is that their only industry?

**F.T:** Well, let's say, that was the main industry in Crystal Beach.

**S.R:** The amusement park?

**F.T:** Yeah, because when that closed down, it would be pretty near as dead as it is now, in the summertime.

**S.R:** Oh, if it did close down you mean?

**F.T:** After it closed down, after Labour Day and things settle down, it would be maybe one in every six houses occupied.

**S.R:** Even now, or is that before?

**F.T:** It's pretty near it now.

**S.R:** What about Police Departments, does Crystal Beach have it's own Police Department?

**F.T:** Yep.

**S.R:** Did it then?

**F.T:** Well, it was hired by... you see, Crystal Beach wasn't always... it was part of Bertie Township. Then they got incorporated and they had their own fire... their own Fire Chief and they had their own Police Chief after that.

**S.R:** Where was the Police Station before?

**F.T:** Right in the Town Hall with everything.

**S.R:** Where exactly was the Town Hall located?

**F.T:** That's funny, I don't... it could be Conway Road. Gee-wiz, I wish I had a map. It was just off of the circle, but now... just off the circle.

**S.R:** Is the building still there?

**F.T:** The building's there. It's the library now.

**S.R:** Do you remember any of the policemen or the police chiefs?

**F.T:** Yes, nothing to any great extent. I was a policeman for awhile.

**S.R:** When would that be?

**F.T:** It was only a short, a very short time. I didn't... I couldn't act... to the chief they had at that place, I says, "Here, just keep your job".

**S.R:** Oh, it wasn't ran very well?

**F.T:** It wasn't ran very well. I didn't like it and I wouldn't be part of it, so I quit.

**S.R:** As far as politics are concerned... oh, one little question. Were there uniforms then, police uniforms? Now they have their hats and their blue suits.

**F.T:** That was it.

**S.R:** They had their uniforms back then?

**F.T:** Yes.

**S.R:** You were in politics before, you were a Reeve right?

**F.T:** I was two years on Council.

**S.R:** You were a Reeve before or after that?

**F.T:** It's three years after that.

**S.R:** You said you were a Reeve in 1964, was it?

**F.T:** Yes.

**S.R:** Do you recall anything that was done in that period of time for the Town, any of your duties?

**S.R:** Of course. You'll remember, when you're a Reeve you're a member of the County Council, the Welland County Council, and you're one member, and there's about 20 others.

**S.R:** So it's hard to get anything done?

**F.T:** It was like... I don't know anything... you could speak out on lots of subjects that you come across, and you'd be snowed under so far you'd wonder why they even had the County Council. Every big community had their, their say so, and all the little communities around them had to go with them. That's one of the undoings of the Welland County Council.

**S.R:** When did that collapse or fold?

**F.T:** It didn't fold... you see, the government took Welland County's Charter away from them and give it to Lincoln County.

**S.R:** I don't understand.

**F.T:** Well, it was the county seat. St. Catharines is the county seat now.

**S.R:** So why did they take the Charter from Welland and give it to St. Catharines... or Lincoln?

**F.T:** Politics.

**S.R:** Was Lincoln bigger?

**F.T:** No, and there's lots of smaller counties than Welland was. We have Liberals and you have what we used to call Gritts.

**S.R:** What's a Gritt?

**F.T:** He's a Liberal.

**S.R:** I don't understand the meaning of Gritt.

**F.T:** A Gritt is a Liberal.

**S.R:** What's the difference?

**F.T:** That's what they used to call the Liberals, Gritts.

**S.R:** Do you recall anything that happened in Crystal Beach while you were a Reeve?

**F.T:** Not a great deal. I had opposition within.

**S.R:** Such as?

**F.T:** There was things that I stood for and there was three members of the council that wanted to run the Town in every respect. And here religion comes in again. I had no religious connection with any of it. Then we had Albert Obidowski, you had Madeline Faiazza, then you had Clark, and they formed the majority.

**S.R:** They were there the same time that you were?

**F.T:** And they had... they were all Catholic and wanted things their way. I'm just telling you the truth. I'd come home from a Council meeting very, very dis...

**S.R:** Frustrated?

**F.T:** Really, beyond common sense. I'd be home maybe a half an hour, and they had made their report and the Catholic Priest would call me up.

**S.R:** Why him?

**F.T:** To tell me what was going to happen. The majority were moving



without the minutes of Council. They had a priest here before that was a nice fellow. That guy there was out to run everything.

**S.R:** The one that was in while you were a Reeve?

**F.T:** No, not when I was first Reeve. I've known him for years, the first one. He was, as I say, a nice guy. I got enough of this guy so I went to him. He was out in Smithville at the time. I don't know what happened, but they took that guy out of here. They sent him up to Hamilton, west of Hamilton. The people there didn't like him... so they shipped him up there and made a... I don't know what they called it.

**S.R:** Did he get promoted?

**F.T:** They sent him as a, kind of a... to build up... over in one of the foreign countries.

**S.R:** Like a missionary?

**F.T:** Missionary.

**S.R:** Do you remember what his name was?

**F.T:** I don't remember what his name was. There's all... but they... he was only there a short time and they shot him. He was that type of... and the people didn't want him. Where, if they had sent a nice fellow, a fellow that could get along with the public...

**S.R:** Oh, that was the nasty one that they didn't like, that they sent over there.

**F.T:** Yeah.

**S.R:** Do you remember the nice one's name?

**F.T:** Canning. He was a nice fellow.

**S.R:** One other different topic... was there ever smuggling around during Prohibition? In Fort Erie there was so much smuggling going on across the river, where they would send out the rowboats to Cuba, and stuff like that. Was there any smuggling around here?

**F.T:** Oh, all along, all... every place that there was an outlet there was a smuggler.

**S.R:** Do you recall any stories about the smuggling, events, or people involved?

**F.T:** This was under cover and I never got mixed up in that at all.

**S.R:** So it was only stories that you would hear once in a while?

**F.T:** You could see the action. You could see that action.

**S.R:** What kind of action? What did they do?

**F.T:** The booze being handled, and take-offs and all that kind of stuff.  
But, that's as far as it went, I never got to mixed up with that.

**S.R:** Was anybody ever hurt?

**F.T:** Oh yes, there was murders and everything else.

**S.R:** Was the law involved very much?

**F.T:** I think, myself, that the law was involved in it too. The office was great and the handling was great. But to me, it had all the appearances.

**S.R:** Were there ever any bookmaking betting places around here? In Fort Erie there used to be some houses set up for gambling.

**F.T:** Oh, you always had the travelling bookmaker.

**S.R:** What's that, or who was that?

**F.T:** Well, he went around taking bets.

**S.R:** When would this be?

**F.T:** Sometimes when the races were on and other times when they weren't. Say they were in Toronto, they'd be taking bets here.

**S.R:** Do you recall what his name was?

**F.T:** I don't know.

**S.R:** You were never involved in that or you just heard about it?

**F.T:** I never got... working every day and all that stuff, I never got involved in that stuff very much.

**S.R:** Did Crystal Beach have a train service, a train station or anything like that?

**F.T:** No.

**S.R:** So no trains ever came through here?

**F.T:** No, Ridgeway was the closest.

**S.R:** Oh, so if you wanted to use the train to ship anything, you had to take it to Ridgeway first.

**F.T:** Yes.

**S.R:** Were there any hospitals? When you were young and growing up, before Fort Erie Hospital was built, and somebody was sick, where did they go?

**F.T:** Buffalo General.

**S.R:** Buffalo General, there were no little home hospitals here or anything like that? What about doctors?

**F.T:** We had lots of doctors.

S.R: Who were the doctors?

F.T: Well, how far back do you want to go?

S.R: As far as you can remember.

F.T: Well, there was Dr. Brewster...

S.R: He was in Crystal Beach?

F.T: No, Ridgeway. I think Dr. Hershey was just finishing when I come on the scene... and the nothing much. And then there was Dr. Thompson, Dr. Snyder, and then the... Dr. Snyder went to Niagara Falls, and Dr. Thompson went to Port Colborne. I never followed the doctors after that, much.

S.R: Were there any dentists?

F.T: The only dentist I know was Glenn Teal.

S.R: Was he a real dentist?

F.T: Oh yes.

S.R: Where was that?

F.T: Ridgeway.

S.R: Was that back a long time ago?

F.T: Not too long. Well, he was he same age as my brother over here.

S.R: Your brother was just a little bit older than you?

F.T: Oh, quite a bit.

S.R: Ten years?

F.T: Oh, I'd say six years anyhow.

S.R: Did you ever hear of Bernardo Boys?

F.T: No.

S.R: They were... it was a charitable organization in England that sent boys out to foster homes.

F.T: I didn't hear of it.

S.R: Were there any big murders or big fires or anything big like that, that happened in Crystal Beach, that would hit the papers?

F.T: I don't think anything spectacular.

S.R: I heard something about riots on the boats, the Americana and the Canadiana?

F.T: Well, this happens when different factions, fellows from one group in the city and another group in the city, two different groups, and they get on the same boat, and the one guy winks at the other guys girl and there's a fight. That often happened.

**S.R:** Did that have any part in the boats stopping?

**F.T:** No, no, automobiles.

**S.R:** It was just from the automobiles that the boats stopped?

**F.T:** Well yes, you see, it cost 50¢ a person to ride to Crystal Beach.  
Well, it cost 50¢ and you could bring a whole car load over to Crystal Beach. That there killed it.

**S.R:** In closing, is there anything else that you can remember that you'd like to talk about?

**F.T:** No, not particularly.

**S.R:** Any other part of history?

**F.T:** Nothing that would interest the public at all, I don't think.

**S.R:** When did your family come to Crystal Beach? Where did they originate?

**F.T:** Whew, now you're asking me. My grandfather's father got Crown land down on the Ridge Road...

**S.R:** A long time ago.

**F.T:** A lot farther back then I can remember. He was dead when I was born.

**S.R:** Where did he come from?

**F.T:** He come from Holland.

**S.R:** Did you ever hear stories about your ancestors at all, anything, like, were they involved with the Fenian Raid, or any kind of history with prominent people or anything?

**F.T:** The Fenian Raid, the main battle was fought right on the... the building that they've got down there now, was my grandfather's great-grandfather's home.

**S.R:** What was his name?

**F.T:** Oh golly, you got me. You see, they had all them old names that... Zachariah, Elijah...

**S.R:** What was his last name?

**F.T:** Teal. And then there's... oh my gosh, some of the names they had.

**S.R:** Did you ever hear from your parents anything about the Fenian Raid?

**F.T:** No, I never found out anything about the Fenian Raid. You see, in the upper parts of their field was, right across from No. 10, they owned the field. I never... whether my grandfather run for Six Mile Creek, or where, I don't know, but he wasn't in it.

**F.T:** No, not in particular.

**S.R:** Well, thank you very much for the interview Mr. Teal.

**F.T:** Why, thank you.

**S.R:** Thank you..