

This is Shelley Richer interviewing Mr. Ross Nigh in his home on Newgate Road on August the 8th, 1985.

S.R: Hello Mr. Nigh and how are you?

R.N: I'm fine thank-you Shelley.

S.R: What is your date of birth?

R.N: December 14, 1917.

S.R: Where were you born?

R.N: I was born in this house that is sitting right behind you, over there about three hundred feet from where we sit today.

S.R: And that's on Newgate then?

R.N: That's on Newgate, that's right.

S.R: So you've lived in the area all your life?

R.N: I lived there until I was married, and then I rented a home one mile south for two years after we were married. Then I purchased this home in 1947, and I've lived here every since.

S.R: This home here is on a farm.

R.N: Yes, I have a forty-one acre farm.

S.R: Is it still farmed now?

R.N: No, just growing wild. I make wood and do a little bit of gardening.

S.R: Could you tell me about the farming days?

R.N: Yeah. I grew up on the farm next door. My father was a farmer and then he began to hang paper. I used to farm as a boy, much different than we farm today.

S.R: What type of farming?

R.N: Well, it would be mixed farming. A few cows, a few chickens, a few pigs, a few geese, a general family farm in those days.

S.R: And the wheat and the grains, that too?

R.N: You raised grain to feed to your livestock. For marketing, your crops were marketed through your livestock. You milk your cows, separate the milk, sell the cream, feed the skim milk to your calves, and pigs, and chickens, then market your pigs and beef cattle, eggs, chickens, and so on.

S.R: Where did you market these things?

R.N: Silverwood's Dairy used to come down and pick up the cream, the sour cream, once a week. The pigs...we'd buy beef cattle, we'd

sell them to local butchers.

S.R: Do you remember who they were?

R.N: Yeah, there was a fellow by the name of Harv Fretz. He used to be a butcher. He lived just south of here. Then my uncle, Reuben Noyes, bought his business out about 1928 I believe. We sold our butcher products to him. Then later when I was married, we started dressing our fowl and taking them to the Niagara Falls Market. So we sold chickens, and eggs, at the Niagara Falls Market for about fifteen years or so.

S.R: What's "dressing"?

R.N: We would dress them, oh yeah.

S.R: I don't know what dressing is.

R.N: What...well, it's really undressing. You kill them and take their feathers off of them and draw them, so they're ready for the pot.

S.R: That's where you sold them to, but where did you get them from? Was it local?

R.N: Well, you'd buy...there were a couple hatcheries in Ridgeway. I sold eggs to both of them. Chester Riegle had a hatchery for a while. Dishers had a hatchery and a feed mill. I got my baby chicks from them and sold the hatching eggs back to them. Then we raised the chicks and dressed them. Then we sold them on the market to the customers who would come by.

S.R: You said farming has changed a lot back then to where it is now. Could you describe the changes, like...how, when planting time came, what kind of machinery you had, as far as smoking your bac on...I don't know anything about farming?

R.N: Well the first big change is...if you just sit here and look around you now, where there were about four or five active farmers that you could see sitting from right where we are today. Some of the farms were fifty acres and some where one hundred. And that would just about be the limit. A hundred was considered a large farm in those days. The farming was all done by horses, cows milked by hand, and it would be a total operation...that is, a little bit of everything. Where today you have big farms, specialized farming with big flocks, and big dairy herds, and then very costly, expensive, sophisticated machinery. In those days we did everything with a

team. We had one for our plow...in fact sitting right there behind you Shelley, is a One Furrow Plow which I found a couple years ago and brought it home and painted it as an ornament. That's the very type and reason I wanted it, because that is the type of plow I learned to plow with behind a team of horses in 1934. It's a One Furrow Wilkenson 5. That brings back a lot of memories. My father gave me the team of horses and the plow and walked beside me, and he must have had heart failure the way that plow jumped around. But you gradually learned and then...I can remember those days when we'd plow from twenty-five to thirty acres every fall, an acre a day, following a team of horses walking ten and twelve miles a day to plow one acre.

S.R: That was going to be my next question, how long it took.

R.N: Well, that's how long it took. An acre, you know, an acre and a half was a good days work, a good days work for a team of horses and a one furrow plow.

S.R: How long would a days work have been? Take the plowing and all your chores, and stuff like that, how long would it have been?

R.N: Farmers would get up from, some early birds would get up at five o'clock in the morning. I was never that ambitious. But some were five, six, somewhere in there. Then you would do the chores, then come in and have breakfast. Then you would harness the horses and go to the field and do your field work. Come up at noon and give the horses a rest and feed them, then have lunch, lie down by the front door to get a little breeze for about fifteen or twenty minutes. Then you'd harness your horses and go back to the field, 'till between five and six, unhitch your horses and come up and then have supper first and then do your chores. Then as the days became shorter you would...no electricity through this part of the country in those days...we would light our kerosene lanterns, carry them out and hang them in the barn and do your chores by lantern light at that time.

S.R: Were they very safe?

R.N: They were safe if they were kept in a safe place. There were a lot of...I shouldn't say a lot, but some barn fires started...if you'd hang them on a...put them on a beam, and maybe by some accident

they'd be knocked off. You'd usually have some secure nails or hook somewhere where you'd hang them. That was...oh that was essential because they could be very hazzardous if they tipped over, because the kerosene would run out and then it would ignite and that was the end of it.

S.R: When did automation come to the farm? When did you go from a One Furrow Wilkenson 5 to tractors, et cetera?

R.N: Well, I would say late, oh, in the middle '20's a few tractors started to appear. The old 10-20 McCormick D-Rings was an old work-horse on the farms. Some of us began then. We would occasionally hire a man with a tractor to do some custom work in our busy season.

S.R: What's "custom work"?

R.N: Well, you'd hire them by the day or by the acre to come and plow or to come and work your fields and just to help you catch up. Then in the, during the war, I guess following the war, was the big change-over...I'm talking about World War Two...the big change-over when farmers began to generally change from horses to tractors, and then to bigger tractors and bigger machinery, and then eventually the combines. The combines began to appear around here, I would think in the mid forties, then in a few years they took over completely. And then of course with that it was the...they kept getting bigger and better and more expensive which squeezed out the little farmer and specialization took over. If you take for instance, in the chicken business for instance, this is the first year that I have raised any chickens for quite a few years. I'm doing it, not because I make any money, but because I just wanted to raise some chickens. I think I can raise better chickens than I can buy in a supermarket and a little nostalgia combined with it. But when we were raising chickens, we would raise from eight hundred to a thousand a year and dress about twenty of them each week and take to the Niagara Falls Market. But back then, that would be about twenty-five years ago, I was getting as high as eighty-five cents a pound for dressed chickens. Now you can go into the IGA, or another supermarket, if you watch the ads, occasionally you can get them as cheaply as eighty-nine cents. That's twenty-five years later with inflation and everything. So the farm flock went out when commercial broiler

production began. The feed companies would get farmers to put in large flocks and then they would maybe supply the feed or pay the farmer so much to raise the birds and encourage big production. Where a farm flock of a few hundred, it went to, where one man would raise from thirty to forty thousand you know, and turn them over, four times a year. And that's where it is today. And then the profit per bird shrunk so much that the small farmer wasn't profiting any more from small farming.

S.R: You told about taking your dairy products and eggs and things to the market. Is that what you sold to buy clothes, and to buy your farm implements? What did the farm make it's money on?

R.N: I didn't take the dairy products. Some farmers did and made their homemade butter. I never did that. But, at that time, I was selling milk to your grandfather [Paul Lichtenberger] who had Lichtenberger's Dairy. That's when I started to sell whole milk. I had a small dairy herd at that time. So my dairy products...I no longer separated the milk you know, I sold...they picked it up each day. My chickens and eggs we retailed to the Niagara Falls Market. Yeah, the chickens and eggs, that's what I was sort...my grocery money. That put food on the table to raise my family.

S.R: And then your wheat and grains, whatever you grew there, that was just for personal use only?

R.N: Well, my feed all went into the livestock. I never did cash crop farming. In fact, I had to buy a lot of feed to supplant the feed I raised on the farm.

S.R: Where would you have gotten that from?

R.N: Well, from Beam's Mill, Daddy Beam from Stevensville, and Disher in Ridgeway were the two main suppliers that I purchased the feed from.

S.R: Is Daddy Beam in Stevensville there still?

R.N: No, the building's there but his family did not carry on the business and he died a number of years ago.

S.R: Where was it located in Stevensville?

R.N: Right beside your Uncle Rupheen's Electric Shop.

S.R: On Stevensville Road?

R.N: A big building there with apartments above. Daddy lived in the front apartment and had his business underneath him. His feed

store was in the front and his milling machines in the back.

S.R: Do you know when he started and approximately when he ended or anything about it?

R.N: I couldn't tell you...he was going there long before I was born. His father started the business. In fact, my father told me that that old building was a church at one time. In back there's a cemetery behind that building. There are a few tombstones back there. And then they built a concrete front on. And then back a number of years ago, quite a few years ago, Daddy tore off the old wooden structure of the old original church, and built a concrete structure all the way back with another apartment upstairs, and he put in some better equipment. Which he carried on then as long as he did anything. But it discontinued with his death.

S.R: Do you know approximately what year?

R.N: No, I could hardly hazard a guess.

S.R: In the fifties, or sixties?

R.N: I would say at least twenty years ago.

S.R: You also mentioned Disher Feedmill. Where is that located?

R.N: That was on Mill Street. I suppose Mill Street was named because of that. It's...I think it's still Mill Street. It used to...you turn from the main street in Ridgeway, left, right by the lawyer's office...between Sherk's Hardware and the lawyer's office...go down to the end of the street. His office was on one side of the street...in fact he had a hatchery then and a frozen food building where you could...when freezers began to freeze food, there were not many home freezers in those days and some of these commercial dealers put up these big buildings where they put in lockers and you could rent a locker to keep it for your frozen food. He had one of those on one side. And then his old...then again it was a family affair, I believe he took it over from his father, I'm quite sure of this. It was on the other side of the road.

S.R: Is it still in operation?

R.N: No, that's been discontinued quite a few years ago as well.

S.R: To make feed, one person said, you have your grains but they're not the right nutrition that the cows, or whatever, need. Is that why you went there?

R.N: Oh, that's right. You'd supplement your grains. Your grains were a good basic feed, but to get concentrates, and added proteins, and so on, you would buy those from the local mill, or you would take...we did not have our own grinders on our farm, so we would take the whole grain to these mills, have them ground, and buy concentrate, or...and then they put in mixers. We'd take our whole grain and have it ground and mixed there if we wished. But also, I had more chickens and cattle than I could produce feed for and I'd just have to buy grain also to supplement their feed.

S.R: Was it very expensive?

R.N: Very expensive, yes.

S.R: Compared to the profit you made off them?

R.N: Well, that's true then and it's true today. You've got to watch that margin between your costs and your income. Farmers today are having that same struggle. Now I'm quite removed from the farm scene, things have changed so much since I left farming. But I can understand the pressures they're under today.

S.R: Chickens are big business now where they used to have a lot of little farms. Is that what squeezed out all the other farmers around then? I don't see anybody farming right here and you said you could see four or five at one time.

R.N: Well, that's true, yeah. Right across here a half a mile, there's a big chicken building. He had big equipment and he farmed all this land up until this year.

S.R: Do people still live on all the farmlands here?

R.N: People are living in the homes but they are not farmers. They are factory workers who commute. Any farming that's been done along here mostly now is wheat along Netherby Road. This is the first year I've seen much wheat, but it's been...and it's true around this area...most commercial farming outside of the farm where they raise feed for the livestock, is cash corn cropping. But there's...

S.R: Livestock corn or table corn?

R.N: Feed corn for grain. There's been a lot of that around here the last few years but these fields aren't doing anything this year.

S.R: Do you know why that is?

R.N: No, I don't.

S.R: Going back, could you tell me what school you went to and where it is located?

R.N: Yes, I started attending school about 1924, I believe. I cut right back here across the fields to the Sodom Road and attended Number Five Willoughby, Number Five Willoughby School. It is now transformed into a house.

S.R: Would you remember who your teachers were and the changes that might have taken place in the school?

R.N: I sure do. First, I attended public school for six years. The first five years my teacher was Florence Gilmour from Stevensville who went to the Stevensville School there and taught as long as she lived. She was followed by Cathleen Swinton who later married Louis Willick, a farmer on the Sodom Road. Miss Swinton remained at that school for, I believe twenty-seven years, and she taught my two older children at Number Five Willoughby. She taught there until she died during the night one night. And they substituted the teacher for the balance of the year and they closed the school and transferred the students to Black Creek School.

S.R: You said it's a home now. From when the time that you remember the school, or that you heard about the school...like you might have heard stories from your father, or your grandfather...to the time it was closed and made into a home, were there any changes made?

R.N: Not too many really in that school. In fact my father attended that school. It was built a year after he was born. He attended that school. And then his children all attended, as long as they attended public school, and then my two until the school was closed. I don't know...I don't think the school changed much from when my dad's time and my time. The old pot-bellied wood stove was in the middle of the school and the toilet facilities were outdoors, outback. I don't know...possibly they put in a better stove by the time my children arrived, I don't even remember that.

S.R: Would there have been electricity in then?

R.N: Oh yes. Well wait, not in my days. I don't think we had a...no we didn't have it when I attended school. It would have been when my children attended. I don't remember just what year it was put in.

S.R: And then where did you attend school after your six years?

R.N: From 1930-34 I attended Stevensville Continuation School. That's in the east end of Stevensville. It was quite a new school then, built I believe in...let's see, it was...they had the opening ceremonies in 1927. It was a three room school and it had three teachers and a student body of, I believe less than a hundred in those days.

S.R: How many students went to your Willoughby School?

R.N: That was considered a pretty big school when for a period of time, we had over fifty students going there with one teacher.

S.R: And it was all different grades, one through six?

R.N: One through eight.

S.R: Was it called grades then?

R.N: No. That wasn't...now wait a minute...classes. They called it...I think it was called classes I remember. You'd have junior one and senior one, junior two and senior two, junior three and senior three, junior forth and senior forth. I skipped two grades. That's why I only spent six years in public school but they had the full eight, the full eight grades. And then Stevensville Continuation School gave you four years. The last year I was there they added grade thirteen but they gave from grade nine through to...and there they called it form, form one through four, but they gave you your high school education.

S.R: You said there were three teachers.

R.N: Three teachers yes.

S.R: Would you remember who they were?

R.N: Yeah, I sure do. Mrs...Miss Lawson, Miss E.M.Lawson was the principal through those years. The other teachers, I remember Miss Armour, a Miss Hetherington, Mr. Blacklock, Miss Cameron and Mr. Richardson ...I'm sure that's his name. He was only there in my last year.

S.R: You mentioned a lady principal?

R.N: Yes.

S.R: Was that very common? The schools I know have male. You have a lot of lady teachers, but male principals.

R.N: No. I don't think it would have been very common in those days. I think that was quite uncommon. Miss Lawson was a very, was a very fine teacher, and a fine disciplinarian for whom I just had very

warm memories and great respect. She was a good teacher and a good administrator. Miss Lawson did not have her degree at that time but she had taught enough years to have credentials. But after she left here as a mature teacher, after serving as principal for a number of years here in Stevensville, she went back to university and earned her degree and then continued teaching for the rest of her life, or until her retirement.

S.R: In Stevensville, or she needed her degree to get her elsewhere?

R.N: She needed her degree to get her elsewhere, yes, that's right, so she'd be a qualified high school teacher.

S.R: When you went to Stevensville School, how far would that be away from your home?

R.N: From here, about two and one half miles each way.

S.R: Did you have to walk?

R.N: I walked the first months, and then I had an uncle who took an interest in me and bought a second-hand bicycle and gave me, my Uncle Norm House.

S.R: Were they expensive to get then? You said your uncle had to get it?

R.N: Well, they wouldn't sound expensive to you today, but they sure were in the kind of money that was made those days, yeah. I don't recall the prices.

S.R: So was it very...not too many of your friends have bicycles?

R.N: Yes. Most of the country boys who rode in had bicycles and some of the town boys. There were quite a few bicycles around the school.

S.R: Are there any interesting stories you can remember about...even as far as activities at school, discipline at school? Like one person mentioned to me that his teacher could stand anywhere in the room, and any kid in the seats...and she'd have her strap, and she could throw and ping off...if somebody was out of line...one shot and she had what she was aiming for.

R.N: Well, we were sure those days that the teachers had eyes in the back of their heads, they were...I suppose a sort of sixth sense that developed with teachers that they knew pretty well what was going on. But there was discipline in the classroom and in those days the teacher was expected to apply discipline, even the strap. The

strap was very much a part of the discipline in those days. The good thing was, the teacher could have used the strap and she'd have the support of the parents. Today teachers apply corporal punishment at the risk of their careers. But quite often, parents would tell their children, if you get a strap at school, you'll get one when you get home. That way you shape up and you obey the teacher and you obey the rules when you go to school. So she had the support of the community. I never in my school, all those years that I went to school, I never heard of a parent making a fuss because their child was disciplined. And the strap was applied on a regular basis.

S.R: So people learned what they were supposed to learn. Now there are sports figures that don't even know how to read yet they even went through college. There wasn't these problems back then right?

R.N: Shelley, it's pathetic. I can't understand it when I see college students that can't spell simple words and can't pronounce simple words, it's appalling to me. I'm not an educator but that's not my career and I don't want to criticize educators, but I can't for the life of me understand how kids can go through school and they can't spell. That was part of our training. It was drilled into us so much that...

S.R: Was it just the basics, like reading, writing and arithmetic, the three R's, and history and geography? The schools have so many other different courses now. But was it basically just your three R's, then history and geography?

R.N: Yeah, I guess so. But what we learned you know, we learnt what we were expected to learn but we learned them well. And we didn't have the field trips and a lot of those activities that the kids have today. It was the basics alright.

S.R: Were there any special events that the school had?

R.N: Well, the only event, well two special events of the year that I recall in my years of public school now...one was the, the old, the township fairs. Every township had their fairs. The schools would compete in different events and speaking contests, and running, then they would have their...oh their work through the year would be on display at these fairs. And this took place at the old Willoughby Township Hall on Sodom Road. The other special event would be the Christmas Concerts which the teacher would organize this and have events,

little plays, and recitations, and things like this. And that was always a big community event. Of course again, well the transportation wasn't like it is today. People wouldn't drive as far, so it was a community event when the local school had their Christmas Concert. They'd have the kerosene lamps or lanterns hanging around the building and the parents would pile in, pack that little place, and the men sitting at the benches at the back. To we kids, it looked like a massive crowd out there with a hundred people there. We'd stand up with our recitations, and do our little plays and things. That was a big event of the year.

S.R: Are you, or have you been, a member of a church?

R.N: Yes, I was a member. I joined the Bertie Brethren in Christ Church at the age of thirteen, in 1931.

S.R: And where is that located?

R.N: Alright. The Bertie Brethren in Christ Church is located on Church Road, just west of the Point Abino Road at the junction of Point Abino and Church Road. It's about a mile and a half west, straight west of Stevensville.

S.R: Could you describe your church from when you first started attending to what it is now?

R.N: Well, the present building is the original building with additions being made over the years. They just celebrated here a couple weeks ago, their hundred and tenth anniversary of the building of the original structure. When I started to attend, the original structure had been added to with the wings at the back. But it had a large concrete step at the front and then it was surrounded by the old sheds yet, that were there for the horse and buggy days. My memory doesn't go back to the horse and buggy days with a few exceptions. There was a couple horses that used to come when I was a boy, but the sheds were still there. They were torn down then over the years. And then there have been many additions made to the church. One, the first when I was attending there, the basement was remodelled and an entrance was placed on the front. Then considerable improvements made in the years since.

S.R: Is that the only church? You had mentioned something about Stevensville, downtown Stevensville?

R.N: You're talking about my church history are you?

S.R: Yeah.

R.N: Alright. When I was born, my parents were attending the United Brethren Church of Stevensville. I still remember going to church there on horse and buggy.

S.R: And where is that?

R.N: That's still in existence in Stevensville, right across from the Stevensville Library on the main drag there. My parents drove the horse and buggy, and then I can remember when they bought the Model T, the first Model T car. Then we attended there until I was twelve years of age, 1930. My mother's family were United Brethren, but my father's family were Brethren in Christ. At that time mother felt that, for various reasons, that she should go to my father's church where he grew up. So we started to attend the Bertie Brethren in Christ Church from that time on. We attended there until 1950, when a group of young people from the church decided they wanted to start an extension Sunday School. In searching around, they decided to start one in the war-time housing area on Drummond Road, in Niagara Falls, and I was asked to serve as superintendent of that Sunday School. As the work developed there, in 1955 I was asked to serve as Pastor in that church, and I served as Pastor of the Falls View Church for twenty years, until 1975. At that time I was invited back to serve as Pastor of the old Bertie Church where I grew up. So I came back to my boyhood church and served for the rest of my pastoral years until my retirement last year as Pastor of the Bertie Brethren in Christ Church.

S.R: Did you have to take schooling to become a Pastor or just a lifelong church member?

R.N: Schooling certainly was encouraged in those days, but not demanded.

S.R: Now it's demanded, isn't it?

R.N: Yes, it is required now. Yes, certain credentials are required now for pastoral leadership, and especially for ordination. I just came in before that requirement was requested. Because of my long service with the church and so on, and I had some training at Niagara Christian College, and then I took advantage of seminars and books and so on to improve my education, but I never did attend seminary.

S.R: How big of a part did religion have in your family life and your upbringing?

R.N: Well, religion had a predominant part. It was very much part of all phases of life Shelley, in those days in most religious homes and certainly in mine. My parents were very conscientious Christians and they felt that if you're going to be Christians you know, it deserves your best. So it entered into your social life, it entered into your business life. You know, when you made business decisions you'd ask the question, how do my Christian, how does my Christian witness affect it, how do my Christian ethics bear on this decision, and I, I'm very, very thankful for that. And I am a firm believer that religion is not just a little compartment of your life, a sort of Sunday go to meeting type of thing, that you take off on Sunday, and get home then it doesn't effect your life. It does affect your life. It must affect your life if it's real. Realistically I firmly believe that.

S.R: There was a name given to the Bertie Brethren in Christ Church, there was a name given to the members....like you have the Mennonites and things...what was the name given to the...?

R.N: The Bertie Brethren in Christ?

S.R: Yes.

R.N: Do you mean a colloquial name, or a nickname, or...?

S.R: Yes.

R.N: Yeah, well...see the Brethren in Christ Church, when our forefathers came to Canada, they practiced baptism by immersion. I suppose it was by the community that had sort of imposed the name of Tunkers, which stuck for many, many years.

S.R: Tunkers?

R.N: Yes. Which means to dip or to immerse. Then it became the official name of our church for many years in Canada. In fact, we were registered with the government as Tunkers. As time went on then, there was...we associated more with the church in the United States, who were known as Brethren in Christ, the Brethren in Christ name became used in all our literatures, our literature and so on, and became more accepted, and many of our churches used it on their signs. And so it was decided eventually to accept the name Brethren in Christ. Officially, we are now registered as Brethren in Christ.

S.R: When would that change have been made?

R.N: That change was officially made in Canada in 1933.

S.R: Was the "Plain People", was that just a nickname?

R.N: No, it wasn't a nickname. No, we were Plain People. In fact, our background, up until very recent years, is that the distinctive people believed in complete separation of world and church, the church and state, and they carried that to the extent where they even dressed differently. When I was growing up, and there are still a few of our older members at the Bertie Church who dress in this way. The men were discouraged, in fact, forbidden is hardly too strong a word to say, from wearing neckties.

S.R: You just knew better than to wear one in the church?

R.N: That's right. That's right Shelley. If you wore a necktie, you wouldn't be used, you wouldn't be recognised as a member. You might have your name on the church role, but you wouldn't be recognised as a church member.

S.R: What was the reason behind the necktie?

R.N: Well, the feeling was that one should not wear anything for adornment. Clothing should be worn for the sake of comfort and for general usage to cover the body and keep it warm. Anything that was not part, was not useful, was considered adornment. A necktie certainly is...it doesn't keep the neck warm and is considered an adornment, as indeed it is.

S.R: Well then, for wedding ceremonies could you wear rings? Were there ring ceremonies?

R.N: Oh no. No Shelley. Up until, oh, the 1950's, our people could not wear a wedding ring. That was not part of the ceremony. That was...a wedding ring was forbidden. In fact, we were married without wedding rings. We were married about twenty years before my wife purchased a wedding ring. They were gradually introduced and then people who were not married by them bought them and wore them. But, it was considered as jewelery, as an adornment.

S.R: What about watches?

R.N: Interesting enough watches weren't frowned on as much as a wedding ring.

S.R: Because watches have a purpose?

R.N: Yeah, that's right. Wristwatches were frowned upon by some for a while, the fellows, about them showing. Most of the people wore watches, unseen watches, in their...pocket watches...are known as pocket watches. Then wrist watches began to be worn. Then over the past few years, gradually neckties began to be worn and accepted. Then our women wore, what was known as a head covering, although...

S.R: A chaplet?

R.N: Well, it's...Well, it was more than that. It was made, designed especially ...and it was covered by a bonnet. You couldn't buy it in a department store. These were made by certain women in the church. They would make these, these little white...

S.R: To cover your buns in the back of the hair?

R.N: They were known as prayer veilings. That's what they were called. And then they were covered by a dark bonnet when you went out.

S.R: When did chaplets come then? I can remember going to church and you had to have your head covered.

R.N: Okay. That was...see, the basis of this all goes back to I Corinthians 11, which says, a woman should have her head covered in worship. And so, when the prayer veiling, the official, or the customary prayer veiling was discontinued, then our ladies went to these little chapel veils, which they would put on...oh, put in their pocket at night and put it on when they go to church, or wear it before they leave home. That more or less substituted for the bonnet.

S.R: Is it still required in that church?

R.N: No, it is not Shelley. That's one of the big changes. That's one of the big changes that has come, come to pass.

S.R: Well, what brought on all these changes? Because when you started out...everything basically comes from the Bible, the rules of the church, and the bible doesn't change.

R.N: You're right. The bible doesn't change, that's right Shelley. To some people this has been a very traumatic experience for a lot of our people in our churches. They use this very argument, the Bible doesn't change, and that's true. But we have to face the fact that interpretation of the bible does change and a lot of wonderful, sincere people will take different interpretation from the same

scripture. I think trend started back, oh, in the 1940's and '50's I believe, when some of our people became very exercised that we were not making an impact on the world, we were not...we were sort of family oriented, ingrown.

S.R: So the church wasn't going to grow then?

R.N: That the church wasn't growing fast enough as a church is ordained to do, or should do. They felt they had to make some adjustments and could not be so severe and so legalistic if they were going to make an impact on the world. You know, I'm not going to make a value judgement today. I'm not going to say our fathers were wrong and we were all right, not at all. I think our fathers were some right and some wrong, and we're some right and some wrong. We're all human and we're doing our best. But, that trend did begin in our church, and has developed until today. Our church you know, as far as dress is concerned, is partially indistinguishable from any other church. But, I think the important part is that our church today, as it did when I was a boy, stresses the validity of the word God, that the church is founded on the word of God, and our faith in Jesus Christ, and his dependancy on his message and on his word. That to me is very, very important.

S.R: The elderly members of the church, the ladies, their dresses all have something like aprons on the front, they've got these bib things on the front and back. Was that...was there a certain code, or was that just what you had to wear?

R.N: That was part of the dress code, yeah. I could show you, I could dig it out I guess, the constitution in 1937, which was possibly the most legalistic constitution of the Brethren in Christ Church in the two hundred years of it's existence, which felt that there were some trends that they had to halt. And they began to put it in writing, some of the practices of the church. And that was the one that had, the Brethren should wear the errect collar, which is sort of a clerical type of collar. Or it said that articles of adornment, in parenthesis, such as a necktie, were forbidden or discouraged. I forget the exact words. The accepted dress for women was the prayer veiling, and dresses with the cape...it was known as a cape. And it was an article that came over the breast to minimize the

outline of the breast, sure. It was sort of a modesty type of thing. I've heard, I've heard them say also it has something to do with nursing the baby, that they could open the dress and nurse the baby behind this cape. It would be a very modest thing. Modesty is a very, is a very relevant thing. It depends on your culture. I was quite surprised, but not as surprised as I would have been if I hadn't heard something about other cultures, but when I visited Africa in 1976, and visiting one of our church services in what is now Zambia. That was Zambia then too. But setting on the platform and speaking one morning, one of the ministers wives sitting back a few rows, and she had a little guy there who was running around and still nursing. She just opened her dress and took out her breast you know, and nursed this baby right there in the church service, and she didn't even cover her breast and nobody blinked away. But you see, in some African cultures, the uncovered breast is considered a sign of modesty. Only prostitutes covered their breasts in some African cultures, and that I had to learn. And missionaries went in with all sincerity, but ignorant of cultural patterns, and when they accepted Christianity they were required to cover their breast, and then they wondered why prostitution increased, because they didn't realize that some of the...they didn't adjust to some cultural habits. But that's another subject. That's a big one.

S.R: What differences...taking another family as not a member of your church, to you and your family as a member of your church...what differences did it make on your family? Were there certain things that were not allowed, entertainment type things or sports?

R.N: Well yes, but the big difference today Shelley, is that we teach biblical principals and give people a lot of latitude in how they apply those biblical principals. But in those days they were spelled out in a much more legalistic way. They were told that they dare not use tobacco, they dare not drink alcoholic beverages, and they dare not attend theatres, and they dare not wear make-up, and they dare not wear jewelery, and they should not, our young people were encouraged not to attend field days and take part in concerts and things like that.

S.R: And sporting events?

R.N: Sporting events, competitive sporting events. Yeah, you could play ball with your cousins in the backyard, but not to take part in competitive sports at all. That was very much forbidden or frowned upon...discouraged I should say. And strongly discouraged. Where today, we would teach first biblical principals of separation from the world of the church because Christians should live lives that are different, honest lives, and we teach, we strongly stress modesty. But we allow...people have a lot of latitude on how they apply these principals so that a family coming from a non Brethren in Christ background into our church today, we are told nice and plainly they are accepted on the basis of their testimony, their confession of faith that they have become Christians and they are born again and they've yielded their lives to Jesus Christ and they promised to obey him, and pledge fidelity to the church. If they're willing to do that, and willing to be baptised by adult baptism, they are accepted into our church.

S.R: What about...you mentioned before the interview about radios and just household things, even those were frowned upon? You never had a radio but you were lucky as far as household games were concerned.

R.N: We were what...what kind of games?

S.R: Household games, checkers, dominoes.

R.N: Yeah, our...well you know, I was talking about the legalistic days, that there were some differences too. I think I mentioned to you that my parents, although very conservative, and very, very sincere in their religious practices, very conscientious, and very loyal to the church, they allowed us to have games in the home. We played ...we always had dominoes, and checkers, and crokinole. Dominoes were the big game. Our whole family used to participate, including my father and mother. I mentioned this to other people my own age, and some who were younger, and they were quite surprised. Their parents felt that when they became Christians, games were part of the world and they should be discarded and they were thrown out. My parents only insisted that they not be played on Sundays. So they purchased us a Bible card game that we could play on Sundays. We played this game with a lot of enjoyment and developed a lot of Bible knowledge over this series based on Biblical knowledge, Biblical questions.

S.R: What was the reason behind the radio?

R.N: Well, I understand that radios were frowned upon by our church. By the time we came in the church, there were some radios. I don't remember much being said about radios. I think it was more a case of economics that my parents you know, didn't during those depression years, just felt that they could get along without a radio and didn't buy one. In fact, I don't know if they ever bought one. I think we boys maybe bought the first radio that was in our house when we got old enough.

S.R: You mentioned the depression years. How did the depression...what changes did it make in your family and the community? What sort of things can you remember that the depression did, it's effects?

R.N: Well, the depression you know, we people who lived on a farm were very hard up but at least we had enough to eat. We didn't have to worry about where the next meal came from. Dollars were hard to come by. When you realize that, you know, you're selling butter for nineteen cents a pound, and eggs for maybe ten or fifteen cents a dozen, and you could hire farm labour for from ten to twenty dollars a month and their board, and young fellows were hiring out to farmers like that for a hundred and fifty, two hundred dollars a year and their board. That meant hard work from dawn 'till after dark. My first job away from home, I went with a local butcher to the Niagara Falls Market after I was through high school, on Saturdays, and I was paid one dollar a day. I was glad to get it.

S.R: Was that during the depression or after the depression?

R.N: That was during the depression yeah, in the mid thirties. Toward the end of the thirties things began to improve somewhat as...well, it was the war I'm sad to say. It took a war to bring some life to the economy, but that's the way it happened. Then after the war of course, things were booming. But people worked very hard for a small amount of money in those days.

S.R: What about the workers. You said it was hard for the farm people but you always had food. So if you were a store merchant or a farmer then you did have some sort of income coming in. What about the other people?

R.N: Well, the people who had a factory job for forty cents an hour, thirty-five

or forty cents an hour, could pay for their homes and feed their families and pay their bills. But the people who did not have work just had to go on relief that's all. People who lived in town, they had to go on the dole, on welfare. I guess that term isn't used so much today, but it's, that's welfare or on relief.

S.R: Did you have to do anything for welfare? In Fort Erie they went to the town chanty, if you lived in the north end you went to the town chanty and you might have to shovel snow in the winter, dig ditches, you did town type of work.

R.N: Yeah, I think they did but I was just a teenager at home and I really don't know what...I know there was some of that, but I can't go into that because I'm not too well informed. They had the relief camps up north for...they built camps up north you know, where they'd send young fellows to make wood or make roads or something for five dollars a month or something like that. It...those were tough years, very, very hard years. Yet, I didn't have a family to support. I didn't feel the impact. My parents always had food on the table. They worked terribly hard and skimmed and saved, but were always able to pay their bills and had food on the table, but as I say, I didn't ...mother would make our own, make our clothes. You could buy, you could buy old sugar bags for five cents a piece and bleach out the colours and get some dye and dye them and make shirts, with a sugar bag. And that type of thing was done to make every dollar stretch. And a nickle was a nickle in those days.

S.R: Now a nickle's just loose change.

R.N: And some of the kids, you give them a nickle...you can't blame them because what does a kid do with a nickel. You need a dollar to buy an icecream cone anymore.

S.R: I think it's a little bit before your time, but there was a charity in England. Could you tell me what the name was, or what you know about it, if you knew any people that belonged to this charity and what they did?

R.N: You're referring to the Bernardo Homes, which was an English charity where they cared for boys who were orphaned boys, or boys from homes where maybe the father died and the mother couldn't care for them all. So they would care for these boys and then bring them

to Canada and place them in homes in Canada. This, I don't recall of any boys coming over in my lifetime that I can remember, but I do know boys my father's age who would be, if any of them were living today they'd be eighty or more, who came over. They were known as the Bernardo Boys. My father would tell you those, he was a Bernardo Boy, which meant that he was one of these English boys who was orphaned and sent over and then adopted into one of our homes. Well, not so much legally adopted, most of the them retained their own names, but they were raised by these families.

S.R: Foster children?

R.N: Yeah, foster children, yeah, that's right. There was two of them that I remember very much here, two hard working men who married and raised families and they were a real credit to the community. I know them because they were fine Christian leaders in our church. The one was William Charleton who became the pastor and leader of the Bertie Church for many years. The other was Charles Wright. And these people, their families are part of our community today, these were two Bernardo Boys who came over before World War One.

S.R: Was it very common...take the population of Stevensville, how many people would know...have any rough idea about how many Bernardo Boys there were?

R.N: No, I wouldn't want to guess. I hear...the ones I heard about were the ones that were in, taken in by some of our Brethren in Christ homes. I would have no way of knowing on that, no.

S.R: Could you...first describe the boundaries around? Now everything's Fort Erie, but there's been quite a few changes to make it into Fort Erie. Could you describe the townships and the boundaries?

R.N: Yeah, up until very recent years, Ontario was divided into counties and the counties were divided into townships. And this area is Welland Country, which took in quite a few townships. I can't just tell you the exact number now. But, here in particularly where we're sitting today was Willoughby Township. It went from the Netherby Road, which divided Bertie Township. Bertie Township run from the Netherby Road south to Lake Erie, and west to Humberstone Township, up to about where Netherby is today. And that encompassed that part.

And then Willoughby went north to Chippawa, and then Stamford Township sort of spread out around the city of Niagara Falls. These townships each had a local council and a Reeve, and they would make local laws, look after the roads, weed laws, line fence inspectors and so on, and they would set the tax rate for those small municipalities. And then the Reeves, the Deputy Reeves of those organizations all formed the county council, which looked after the various relating to the counties, the county roads and some of those things. The county line was the Netherby Road, just a thousand feet south of us here, the main road. Well when they divided they did away with the local townships and made the urban municipalities and included all the townships in the urban municipalities. Then they moved the dividing line of the town of Fort Erie, the new town of Fort Erie is here right in front of our home, a thousand feet north of the Netherby Road. But it sort of zigs and zags along. You go west, or go east rather, and then it goes a little farther north and takes in the, it takes in Douglastown.

S.R: So Douglastown is in Niagara Falls?

R.N: Douglastown is in Fort Erie. That's in Fort Erie. And then you go west here not too far and it goes over a thousandfeet south to the Netherby Road and then goes up. So you're driving along the Netherby Road and you're driving in our end of the Town of Fort Erie, and you drive a little bit more farther and see you're now entering the city of Niagara Falls. So it's a bit confusing. But anyway, right here where we sit in my home, that the road off the Netherby Road that comes in and services our two farms here, my home and my brothers home next door, that belongs to Fort Erie. But our land is in the city of Niagara Falls. So we pay taxes to Niagara Falls, but if we want the road plowed we have to call Fort Erie.

S.R: And I noticed you have a 382 Stevensville phone number, and it's R. R. # 2 Stevensville your address.

R.N: It's R. R. # 1 here. R. R. # 1 Stevensville, and my phone number is Stevensville that's right. So we have a Stevensville address which is in Fort Erie, a Stevensville phone number in Fort Erie, but we actually live in Niagara Falls. We pay our taxes to Niagara Falls.

S.R: Growing up as children, and young adults, you did your shopping

in Stevensville?

R.N: Yes, largely. Once in a while, once in a while my parents maybe would team up with another...I had some cousins in Stevensville. They would come and leave their children here and the two parents would go to Welland occasionally on a Saturday night and do their big shopping. But I was a pretty big boy before I learned very much of the city.

S.R: And Stevensville?

R.N: Stevensville was the centre, Stevensville was the centre of it all.

S.R: Could you...from the time you remember and what year that would be, your first recollections...could you describe Stevensville, what street you're talking about, the differences in the stores, if you remember the proprietors, any special hangouts for kids? What did Stevensville have to offer?

R.N: Well, we'll go back to my high school years, that's when I was in Stevensville every day. At that time the main store was where Mae's Restaurant is today, a great big brick store. The bank was in the same place.

S.R: Oh, right on the corner where the stop lights are?

R.N: That's right. The bank was there. It has changed it's name somewhat through the years. I think it was the Sterling Bank at one time and then the Imperial Bank then finally the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. The Stevensville Store was operated when I was a boy, the grocery store and clothing store, they had a clothing department as well. It was a general store. That's what they had in those days.

S.R: That's where Mae's Restaurant is now?

R.N: That's where Mae's Restaurant is. It circled right around and had openings on both sides. It was owned by...it was operated by a Wally Moon and Fred Staples. And then Fred Staples started his insurance business and sold his share to Wally Moon. Then down where the Stevensville Grocery is today...

S.R: Where's that?

R.N: That's just down the road a short distance towards the post office.

S.R: Oh, it was Hendershot's Store?

R.N: Hendershot's Store, yeah. It was Hendershot's Store, then that was

operated, well it was operated by a couple by the name of Nicks at one time. That's as far back as I can remember. A man by the name of Orval Nicks. He operated it for about four or five years there in the late 1920's, but then Hendershot took it over again. Oh no, oh no, Ed Lake. No, no, after that, after that Mr. and Mrs. Lake operated that for a number of years until then when he gave it up Crosby Hendershot took it over until recent years. The post office was on the Main Street, right across from Spears Garage, over there beside your Uncle Rupheen and Aunt Thelma's home, in that big brick building right across from it, Climenhaga's Funeral Home. And Climenhaga operated the post office as well, and that's where the post office was there.

S.R: About when did the funeral home move? I can recall when the funeral home was near the post office. Didn't the funeral home used to be around there?

R.N: No, the post office...but the funeral home is where I described it right across from your Aunt Thelma there.

S.R: Didn't the funeral home used to be around the Stevensville Planing Mill somewhere?

R.N: Well, yes. It moved down there then. They bought the old Johnson home there right across from the Stevensville Planing Mill, and that carried on there until very recent years.

S.R: Where did Central used to be? To call to use the telephone you had to call Central.

R.N: Yeah okay. That was always in the, all the years it was in Stevensville that I recall it was in Ross Wade's home, which was right beside the gas bar now. There was an addition there on the one end of that home now. Of course going back...well, I guess it was in the main part of the home and that little addition there used to be old Mr. Wade's Tailor Shop. Then when he died they moved it from what is now their living room of their home over to that area. But that's the building at least where...at that home right beside the gas bar, where Central used to be. Of course we had to call Central to go anywhere, even to...the only person we could ring directly was on our own lines. See, it had about six or eight people on your own line. We could hear them talk you know, and they could hear

you talk if they wanted to lift the receiver. But you lifted the receiver, pressed a little button on the side, it rang, and that got Central, and you gave her the number you wanted, and she carried it through for you.

S.R: So, the only way then that you could talk to your neighbours was if you both happened to pick up the phone at the same time, or could you call? Is there a special way of calling on the same party line?

R.N: Well, party lines usually run together if your neighbour wasn't using it.

S.R: You said, the only people you could call were your neighbours, without going through Central.

R.N: Oh, okay, yeah. If you wanted to call people on your same line, you would ring...everybody had a ring. Say it was two longs and three shorts, or a long and four shorts, or something, and you wouldn't press a button. You would just lift a receiver and you would DING, DING, ding, ding, ding, then you had your...each home had it's own code. You called them without going through Central, that's right.

S.R: Are there any other major changes that...or even minor changes, that you can remember that have taken place in the community, from back then 'till now?

R.N: Oh, I can't just think of what I can remember that we haven't covered. Well, one change...talk about transportation then, the network of roads would be one major change since I was a boy. I can remember going through the...my earliest recollection we had mud roads and secondary roads. I guess Nubmer Three Highway was paved at that time, and some of the city streets. The secondary roads would be like the country roads now, just a rough stone on it which they'd go through and grade periodically. My earliest recollection was when I was quite a young boy at that time when the Sodom Road was concreted. It was...

S.R: Like sidewalks?

R.N: It was concreted by...they had a firm come in...I remember the old Mac trucks coming in there. That was a big event for me as a country boy, going by those big trucks that went down slowly past our school. And they just did them like they do sidewalks,

plain concrete slabs. Then you would go, except that you had these divisions you know, and you'd go bang, bang, bang going. And that, that was like that for a lot of years until they finally paved over that. The Netherby Road at the front here used to be known as the Townline, between the two townships. That was paved also when I was quite young. So I don't remember too much that preceeded that.

S.R: Sports. You had mentioned that your religion was the Plain People and sports were frowned upon, competitive sports. But could you recall any people from the area that made a name for themselves in sports?

R.N: Well, in sports, I'll say again that we were discouraged from participating in competitive sports, which would be field days, but when I was at school I played ball with the kids and that was okay. When they were practicing for the field days I would practice with them, but I was never much of a sportsman. Even if I had gone into competitive sports I would never had won any medals. But I remember...one highlight in my high school years. We had a young fellow from the west end of Stevensville, his name was Richard Johnson, a bit older than myself, who was our top athlete. He became so good that he represented Canada in the Olympic Games in Australia back in the 1930's. That was quite an important thing because Australia was a long, long way away.

S.R: Like another planet nowadays?

R.N: Like another planet, that's right.

S.R: How old were you when, can you remember when you family finally got it's first car?

R.N: I remember it very well. It would have been...I suppose I was eight, between eight and ten, somewhere in there, in the later 1920's. Dad was one of the later ones to get a car around here. It was an old Model T Ford that you had to crank of course. It had a...it was a touring, known as a touring car then with a top that you could put down. It would be worth a fortune today now if we had it. But it was a pretty, pretty simple, pretty simple car.

S.R: So, you don't remember very much of the horse and buggy days?

R.N: No, no, I just barely remember going to church with my parents

in a horse and carriage. He used to have a one...I remember vaguely one time coming home with the one seated buggy, down the Townline from church and a truck went by and scared the horse and the horse panicked and ran away. It ran in the ditch and broke loose and the top of the buggy turned over and the horse ran home. Then dad had a two seated carriage which they had the...those are just kind of vague memories from my childhood days. That's going back sixty years.

S.R: What about the ferries? Did your family make use of the ferries?

R.N: Yeah, a little. I think it's too bad that it was discontinued. It was sort of a romantic thing for us country kids especially, to cross the ferry to Buffalo. That continued on after I had a car. I got a car when I was around twenty-one I guess, twenty or twenty-one. That's about 1938. I remember a few times as a young fellow going over and driving on that ferry and going across to Buffalo, going up Ferry Street, then into the big city.

S.R: What were the reasons for going to Buffalo? Especially living right here, you've got Niagara Falls, Welland and Fort Erie as the major shopping areas and stuff like that?

R.N: Well, two things I think. I know when I was a kid, my father used to go over because mother's doctor was a Buffalo doctor. He had some specialty that he doctored with. But, when we...we young fellows would go over...of course Buffalo was the big city. We'd go over to see the zoo, or we'd go over to shop because Buffalo prices were considerably cheaper than here. In those days my mother had a cousin in Buffalo, and I know on a couple occasions I and one of my cousins went over and we stayed. If you stayed for forty-eight hours you could bring back a hundred dollars I believe. We'd go over and then we'd shop. We could save money on tires and I bought a typewriter there once when I was going to Niagara Christian College taking a typing course. I saved quite a bit of money. So that's one reason, prices were considerably cheaper.

S.R: Did you ever have occasion to travel on the Dummy?

R.N: No. I know what they're talking about, but no I never did.

S.R: You mentioned your mother did her doctoring with a doctor in Buffalo. What did the area have to offer for hospitals and doctors?

R.N: Okay. Doctor Buell was the old general practitioner in Stevensville. He was our family doctor who did all the doctoring and all the extreme cases would be sent to the hospital. But Dr. Buell was a good old family doctor who'd...he would make house calls or you could make office calls, go in and see him. He delivered the babies in their homes. My mother tells me that my sister cost them eight dollars, I cost them ten and my brother cost them twelve. That was total cost for a childbirth. And when she had them they were here in her home, in this house, and Dr. Buell would come and attend them and that was her charges for calling his services.

S.R: Could you estimate on what that would be worth now?

R.N: Well, in 1946 I had my first son and my wife stayed in the hospital for eight days and the hospital bill was fifty dollars. I think I paid the doctor thirty-some, I forget the exact figure. A year later she had our daughter and she was in the hospital six days and the bill was fifty dollars. It had gone up that much in one year. Eight years later we had our third son in Port Colborne Hospital, she stayed four days and the bill was eighty-some dollars. But now it goes up to the hundreds you know, to stay one day.

S.R: That was before insurance?

R.N: That's right. I didn't have insurance for any of those. I paid it myself. You could buy...there was no government insurance then, no O.H.I.P., but you could buy private plans which I didn't have.

S.R: Where...in your parents time when you were a small boy...if something happened to you...like say you needed to have your appendix out, where would you have gone? Were there any home hospitals, or anything like that around here, or was it just...?

R.N: In those days? The hospitals were where they are now. I can remember going to the Fort Erie Douglas Hospital when it was built. I can't tell you off hand whether they had a hospital in Fort Erie before that. I suspect they had some type of hospital in Fort Erie before the Douglas Memorial was built. But the...they would have to go to one of these hospitals. Either to Welland, or Niagara Falls, or Fort Erie or Buffalo. Some people went to Buffalo, they always had good hospitals there. Surgery was done in hospitals like it's done today as far back as I can remember. I think the doctors did

more minor things in their offices than they do now. Well in fact I know they did. But anything, like appendix or anything like that, they'd go to the hospital.

S.R: You have a store on Netherby Road called Nigh's Sweet Shop.

R.N: That's right.

S.R: Could you tell me the history of the sweet shop from when it started to the changes that have been made? I know it started out in your home. And then following that a little bit of the story about who owned the building and who built it.

R.N: Alright. This wasn't planned. It was just one of those things that comes about through events. First of all, my wife grew up in Western Canada and she worked in a Chinese restaurant. She has quite an artistic touch. There was an old Chinaman who took quite an interest in her and he was a cake decorator. He taught her how to decorate cakes. From the time we've been married she did, she's always done some of that. Then a number of years ago some friends of ours in Stevensville, Arnold and Anna Ellis were molding chocolates and decorating them and selling them to local people. We knew them very well and they called on Roxena to come down and assist in some decorating when they were in their busy Easter Season. There she learned how to mold, and then they loaned her a few molds and she started to make a few for our family and friends. We were attending the market in Niagara Falls, we used to take them to the Niagara Falls Market. It was just one of those things that grew and we started to purchase our own molds, purchased our own chocolate, and it grew each year. For the first number of years Roxena made it in our kitchen, and then had a little room off her kitchen with a whole wall where she stored it. Then...oh let's see, it would be about sixteen years ago, my son I believe was fourteen years old, my youngest son, when she got so busy that she got him helping to mold some pieces. I said well, if he can do it I should be able to learn to do it and help out a bit. It was just about that point when Shirley Beam from Stevensville, a correspondent for the local newspapers, asked to do an article. She got some pictures and wrote an article and put it in the three local papers.

S.R: What would they be?

R.N: I beg your pardon?

S.R: What would the two local papers be?

R.N: The Fort Erie Times Review, The Niagara Falls Review and the Welland Tribune. As a result of that publicity, people just, phone calls just came in, orders came in. I guess that was the year that she pressed Rick into service to help her and she worked day and night 'til Easter. So we decided to see what could happen and we let it expand. Then the next year we moved up to our recreation room. We took it over and the orders more than doubled. My wife and I were standing there 'til two and three in the morning many, many, many nights...just melting in that little double boiler on the stove and testing by hand. Then the following year we decided to buy a commercial melter and we took more of our...we took over part of our garage. From that time on it's just been increased every year. Well then when Rick was married ten years ago, his wife was very artistic and she sort of...she began to help. She liked doing this and they became very much part of the operation. So we took them in as partners. Then, I think it was 1979, we started talking about...Rick was married by this time and we started to talk about expanding and getting a year 'round store somewhere. We started to look around the area close by for a place to rent and we couldn't find any. Rick came by the old Village Garage one night here at Snyder and said dad, there's a for sale sign on that old garage. So we started negotiating and we came up owners of the place. The place was pretty decrepit at that time and it had not been occupied for a period of time. We tore the inside out and rebuilt it. So Rick and Becky moved into the house and we remodelled the store and opened a year 'round business there. We close for two months in the summer now but we've been operating now, at that now, since February of 1980.

S.R: And it's a flourishing business then?

R.N: It has done, it has done well I'd say. Yes, it's done well.

S.R: As far as your expectations?

R.N: Yes, it hasn't expanded greatly since the opening time, but the first year was a banner year and...oh, one year I think it went down a bit, but then this last year it, sales increased considerably. Yes it's, we have no complaints. It's been very, very good. We're just

amazed where all the people come from to buy chocolate.

S.R: A lot of Americans?

R.N: No, we don't have many Americans coming. We thought, we stayed open the first couple summers because we thought we'd have more American trade but summer isn't a good time to sell chocolate. This is pure chocolate, we do not add wax or preservatives, and it makes it a little bit more difficult to keep.

S.R: A high air-conditioning bill.

R.N: Well we have to air-condition it yeah, we have to keep air-conditioners going. We do that in the spring and fall too. We found that it was hardly worth keeping open in the summer. It's a nice break for the family so we just closed through July and August now. It's staying a nice local business for the community and it's made a nice family business for us.

S.R: Thank-you for the interview Mr. Nigh.

R.N: Thank-you Shelley.