

Diana Matthews interviewing Mr. Ed Hawkins at his home, 26 Wintemute Street, Fort Erie, July 2nd, 1985.

**D.M:** What's your full name?

**E.H:** My full name? Edward Homer Hawkins.

**D.M:** How long have you lived in Fort Erie?

**E.H:** What do you mean by that Diana, Fort Erie proper?

**D.M:** Fort Erie where we are right now, in this house say.

**E.H:** I've lived here since 1952.

**D.M:** Where were you born?

**E.H:** Stevensville. I was born in 1916.

**D.M:** That makes you 69?

**E.H:** Yeah, I'm in my 70th year.

**D.M:** What did you do when you were a kid in Stevensville?

**E.H:** We had a wonderful time. We made our own fun, we had a creek that ran out behind the hotel and there was a garage right across the... right in the middle of the village and Edgar Heximer, every night he put up lights and.. unless it was during the winter of course! You know, he kept it flooded and he did this out of his own good heartedness and of course I was always interested in hunting and fishing, there was always lots of fishing, the creek there was full of fish at one time, apparently it's dried up now.

**D.M:** What was the name of the creek?

**E.H:** Black Creek. It's alright at the mouth here but up at Stevensville there, it's pretty dried up. We used to go out and catch all kinds of fish in there, different kinds you know. We were always busy, boy, every season, myself I'm speaking of, one season was trapping and one was fishing and one was ice fishing out on Lake Erie.

**D.M:** Did you ever go to any amusement parks, Erie Beach or Crystal Beach?

**E.H:** Oh, yeah! That was a big thing when we were kids, especially the Farmers Picnic.

**D.M:** At Crystal Beach ?

**E.H:** Oh yeah! That was great.

**D.M:** What was that like?

**E.H:** Oh, well, it's similar to now only the prices, I mean even then hotdogs were 10¢, which was a little more than other places, I think you bought them for a nickel other places, but it cost us 10¢ and I think

pop cost us 10¢. It cost nothing for swimming or stuff like that, everything was free and there was all kind of people at the Farmers Picnic, that was a big day for Fort Erie and Stevensville and the surrounding district.

**D.M:** What about Erie Beach, did you go there?

**E.H:** Yeah, I was down there a few times Diana, but I can't recall too much about it because when I went there I was real young. You've probably heard about it, there used to be a train that went from Fort Erie , did it run to Crystal Beach or Erie Beach, I don't know much about that.

**D.M:** What schools did you go to?

**E.H:** Stevensville Public School and then right beside it, Bertie S.S. #9, is that right? Then right beside it, there was another building they built and I don't know really what that was, whether that was the little high school or what, but when I passed entrance, they had the continuation school built down on East Main, down at the other end of Stevensville, and that must have been built... let me see... I was 13 when I passed my entrance, and I was born in '16 so that's about in the 20's that the continuation school was built. So I went to school there and I think I quit in '34 and I took two business courses here in Fort Erie, going back and forth, bumming rides and I used to get a ride with the Gilmore sisters, they used to be quite a... they all taught school. 2 or 3 of them taught down here.

**D.M:** Is that where the name Gilmore Street comes from?

**E.H:** I don't know, I don't think so.

**D.M:** Are any of those buildings still standing?

**E.H:** Yeah, they are all there. The old school, and that other old building that's still there. But I forget whether that was a little high school or not.

**D.M:** Are they still used as schools?

**E.H:** No. Neither one of them now. I think all the kids are bussed now. They probably use the continuation school, I'm not sure. And then the high school, either they go to Ridgeway or Fort Erie .

**D.M:** I understand your father owned the Stevensville Hotel.

**E.H:** Yes.

**D.M:** Tell me all about your parents.

**E.H:** Okay. My father was an engineer on the railroad and according to other people telling me, he was quite an atheletic sort of a man

and he was an engineer on the railroad and he used to tell me, to go to St. Thomas, it would take him a week to go from Fort Erie to St. Thomas, after pulling siding and this and that, and he was playing soccer and football for a Buffalo team at that time, and he liked sports so well that his dad offered him the hotel, which was known as a flatroof. I don't think many people know about this, but right at the top end of Jarvis Street was the... my grandfather had it and he sold it to my dad and that was known as a flatroof. Since then, it's all been torn down, but the roundhouse, have you ever heard of that Diana? That was at the corner of Crooks and Phipps Street, only back in there a little bit. It was a big roundhouse where the trains used to come in, they had the turntables there and they used to fix them and they had the turntables in there and they'd send them out. Fort Erie at that time was a tremendous railroad town.

**D.M:** When would this have been, what year?

**E.H:** Oh, well, before I came down here...40's or 30's, I suppose part of the 50's before it started to go bad.

**D.M:** When did your father buy the hotel?

**E.H:** Oh, the flatroof, he bought that... the year you mean? I can't remember that. But he bought the flatroof from his father and he run it there and started in the hotel business. My mother... they were just married then, he got married and she went in there with him. She told me before she passed away that they had quite a flourishing business. At that time there was no income tax, you know, and the reason I say that, is after they got operating there and had some boarders, she had I don't know how many boarders, the rate was 25¢ a day, and that included three meals and a bed. She told me before she died that when they raised the rate to 50¢, and the one fellow that they had, left. It was too much. It's hard to believe, isn't it? This is just what she told me before she died. She started talking and reminiscing and telling me how many times she had to... up there she'd wash probably three times in one day. At that time there was no diesels you see, and it was all coal and steam. Anyways, my dad sold the place to his brother, Charlie, and bought what they call the halfway house on Nigh Road. Now Nigh Road, Diana, was the main thoroughfare from Buffalo. This was before No.3 was built and before Dominion was built. Nigh Road was the main thoroughfare

from Buffalo to Crystal Beach and he had a very good business there, especially Americans, they all... well, I guess there was a lot of horses in those days, there weren't too many cars. I had a picture the other day, I guess it was my uncle was driving up there and he had one of those big open touring cars, so there were a few, but a lot of it was horses. He was doing great there, they had little dances Saturday night. Hotels then weren't like they are now, they're more in the pub, you know, like the English pub. But anyways, one day the fathers of Stevensville came down there, I can only remember two of them, one was George House, he was a hotel inspector, and the other one was Pat Robinson, he owned the store in there in Stevensville and another one, I forget who that was, whether it was Dr. Buell or who it was, there was a third one anyways. They came down to the halfway house and asked my dad if he would come to Stevensville and run the Stevensville Hotel, there was kind of an undesirable man that wanted to buy it and they didn't want him in there, the people of Stevensville, you know? And they knew he ran a good hotel and he didn't smoke or drink and he didn't stand for any foolishness as far as fights or things like that, so they come down and asked him to come to Stevensville. He said, "no, what am I going to do with this place?" So they told him "give it away, come to Stevensville." So anyways he sold that place, I don't know who had that afterwards, and moved to Stevensville, I think it was 1911, Diana, if I'm not mistaken. So they started there and that was his business for 40 years. 40 years he stayed in Stevensville.

**D.M:** Did you run the hotel after that?

**E.H:** Yeah, when I was 23 or 24, he made me a partner on account of income tax had started then you know, so then the two of us, more or less, until he passed away in 1950. Then of course my mother was getting up in years and the two of us could run it very well together and then I run it after he passed away for another year, and then I sold it. My mother wanted to get out, she was close to eighty then, I guess.

**D.M:** What was your father's name?

**E.H:** His name was Edward Joseph Hawkins. I gotta tell you these few things, how good a hotelman he was. In 40 years, he never called the police.

**D.M:** Was there never any trouble?

**E.H:** Once in a while. Once in a while you get that... you know, you can't help it, Diana, when you are in business. There's always... I would say 90% of the people that come in are good, but there's the 10% that come in sometimes looking for trouble. He would take them... he would nab it right in the bud, take them over to the corner and talk to them and this and that and maybe buy them a drink and kind of ease them out. Nine times out of ten, these people would come back to him and apologize. A couple of times I asked him, I said dad, listen, why don't we toss them out and get rid of them-or no... I would say why don't YOU do that? He said well, they've spent a little money here and if I kick them out on the street, I don't think that's right. He couldn't see kicking them out. He'd either send them home in a wagon or a car. He was that way, you know? And he never drank or smoked. He was well liked around the town, even the Mennonites, they used to come into the kitchen and talk to my mother and sell their wares, their eggs, cream and all those good things, they thought nothing of coming in and having a chat. I spent a wonderful boyhood in Stevensville. It has a soft spot in my heart.

**D.M:** Did you work in the hotel when you were a kid?

**E.H:** Oh yeah, all the time.

**D.M:** What did you do?

**E.H:** Well, what did I do? I filled the freezers at night, carried up stuff from the cellar, mowed the lawn. There were no taxis then, I used to... when I was old enough and had a license, there was no taxis, so I had to take people... do those little things. During those years, he had a big livery barn and he had horses and he had what they called a sample room, just off the side and these travellers and that would come in by train, and he would go up in a buggy or something and bring them down, bring their things down in a democrat, and they'd set them up in this little sample room. They'd be there sometimes for a week, staying at the hotel. There used to be the odd medicine man that would come around selling. When I was just small, I can remember those things! Our room service wasn't that great, we only had nine rooms there, and if you had 3 or 4 in there at a time, that would be... There was quite a story, too, about... my dad come down one day to look at the flatroof, just look at it, see what was going on there, and this lady lived next door and she didn't have too good a reputation. In fact, they called her the Canadian Nickel

in Fort Erie here. I know her name, but... I think she's passed on now. But anyways, I'll tell you the story. She had a parrot here... and she would drink... well, you have an idea of what I'm gonna.... even just the name would tell you something. She knew my dad's parents very well and knew my dad very well, too. She came on over to him one day and she said "hey Ted, will you buy my parrot?" And he said "I don't want no parrot Viola." That was her name, Viola. He says "I don't want no parrot!" I guess she wanted some money for drink, you know. Anyway, she kept on and he finally said "I'll give you ten bucks for it." Now, ten bucks in those days was a lot of money, you know what I mean? She said "no way." So he went home, anyways. One day, I remember, in the summertime, the bar was at the front there, and I was behind the counter..... I think when she came up there, I don't know, but I think it was under the O.T.A., The Ontario Temperance Act, and during that time my father had ice cream and cigarettes and something to...you know, to keep going I guess. So... one hot July day, I looked out and there's this rumbleseat... and here she is, she's sitting back there and she's loaded and she's got this parrot, and there's another guy driving there, and she gets out and my dad wasn't home, so she come in and she said "Here's the parrot!" and I said "I don't know anything about it!" well, she said "Your dad offered me ten dollars for it, gimme ten dollars and you can have the parrot." Well, I didn't know what to do, but I went back to the till and I took out the ten and bought the parrot. Haven't you ever heard any stories about that parrot? Well, that brought more business to our place there during the summer... and it was stolen... well. it was stolen once... That parrot loved my father so much that he could let it out, if he wanted to, in the morning, and it would fly on his shoulder and talk like you wouldn't believe. Just as plain as you and I are talking. But it had this one bad word that was her... well, you could imagine, real rough ones, and so my dad got the parrot away from that and started to whistle "Polly, Polly" And "Polly want a cracker" and "Hello" and so, during the years in the summertime, when it would be sitting out on the verandah there, people would, instead of coming up the River Road to Crystal Beach, would come through the Sodom Road and stop with their children and shake hands and talk to the parrot. It got quite a name!

**D.M:** What was the parrots name?

**B.H:** We just called it Polly. The thing didn't like me too well because I used to get so damned mad. Sometimes it started at 7o'clock in the morning and it was just like a human. You could hear it, so help me, you could hear it from the hotel down to the continuation... it was just... well, he stopped cars that were going by, you know, with this whistle of his. It was quite a thing anyways, this parrot, everybody loved it. One day, I don't want to mention any names, one day, they were doing something up at the track, and this fellow from Chippewa, one of these truckers, you know, they were in there having a few drinks, well, when he went out, he grabbed the cage and threw it in the back of the dumptruck and took off! Well, we didn't miss it for a little bit. Then I come out and there was people sitting on the verandah ,and they didn't say too much, it kind of made me mad too, so I went and I told my dad. I'd knew who took it, yousee, so I run out and I had a convertable at that time, a '42 convertable. I guess I can see the picture yet! I was driving and I had it wide open, going down towards Chippewa. I hit the Sodom Road and we caught up right at the end of the Sodom Road and stopped them. Dad got out and I got out and wanted to know where this parrot was, you know. He said "I haven't got your parrot." We looked in the back and it wasn't there, so we come home. About... I guess it was 3 nights later, I want to mention this boys name, at that time his name was Wilmer Heximer, and he was crippled, I forget the name of the disease, but he had one chance in, I think, 700 of living, but he pulled through. But anyways, they had him out on the porch, and across the Sodom Road, in the tree, was this parrot. You couldn't see it, but it was whistling, it was hungry, and it was whistling to beat the devil! The kid knew that my dad owned the parrot, so he told his mother, his mother called up dad, and dad went down and said "Come on, Polly!" and the bird flew out of the tree, and there was a piece out of his back. They threw it out of the truck when they came around the corner in New Germany, it wan't a straight road then, and they threw it out and he found the cage and it was all dented and he took it home and fixed the bird up anyways, it was okay. So, what happened after that.... Well, to finish the end of the story about the parrot, as I say, he didn't like me too well because... he started this whistling and I'd get...

so damn mad and I'd pick him up and I'd put him in the back room. I'd go to shake hands with him, everybody else could and he'd go after me, you see? So, after my dad passed away, I said to my mother, "What are we going to do with this parrot?" Just about a year before, my father was offered a hundred dollars for it, which was a pretty good price at that time and he wouldn't sell it. So I said "What are we going to do with it mother?" She said "I'm getting out of here, I'm going up to Edith's for a while," that's her daughter, she said "I'll take the parrot with me up to Port Colborne, and in the hot weather, she can put it out on her back porch." Well, it started up there at 7 or 6... up there, Stevensville was a different town, because they were all... they got up anytime... but up there, there were shift workers for the nickel plant and all these plants and the complaints started coming in to my sister. So, my mother says "Well, we'll have to get rid of it." So she advertised and a man that had a pet store at the other end of Port Colborne, he came up and he gave her 25 dollars for it. He had it about a month, and then he had to get rid of it!!! Then it went to Welland and that was the last I heard of the parrot. I think it was about 40 years old then, but they live to be about 90 you know.

**D.M:** Where did you live through the First World War, in Stevensville?

**E.H:** Oh, yeah. Well, I was born in 1916, so I don't know too much about that. The war started in '14 and finished in '18, didn't it?

**D.M:** What about the Second World War, did you live in Stevensville then?

**E.H:** Yeah.

**D.M:** What happened in Stevensville during the war, did it affect the town very much?

**E.H:** Well, it went on pretty normal, we lost a few boys, some of my friends. The undertaker lost his only son, Robert Climenhage. Bert Climenhage run the funeral home there for years, till he passed on, and then he also run the post office.

**D.M:** What other stores were there in Stevensville at the time?

**E.H:** Well, okay... The hotel is on the northwest corner, and on the east corner was this drygoods store run, firstoff, by Pat Robinson and then Walter Moon, he had it for years, and then he went into business with Fred Staples, and they run it for a while, and then on one corner of the building, was what I first remember it to be, was the Sterling Bank, and then it was the Standard Bank, and then it was the Bank



of Commerce. It's been the Bank of Commerce for some years, but it used to be the Sterling and the Standard. That's going back a few years. Then, on the southwest corner, was a building there owned by Phil Lichtenberger who sold implements, he run an implement store and sold implements.

**D.M:** What do you mean by implements?

**E.H:** For the farmers, plows and anything for the farm, you know what I mean? Towards the hotel, right in front of it, he had this big scale there for horses and whatever... they'd charge, I suppose, to use the scale. On the other corner, the southeast corner, was just a house there. Lichtenbergers later became Lloyd Wales Plumbing, he bought that off Lichtenberger. That's been a plumbing thing there for... oh, gosh, I don't know how long... before I came to Fort Erie.

**D.M:** Who owns the Stevensville Hotel now?

**E.H:** Well, that's a funny one. Really. We had it for 40 years and we sold it Conrad Willi, then he sold it to a fellow, and I don't know his name, from Toronto. Then he sold it to Joe, and I don't know his last name, then he sold it to a Mike, and I didn't know his last name, and one week ago, it sold again to another couple from Niagara Falls, and his name was Mike. In 30 years, that thing has changed hands 5 times, I guess. But that's what I'm trying to say Diana, The hotel business now, I think, isn't as good as it used to be, because of the prices. Years ago, the working man depended on the railroad up there for our winter business. The sections, they all came in and the banks were closed, so my father would cash their cheques and it kept you going. You'd have all these expenses in the winter and then in the summer when the weather was hot, when it was beer weather, we had a very good business. But now, even down in Fort Erie here, one or two hotels are filing bankruptcy which I never heard of in my life before in a hotel. They've got the prices up... I mean, a glass of beer in a hotel now, costs you, I think, 60 or 70 cents! For a bottle of beer! Maybe I'm wrong, I don't know, but ....

**D.M:** When did you move to Fort Erie?

**E.H:** I think I moved here in '52.

**D.M:** What was your first impression of Fort Erie?

**E.H:** Well, I went to school down there Diana, I think for five years, and my grandparents were down here and my dad always brought me around, this was his town too, you know, he was born down here. A tremendous amount of people from Fort Erie used to come up to our place. It wasn't strange for me to come down here.

**D.M:** What was Jarvis Street like?

**E.H:** Jarvis Street? My wife can tell you more about that, she was born here, on the street over from Jarvis. it was always a going concern, I thought.

**D.M:** What do you mean?

**E.H:** Well, the stores were all full... it was just busy.

**D.M:** Busier than it is now?

**E.H:** Oh! You can go over some nights and shoot a cannon down the street. There's nothing there now outside of bingo.

**D.M:** What was there to draw people there before?

**E.H:** The business... there was alot of people around here. There was the A&P and there was a wallpaper store and a paint store and a hardware over there, but now, Canadian Tire and some of these others have moved in. At that time, everybody had to pretty much go over to the hardware over there. There was one down in the South End, Canadian Tire was on Jarvis at one time... there was two drug stores and they all did well, gee... they all made a good living. There was a tailor shop, Tip Top, I don't know whether that's over there yet or not. Things were different.

**D.M:** Do you remember when they built the Peace Bridge?

**E.H:** Yes, I think that was in 1927 that that was completed. I can remember my grandfather, he was kind of a well know figure, he was mayor here for a long time, I think.

**D.M:** He was mayor of Fort Erie?

**E.H:** Was he mayor or reeve? I think he was mayor.

**D.M:** What was his name?

**E.H:** Ted Hawkins. I can remember him saying to me, that he hoped that he lived long enough to see the Peace Bridge, and I think he died in '27, I think he just saw it. I was down there when the Prince of Wales came. He was there, he was just a young fellow then. I remember seeing him there at the opening in '27. I guess I was 11 years old.

**D.M:** Tell me some more about Stevensville.

**E.H:** Well, I can remember when there weren't any street lights in Stevensville and when there were hitching posts out in front of our hotel. There would be a hitching post with a rail on it and they could tie their horses out there. The memories are great of that place. Then lights came in in the 20's.

**D.M:** Did you live in Stevensville when there was no electricity?

**E.H:** I can't remember, but I think there was. Although, there was still gas things in our hotel, gas jets. Up the street, I told you, Pat Robinson owned that one store, and up the street was a store run by Hendershot, and then a Mrs. Lake, she took it over and run it for years, and then the son did, Crosbie Hendershot, and then he sold it to this brother, this Joe that bought our place, he had a brother and he's still running the grocery store there. Next to the store up there was a cider mill, and that was a great thing for us kids. In the fall they would bring the apples in and we could have all the cider we wanted. They would squeeze it out and the pumice came out in this big pile and then there was a faucet... ha ha! I suppose we drank worms and everything else, I don't know! I don't think it was strained, but it tasted good, it was sweet cider. Mr. Charlie Wale run that. He let us kids have... it run into a barrel there, and we could have all we wanted, and the apples too. Then there wasn't any other business until you hit the Stevensville Planing Mill, run by Wilfred House. When I was a kid, I still remember Sam House, the original owner. I think he only had one finger left on both hands. They were taken off at the mill there. I guess there weren't many safety precautions in those days. I can remember coming home and telling my mother... I was up by the where the post office used to be, and he'd keeled over up there, and I come home and said Sam House just died of a heart attack. Anyways, the mill went to his three sons, Clifford House, Charlie House, and I should have said Wilfred first, he was the oldest. Anyway, that was the three, Wilfred, Charlie and Clifford. In the will, Wilfred and Charlie had equal shares, and Clifford, the youngest one, was to have a job as long as he lived. This is the story I got anyways. He was to always have a job at the mill. He's kind of a... I don't know... many a time, they'd have to go out and get him, he'd be out at the Ridge Hotel with a load of lumber on, and people were calling up waiting for their lumber, but he didn't give a darn because his job was never

in jeopardy, you know, and they'd have to go and get him. This happened many times. He just passed away here not too long ago. So anyways, Charlie House then sold his interest to Wilfred House, and Charlie House went into the gas well drilling around Stevensville there, then Wilfred run it 'til his death here and he made alot of money there. He was a very decent sort of a person. He wound up with, I guess, quite a bit of property through letting people having lumber and never pressing them too much. He was a real nice gentleman. Eventually, he had some of it that he had to take over, well, he wound up with an awful lot of property and he donated an awful lot around that town, he would give pieces of property for parks and stuff like that. He was a real nice man. So, as I said, Charlie went into the gas well drilling, Clifford passedaway, so that mill went to the boysthat worked there, the nephews, Billy Gilmore and the House boy. They run it for about 3 or 4 years, and they've had three fires up there, so they finally said that's it.... anyways, there's no more mill. It was arson.

**D.M:** It's gone now?

**E.H:** Yeah. And this beautiful store, it must have been worth, with everything in it, four or five hundred thousand. They torched that and everything went. They did get insurance, but you never gain on that, you know. Then they torched the mill itself, twice, and finally these boys now, these nephews were up to... I was talking to Billy, he's in his fifties, he says to rebuild everything and start all over, he'd be retirement age. So anyways, that's the story of the mill. Now, what else can I tell you .....

**D.M:** Where did you live during the Depression, Stevensville?

**E.H:** I lived there.... I've lived there and I've lived here and that's it!!

**D.M:** How did the Depression affect the business in the town, did business go down?

**E.H:** Well, I can put it this way, during the Depression, things were rough, but of course I was really young, and we didn't notice it so much in the hotel, my sister and I. Dad had quite a bit of property down here, and I think the lowest he went was 29 dollars a month for rent. Rather than have it vacant, it was something coming in. It hardly paid for taxes and things like that. Then he had 3 cottages at Crystal Beach that he... that the original Maggie... do you know Maggie and Jiggs? Have you ever heard of them? You know how

long ago that is? Well, she was the original Maggie that played in these... performed on the stages, and she was coming from Detroit and she had these three cottages down there and anyways, my father had a mortgage on them... she got killed anyways and he wasn't getting paid and this that and he had to take them over. So he took those three cottages over in Crystal Beach, they were side by side. I used to go up there and clean them up and we'd go out and work, but they got to be an awful headache. Finally I sold them, you know, after I got down here. Property wasn't as bad as it is now. Let me see... about the people in town, I can't hardly recall... we just seemed to get along, we still had fun, we made our own fun and everything. Euchre games and church socials and church lunches and things like that. I can't remember it being that hard, but of course my parents were taking care of me at that age, so it might have been tougher then, I don't know. We seemed to survive anyway.

The school I went to... 3 of the boys set fire to that, they really got a lacing over that... one of them did...

**D.M:** Did it burn right down?

**E.H:** No, it was a brick place, but they'd set it down in the basement. The one boy, he really got... he really got laced, boy. I didn't see it, but they said his arms were bleeding. In those days they used the strap, they didn't fool around. And you couldn't go home to your parents and say anything because they'd say well,... they'd send you back!!! That's the problem nowadays, I don't know, kids get away with murder at school.

**D.M:** Were there any other hotels in Stevensville at the time you had your place?

**E.H:** Yeah, one next to ours, that would be up West Main. Why they call that Main Street I don't know. They main drag is Victoria. It was the next building. They tell me that was a hotel, I don't remember that. Then there was one down the street on East Main on the right hand side, there was a hotel there. And believe it or not, there was three in New Germany if you can believe that. But anyways... There was this guy, he had a little shop. His name was Peter Schwartz, this is going way back, and he used to make shoes, he was quite a wealthy fellow when he died. I think he made them for around 7 or 8 dollars a pair. They were hand sewn and hand made if I'm not mistaken, they would have even been less than that because you could buy shoes in those days for a couple of bucks.

**E.H:** He used to be the shoemaker there. Then the next house was the United Bretheren Manse, I don't know too much about that. Next was the fire hall, then the library... I'm trying to think of the businesses that were in Stevensville when I was a kid.

**D.M:** Was there a doctor there?

**E.H:** Oh, he was a family doctor, Doctor Buell. He was a country doctor! He was a great friend of my family's and of everybody's. He was just a great guy. I remember he used to come over when I was just a little fellow and sit there and, you know, talk and... when I got old enough to drive a car, I used to like to bring him down to Fort Erie and pick up a racing form. That was a big thing in my life, running the doctor down here.

**D.M:** Did you got to the racetrack in Fort Erie?

**E.H:** Years ago, that used to... they had what they call the Bertie Fair there, and it was very similar to the Farmers Picnic at Crystal Beach, and they had this big Bertie Fair there.

**D.M:** What went on there?

**E.H:** Oh, games and they had food and the stands and judging of cattle and horses, any livestock, and then they usually had competition with the schools, racing you know, and they had a band. It used to be just a wonderful outing. The Berie Fair, that's all gone away with now.

**D.M:** Do they still have the Farmers Picnic at Crystal Beach?

**E.H:** I don't think so. They have a... people do go over there with their baskets and sit down and eat. The Farmers Picnic was really a family affair. Everybody came from everywhere around the country and it was a real... then they had the Crystal Beach boat running then, you know.

**D.M:** Which boat was that?

**E.H:** The Canadiana. From Buffalo to... and then that Canadiana would bring the people over, and once a week they would have a moonlight ride up the lake there and that was very nice. They had an orchestra and there was dancing and drinks too. That's what spoiled it I guess, they started to get trouble. I don't know really what happened there. That was a great thing in my day.

**D.M:** What was Crystal Beach like, were there lots of rides there?

**E.H:** Oh, yeah. Well, probably not quite as many, but they had the big rides, not the... they didn't have that... When I was there, you know

the smaller ride? They had that one, they didn't have the big one. That used to be down at this other end, now they've built one way up there. What else was there... there was the funhouse, there was the rides, all the different rides you can think of. they've got some extra ones there now, boats and some others that they didn't have before. The Merry-go-round is still there, the little train has always been there, you know the train ride? I really think, I don't know, but I really think we were born in kind of a nice time, when you sit and think about it, compared to now, so much trouble with drugs and everything.

**D.M:** Can you remember any really bad stretches of weather?

**E.H:** Oh, I sure can. In the forties sometime, I was over in Niagara Falls, New York that night and I thought I could get home before the storm started, it was coming down pretty good, and I got as far as the Sodom Road, coming up the Sodom Road halfway, and there I stopped. I had to spend two days in this farm home there, but anyways, I got home. The snow... there wasn't any way anyone could get in or out, the snow was about 4 feet deep on the road and they just had a path up each... where the people could walk and when I got home, the hotel was filled, the people that had been there that night had got caught. There was a young couple there and the mothers were frantic that they were out with a boy and that they had to stay out overnight, and my mother... I guess she had them laying on the floor, there was nothing wrong. The bread ran out so I guess she made homemade biscuits and things like that and managed to keep these people going 'til they finally got out of Stevensville. I can remember that, I think that was the storm when the Honeymoon Bridge at Niagara Falls collapsed... right in that time zone anyways, I can remember the two of them together. But you mentioned about storms, there was that one, and then there was another one that was bad. Of course we had a bad one here not too long ago. But I remember that one where the snow was... you couldn't do anything, it was just a path down the whole street right in the middle of the road.

**D.M:** There were no plows?

**E.H:** Well, they had nowhere to throw the snow I guess, they... we had quite a bit of snow to begin with. Like I was telling you, I stayed at this farm home and I had to walk in to New Germany and then

call there and then I walked from there to Stevensville, but when I was walking up the Sodom Road, I could touch the telephone wires, you know, I was walking on top, and they had no place to push the snow, you see? My car stayed in the middle of the road up there until they got down to it and then they got it pulled into the farmyard. That was there for another week. That's really... we had lots of bad storms, but I don't think, that I can recall, we had any as bad as that one. That was in the forties, it was terrific.

**D.M:** Did you see the Honeymoon Bridge in Niagara Falls collapse?

**E.H:** No, I didn't. I saw pictures of it.

**D.M:** Tell me some more about the businesses in Stevensville.

**E.H:** Well, there used to be a tinsmiths shop owned by Mr. Wale, that would be Lloyd's father that runs the plumbing business there now, and I can recall him in business there and also remember every evening, passing the hotel with his cow, he pastured it up east of Stevensville somewhere, and every night he'd come home with this cow with him. A lot of people had cows in those days!! Oh, I'm telling old stuff here!! Down farther on East Main Street was the blacksmiths shop run by Ted Anger, and I remember that quite vividly.

**D.M:** Do you remember many cars around at that time?

**E.H:** Not too many. There were very few. My dad had one, but they weren't that plentiful, there was no police protection or speed limits or anything of that description... what I mean, there was no... I don't think there was any police around at that time.

**D.M:** When did you first get a police force, was there a sheriff?

**E.H:** Well, they used to say my dad was the police chief, the j.p. and everything else I guess!

**D.M:** After you worked at the hotel, did you have any other jobs?

**E.H:** Yes, I had my papers for the States, and I worked for DuPont for five years, and between them wanting me to... they were gonna close this one department up... and between a man coaxing me to go into business with him over in the States and wanting me to move to the States, so I quit and went with this Mike Delappo into the Tavern, but he found out after I'd quit, which I was going to do anyway, that I had to be an American citizen for five years before you can get your partnership license, you see? So then I came back and I was around the house here one day, and I took a run down to the Falls, I wanted to see this one fellow who used to come up to the hotel in Stevensville, John Shanehole's the name.



He was a real nice person, you know? And I went down there especially to see him, and so I went to the Canada Coach dispatch office and they told me that they had let him go. The supervisor there was a fellow who used to come to the hotel too, and pitch horeshoes, and he asked me what I was doing, and I said nothing, and he said "gee, how would you like to drive a bus?" and I said "I never drove a bus in my life!" "Ah," he says, "come on! I'll pick you up tomorrow morning and I'll take you to Hamilton and you can start training there." So I come home and told the wife, and I was shaking, you know, and sure enough anyway, they called me up and said go down to the Falls and he took me to Hamilton and put me in one of these busses with three inspectors sitting there and I had never drove a bus in my life! Well, I'm telling you, I damn near died. I did take one pole off the corner there, I took it too sharp. And then they started driving me in the city of Hamilton! With no... you know? Telling me what to do and this and that, well I'm telling you, for the first two months anyways, I said oh! But anyways, I finally got on to it a little bit, then they put me on the ticket machine in the bus and sent me down to Crystal Beach, and I went down there and I'd only had a little training on this ticket machine, and the dispatcher up there said "Okay now, you know how to get to Buffalo and how to get to the Greyhound?" and I said "I don't know" So he sent one guy with me. I was picking up these people in every town, there was Ridgeway and Windmill Point and Crescent Park and they were all different stops, different numbers and I was having one heck of a time, and finally I get in to the Greyhound there anyways. Well, this happened and after about a month I start getting my confidence back, so then I carried on for 16 years with that. I really enjoyed the bus, I enjoy people. Like from the hotel, being in business there, and I enjoyed the bus driving. So finally, the company gave me a bus here to keep, and I kept it here for many years. I did all the charter work for them, beach work and I went to the airport to pick up the Japanese and take them to the Falls. I would save them alot of mileage you see, not having to drive a bus all the way out to the airport, and they trusted me apparently, and I kept it running in the wintertime. Canada Coach got contracts from school runs, and I did a school run in between, and then I used to, in between that, I used to take the people from Fort Erie to Buffalo on the Greyhound, and drop them off at... right after I dropped the kids

off, I would drop them off and come back, and right after 4 or 5 when I'd get the kids home, I'd take off for Buffalo and I'd have the 5 o'clock Greyhound. So anyways, it was busier than... finally they... Mr. White called me up and said "I think you're doing too much work." And I don't know whether the people were... the other drivers were complaining, I don't know whether they were or not, but I was having a ball up here for many years. I didn't have any problem with school kids, I let them know the first day who was boss and I didn't... I hope this doesn't sound like bragging, but the first day or two of school, they were young kids, you know? And I never had any problem with school kids. I was just letting them know right off the bat that I didn't want them to stick their arms out or if they wanted to sing a song it was okay, but no hollering out the windows or anything like that.

**D.M:** Was that your last job?

**E.H:** That was my last job, yeah. Well, gee, that was pretty good, wasn't it!?!? 16 years after I.. this was only a part-time job! It was supposed to be and I was working more than the full-time guys. That's that. I always had 20/20 vision, you know, you had to have. I had an exam every year with my bus driving, you have to have.

**D.M:** Can you remember any more businesses from Stevensville?

**E.H:** Well, next to Edgar Heximer's Garage was a blacksmith's shop run by Howard Bertran, and the reason I remember that when I was a child, was that at 4 o'clock every morning, his anvils would be ringing, never miss. He'd be in there pounding out the different... and he shoed horses of course and made different things, I suppose, for wagons, but I can always remember that anvil ringing at four every morning, you had to be up. Of course I was up in the mornings to go out fishing or something, but you'd always hear that ringing at 4 o'clock. Next to that, was Ed Spears garage, and this was old Mr. Spears, he's been gone for years, and I can remember him, he had the Chevy business which was quite a thing then, because cars were just coming in. I can remember him telling my dad down there that this previous year there, that he had done a hundred thousand dollars in business which was tremendous because the Chevy's sold for around a thousand dollars or nine hundred or something like that when they first come out, so he was telling my dad that, at that time. Next to that was a barber shop and a lunch counter and

next to that was Roy Morningstar's Plumbing, which was quite a name around Stevensville, he was there for years and then he sold and moved out to Ridgeway. Next to that was the phone exchange. When there was a fire, we always called up and asked where the fire was from the lady on the phone exchange and get all the news pretty much.

**D.M:** When did phones come to Stevensville, did they have phones before you were born?

**E.H:** I don't remember, really, whether they were in or not, Diana. Let's see, that takes care of everything up to the station, which was run by Art, he was the station agent.

**D.M:** A fire station?

**E.H:** No, the railroad station. I still don't know what track that is up there. But Art Baker run that 'til he passed away and then that was torn down eventually. Then coming down the other side of the street was the post office, the original post office. It's still there, but I don't know what they use it for. That was the last until the hotel. I think I went up all the streets.

**D.M:** Your hotel was the last at the end of the street?

**E.H:** Well, that's just the four corners there. I went up East Main and West Main and up and down Victoria, I went up and down all the streets. I think I've told you all the businesses that I can remember.

**D.M:** Is there anything else you'd like to add on?

**E.H:** You're a very nice interviewer!

**D.M:** Thank-you.