

Beverly Branton interviewing Mrs. Winnie Pickard on May 7, 1985.

The interview is being held at 171 Gorham in Ridgeway, Ontario.

B.B.: Hello, Mrs. Pickard.

W.P.: Hello.

B.B.: Would you give me your date of birth please?

W.P.: Yes, it's September 23, 1913.

B.B.: And your place of birth?

W.P.: Birmingham, England.

B.B.: And your occupation?

W.P.: Housewife, farmer, whatever.

B.B.: Okay. What brought you to this area, the Fort Erie area?

W.P.: Well, a friend of my grandparents actually, next door neighbour in England. And I'm sure if you haven't heard of him you will eventually. He's an early citizen, Bridgeburg, John T. James, is quite well known, really. And he was next door neighbours to my grandparents and he came up here and apparently why they came I don't know but that's why they came to Bridgeburg.

And my husband's people, most of them came out at the same time I presume. They had a large family of ten children.

But then my father was a silversmith. He was an apprentice for seven years as a silversmith. And at that time they did all this work by hand, you know and they used a little blow pipe, I, probably to cool the metal or something. And he had some lung thing, now I would imagine it was a type of emphysema. All I know is what my mother told me so he had to leave England when I was six months old. And he had the choice of going to Canada or Australia and I guess with his family being in Canada it was pretty obvious, but there wasn't much use for silversmith out here. So he went, John T. James had a general store in Fort Erie but he also had a lumber company up in northern Ontario, near a place that's there now called Sprucedale. Where the lumber company was, was Whitehog but there's nothing there now. I have seen it, years, there's a couple of houses that have burnt down and that's about all. So he went up and sort of managed the mill for John T. James. We were up there a couple of years.

B.B.: Where was Mr. James's general store located in Fort Erie?

W.P.: You know where the Oddfellow's Hall is? It's on the corner of Central Jarvis. That was his general store. I remember that quite well.

My husband worked up here at Crystal Beach Planing Mill for Harry Haun and he said that Harry Haun had to go up north and that was to get lumber from John T. James, so I know that he is well known. I don't remember him personally but all my life everyone referred to John T. James.

B.B.: He resided in Fort Erie himself?

W.P.: Yes he did. I do remember when he lived on the corner of Dufferin and Central because after Sunday School, I'd be probably three, and they use to take me there for dinner. And I remember his daughters name was Francis and she made me these slippers. I still remember them, carpet slippers. You use to cut the soles out of carpets and crochet the tops. It's funny the things that kids remember you know but that still stands out in my mind.

B.B.: So what brought your dad back to the Fort Erie area?

W.P.: Well, my mother had never been out of the city in her life and there were none of her people there, and I guess she could stand it so long, that's all, so he eventually came back to Fort Erie and got a job on the railroad and he worked their all of his life until he retired.

B.B.: Which railroad?

W.P.: Canadian National.

B.B.: Whereabouts did you live at that time?

W.P.: We lived on Phipps Street when we first came down here in a very small house, it's still there. And no electricity I'm sure of that. In fact, there was no indoor plumbing because I remember the bathroom was put in sort of a shed that went back, you know. And people who lived across the street, her name, the la., girls name I suppose she would be a girl, I don't know she seemed, Ethel Williamson, she was a schoolteacher. I'm sure you'll hear of her too. And her brother's name was Jack Williamson and he played for the town baseball team. And that impressed me somehow, I don't know why.

My father was probably one of the earliest people to have a car, in Bridgeburg, because I wouldn't have been more than six or seven, and that was fairly, you know, it was fairly new cars around there. And he always had a car from them on.

B.B.: What did the north end look like? Were there as many streets as there are now?

W.P.: Pretty much. . I don't remember that that has changed a great deal. Well we weren't, I wasn't too old when we moved to Dufferin Street. We bought this old house and that would be the corner of

Klauck Street. Do you know where Bocci's Rug is..well that was where our house was. And it was an old house and it had not no electricity and no bathroom. But my father put it in immediately after. But I can still remember the gas fixtures, the pipes coming out of the walls, where they had been. And the stairway was enclosed, like a door closed it off and it went up between walls. And what had been, I presume a big open hall they closed off and made a bathroom in there. But that was an old house. And we lived there until I was oh, I think I was twelve of thirteen and the gas company bought that property because they were on Jarvis Street, coming right back to our property and they needed it at that time for storage. They just tore the house down and used it. And we bought, built a house on Crook Street. That's right next to Rio Vista Golf Course now. That's still the same house, that ~~pink~~ one is the same one that we built. So that's where we lived and I met the boy that lived next door and eventually married him.

B.B.: Was the golf course there at that time?

W.P.: No. It was there while we were living there but not at the time that we built the house. In fact, we bought the lot from Mr. Stein, that was my husband's father.

B.B.: When did Rio Vista Golf Club come in?

W.P.: I can't tell you the year. I can remember going out to play after the end of the season, my brother was quite a good golfer, he caddied up at Erie Downs at that time. And he was quite good and he would take me out with him. The only way I would get over the creek was if it was frozen over. I liked to walk, and I'd spend a lot of time around Frenchmen's Creek. We use to skate there too. It froze over, there was enough water in it at that time and it froze over right down to the river so you could skate all the way down on it.

B.B.: Who owns that property behind Frenchmen's Creek all the way up to Rio Vista?

W.P.: I don't know who owns it now. There's been some of it developed over the last few years when I was over there. My husband's father Mr. Stein, he owned, I think, right back to Frenchmen's Creek at one time but I don't think he would have owned that fat when I knew him because there was only an acre of land all together and he had part of it .

B.B.: Did the golf course then buy the property off of Mr. Stein, was that's Mr. Stein's property.

W.P.: No, that wasn't his either. He was on the other side. I was thinking about the, you mentioned the difference in the streets. And as far as I can remember the streets are still pretty much the same. Because that was Klauck Street, it was just sort of an alleyway that went through beside our house and I can, I was thinking the other day about horses..but I guess there was lots of horses around there and we didn't think anything of it but..The lilac bushes, this house was overgrown with them you know. And I can remember one time dodging out from the bushes and growing and this man was coming along with a horse and I went right under the horse, and if you ever saw it, the things that kids do. I think the man probably had a heart attack afterwards but it didn't phase me.

We had a theatre up the street. Bellard Theatre on Dufferin. Is there a building ther now? That wasn't torn down so many years ago. That was the Y.M.C.A. That's what it became afterwards. But that was owned by the Ziff's, the whole family worked in there. I went to school with some of the Ziff children but they all worked the mother and father and all of them worked in that theatre. And we went every Saturday afternoon, 'cause they had serials you know, you had to go and they left you..cliff hanger.

And our games were sort of pretend things at that time. Where we lived we had two or three steps down so we were up on a fairly high grade, you know, that and not too far from the river and I always remember because I got to be dethroned because I was the smallest and lightest of all the children I played with and I was the one that could jump and land on the horse, presumably you know, as you ran by. But we played down along the river all the time. I often think of those people who are so aftaid of the river with their children. But that's where we played, summer and winter. There were old boat houses at the bottoms of all those streets along there like Jarvis and Dufferin and Phipp and right on down to Bowen Road, there were boat houses. They told me there was a lot of bootlegging down there at that time, could have been making..but I knew nothing of it, I was a little young for that, I guess. But in the winter we'd play down there on the ice. I always had wet feet but it didn't seem to harm us. And we swam and we all learned to swim in the river.

We use to swim at something we called the Rock. It was oh, roughly half way between Bowen Road and Cozy Dell. Do you know what I mean when I say Cozy Dell? Well I think it would be roughly halfway and that's where we swam. I think there must have been a little, river must have come in and the current out farther, because it didn't seem to be dangerous, I never heard of anyone being drowned. We'd hear of drownings occasionally down in the big hole, the Baby Hole in the south end but they were all these people from out of town. But that is, the current there is quite dangerous. I wouldn't want to go out too far there. It's not too far from the Peace Bridge and that's a tricky corner. But my children swam in there for a long time. I wouldn't want to swim in the river now, I think it's polluted and if so it wouldn't be too pleasant. But my children swam across the river and back. That was a thing the kids did. They'd start out at the Peace Bridge and they'd end out Cozy Dell by the time they made it back and came with the current. But they did it and we didn't pay too much attention. It seems strange now.

B.B.: Cozy Dell, is that at the botto m of Jarvis Street?

W.P.: No, no. It's past Bowen. It's a cluster of old buildings. You know where the sewage disposal plant is back in there, well there's a bunch of houses down in there. A lot of it has been modernized but I can remember there use to be a sidewalk, that was Cozy Dells sidewalk on the edge of the water. And there was summer homes, I think a lot of them, some of the people from Buffalo because I remember there was a Dr. Cobb who was a well known artist..ah, dentist, from Buffalo and he had a summer home there.

B.B.: Do you remember..right now at the bottom of, oh it would be Highland and almost the bottom of Bowen, there's two rock abutments or whatever, in the water there. Some of the young people in the north end would call them the Yellow and the Red. Is that familiar to you at all?

W.P.: No, but I would think, there was a Yellow and a Red boathouse there at one time and that was a foundation for it , possibly, because these boathouses were built right on so the boats could come into them, you know, inside the boathouse. So that's probably still there. In fact, I use to swim myself, I'm not that strong of a swimmer, but the one at the bottom of Bowen, I could go with the current and go down to where we swam at the Rock, as we called it.

B.B.: What about Jarvis Street, how has that changed?

W.P.: Well, it has changed considerably as I remember because I was very close naturally living there on the corner of Dufferin. And I remember, this sounds so ridiculous, but on the corner of Klauck and Jarvis there was this big excavation. I thought many times what that could be, it probably isn't as large as I think, you know as a child it seemed so..But as a child that's where we use to go in the winter because water would form in the bottom and that was quite a stretch of ice in there. And we'd take off from the sidewalk there and go down, if you weren't afraid to go down this real steep slope, you could go all the way, you know, and slide and so forth. But they called it the Chinaman's Hole, believe it or not. And simply because there was a Chinese Restaurant next door, I guess that's why. It wasn't an insulting term or anything, that's just what it was known as.

And then I think west of that, there was a bakery. I've forgotten the name of the bakery. And the next store I can think of up there was owned by a man named Walter Mullet. And I can only think of it as being a grocery store. It seems to me he had grain and potatoes and things but that's the only thing...And there was a little Chinese laundry next. And then there was a butcher store owned by Mr. White. He did his own butchering of meat. I don't think they handled groceries to any extent. And his daughter was a Mrs. Mossom and during the war she ran that, and it closed after the father died, you know, she ran that for the I.O.D.E. as a salvage shop. They made quite a bit of money during the war, I think, quite big, I mean fairly big. And then I think the next, no there was another, ya there was another building there and that was the ice cream store run by a couple of ladies, they seemed like men ladies to me, Miss, Mrs. Mitchell, one was named Alice, I can't remember the other. But that was a real thrill because you had those wire back chairs you know that you sit on in ice cream parlors and everything. And then.. I'm trying to think what the next store, I don't remember much of about there, until Briggs, Briggs's and I think he handled wallpaper even then. I know he handled paint because I can remember being impressed by his picture of the world with the paint going across it, and you know covers the earth, it's a symbol for Sherwin Williams or something. But it seems to me he had gas pumps out the front. I can't imagine why he would but it seems to me he did. There weren't

that many gas pumps around but it was common at that time. And right on the corner there was a fruit..Purpura, Purpura, that was the name of the people that ran the fruit store, I remember that.. and I think perhaps Mr. Purpura didn't speak too much English in the beginning because he was called Johnny Banana. And I don't think it was just we, children, I think that's the general..I think he had a wagon he went around and sold fruit, as I remember right and that was Johnny Banana. And then the Town Hall would be across the street from there, smaller, smaller town hall. I can remember that as a very small child. And the library because I went to the library as a very small child, I remember that. And then..

B.B.: Where was the library located?

W.P.: It was part of the Town Hall. It was for some years even after the newer Town Hall, newer, the one that's still there but still newer than the one I remember, it was still going back.

And then there was a drug store. That was Bobby Lands drug store, I remember, you use to get ice cream in there too. For ten cents you got a really good pineapple soda. I looked forward to that.

I don't remember so much about the opposite side of the street. Oh, there was a dairy store, down there, it would be the north side, ran by some people named Seeber, by Mr. and Mrs. Seeber, S-ee-b-e-r, then there son Albert who I think still resides in this district, I don't know what he does. And then lower down there was a grocery store, it was Kraft's grocery store. I've often wondered if it wasn't some connection with the cheese Kraft, but that I don't really know. And what was further down I don't really know. I remember when another grocery, another drug store came to town. Lons, was the only one for years and years and then Mr. Camm came. He opened a grocery store at, let see, the lawyers, right at the corner of that building, Girdlestone, was it Girdlestone..he opened his first drug store there. I can remember that because he handed out these little sample things, you know little bags of samples to all the customers that came in you know. Kids thrilled with things like that. Then later he moved his drug store across the street and he also opened one in the south end. And Kip Billings worked for him in the one in the north end and then he took it over later. I can remember that part.

Oh, and the Chinese Restaurant also moved across the street in there where Wilson's Brockerage, is it, or Wilson's Real Estate, right there on the corner, right near the lawyers there. And then there was a big house across the street, across Klauck Street from them owned by a Mrs. Henderson and she use to teach school. I can remember her teaching me at one time.

B.B.: Which school did you go to?

W.P.: Rose Seaton, Phipps Street School they called it then. I had Miss Seaton for a teacher. She was a wonderful woman. She was the one who really got me first interested in painting. I always did draw and paint as far back as I can remember from a tiny child but she took an interest in it apparently when I was in her class. And I can remember her bringing me birch bark and showing me how to make little Christmas designs and I made my own Christmas tags. And from that time on I made Christmas cards and birthday cards, and personalized them you know and I sold them, a dollar a dozen. And that's how I made all my spending money 'til I was quite a big girl, 'til I went to work in fact. But she was a nice person. I started to go to school three times. I was actually seven by the time I started school, because each time they'd take me up to school it was so crowded they weren't taking anymore children. But my father taught me how to read and write and in fact I joined the library at that time. And so I went through the first three grades in one year anyway so I got caught up with everybody else, you know, it didn't make any difference really.

B.B.: What did the school look like at that point?

W.P.: It was smaller than before it was torn down. They added some more on after that. But they had high school, one grade of high school, I'm sure, upstairs. I remember some of the big girls I saw up there. One was Helen Brewster, Helen Morningstar. I think she's still alive. Jane Reid was her daughter. And I think she's up in Sunset Haven now. And one was, who later became my own sister-in-law, Leta Stein. And Merl, Merl I think is still alive, she was Merl Long and then she became Merl Hildreth. I think she's in the hospital too, I think she's getting along pretty well. But I can remember that and that was high school. What happened after that I don't know. Apparently it was the same thing in Ridgeway because Jim's swore

that he never went to high school, he went to the school which is the Masonic Building down here. But they apparently did have one grade of high school upstairs there or maybe there was more grades I don't know. There probably weren't enough children so they could have several before they built a high school.

But the streets stayed about the same, I think. You know, the stores changed naturally. I was just trying to think, speaking of Klauck Street, was the gas company on the corner and then was the Manstratton Hall. It was a big dance, where people had dances and that sort of thing because I remember my grandparents having their Golden wedding there. And all the children came from various spots and they all sang. They all sang songs. They all had marvelous voices. It's hard to believe isn't it. Two of them had trained voices and they came from a very poor family believe me. And yet, you know they had such good voices, all of them. My father had a very deep bass voice. But every one of the children sang. He had about ten at that time. And they hired that hall and they had the Chinese people from this restaurant cater the dinner and everyone came with all their children. I have pictures somewhere taken of the Golden wedding. My son has some, my daughter-in-law is quite interested in these things and she's taken a lot of the old pictures you know.

We use to go down to the ferry. I guess we walked, we must have walked down. And we use to go to Erie Beach. There was a little train you know that ran from the ferry landing right on down to Erie Beach. But I've heard it called by various things but what we called it was the 'Peanut Train'. That's all I ever heard it called. That's where we went, mostly Erie Beach. But I can remember coming to Crystal Beach on a train, and getting off a train and it seemed to me I got on some sort of a conveyance that had seats sideways rather than one after the other. So I asked Jim about it once and he said yes, that I would have come to the Ridgeway Station. It was down on Ridge Road there by the tracks at that time. And he said there was what they call the 'Bus' and it was horse drawn and that there were benches and there was a covering over top, then there was canvas sides that they could put up in bad weather. But it was open as I remember it with the benches. And that took you over to Crystal Beach. We didn't come up here very often because

Erie Beach was much handier. But I can remember doing that.

B.B.: As you compare Crystal Beach and Erie Beach, which did you like the best?

W.P.: Well, I liked Erie Beach, but Crystal Beach was much larger. And they had a nice beach here, where they had no beach at Erie Beach. It's Waverly Beach now and it's just rock. They did later build swimming pools but when I was very small they didn't even have that.

B.B.: Describe Erie Beach for me.

W.P.: Oh, mostly it at that time, as I can remember it, there was a big park and we use to go for picnics more than anything else. Now they had a zoo, a small zoo but whether they had it when I was very small, I think I remember it more as I was twelve, thirteen. They had a, oh, a merry-go-round, naturally. That's, I'm sure they always had a merry-go-round. And they had a roller coaster ride, oh, the catipillar but that was later too, that was when I got a little older.

B.B.: What is the catipillar?

W.P.: It had a piece of canvas top, all painted to look like a catipillar. You sat on the sides, inside, and you went round and round and round. This thing was over and it looked like a big round catipillar I presume.

And then they did have a water sheet, like a tunnel of love, but that was when I was older, too. I was thirteen or fourteen at the time, I can remember that. You went through this little dark tunnel but then you came down a shoot at the end into the water which you don't get in every tunnel of love I guess.

B.B.: Were you ever at the dance hall there?

W.P.: At Erie Beach?

B.B.: At Erie Beach.

W.P.: Yes, I've danced there. I wasn't much of a dancer at that time but I danced there.

B.B.: What did that look like?

W.P.: It was um, I remember the dance hall,..I don't know whether there was a restaurant there. There may have been. They had two pools, a swimming pool and a wading pool. I know that because I went with my Sunday School class and fell in with all my clothes on. In the wading pool of all things. And I had to borrow a slip from one girl and a sweater from another to go around i nthe rest of the day because my own were dripping wet.

...Iwas trying to think of another interesting spot that runs through my mind.

Well as I told you we, they were Fort Erie and Bridgeburg and the west end as they called it was Amigari and it was A-m-I-gar-i, which irritates me because they always spell it Am-a, now, but it isn't, it wasn't. I don't know what difference it makes but those things bother me. Incorrect spellings in newspapers which you see constantly and incorrect English on television, they bother me too. A sure sign of old age I guess.

B.B.: Do you remember when it was amalgamated?

W.P.: Oh, yes.

B.B.: What was the reason for it?

W.P.: There was talk of it for years before they did it. I don't know what specific reason whether, the same, maybe why we went Regional. It was suppose to be more economical. I can't tell you really. I just took it for granted that it was going to happen.

B.B.: Before it happened was there a mayor for Bridgeburg?

W.P.: There was a mayor of Bridgeburg. And I remember him very well, there was indoubtedly quite a few of them, but the one I remember particularly was Harry Hall who lived on Phipps Street opposite the school. And just at election time he use to come and give us bags of candy, penny candy. I mean I didn't know it was election time and I certainly wasn't old enough to vote for him but presumably that was to influence the parents, I don't know. But he was in there for several years, I know that. He's the one that made an impression on me anyway because I got the bags of candy.

But I think Fort Erie itself was smaller, maybe not as much as area was concerned but probably fewer citizens because they had a Reeve, I'm fairly sure they didn't have a Mayor. And I think that has something to do with the number of citizens. I'm just guessing but I think so.

And Amigari was very small. It was just on its own. But then it got to be Fort Erie south and Fort Erie west, that's what they were for quite awhile. There was a little competition between the two.

B.B.: Was there?

W.P.: Oh, I think so, I think so. Bridgeburg people weren't too anxious to go adopting the name Fort Erie but I mean who wants 'Bridgeburg'. And Fort Erie was historically the name, taken from the Old Fort.

I know the other thing I was going to tell you about. That we'd

go across the International Bridge, we use to go to Buffalo shopping. And we'd go across the Bridge on this one little car. I think it would be electric or something. They called it the Dummy. And that's what we went on and then we'd take a street car right there and go uptown in Buffalo.

B.B.: Do you remember when the Central Avenue Bridge was built?

W.P.: Oh yes, very much so. It made a big difference! Because when we went to highschool I use to walk from Crook Street and we had to go down and across at the station. And that made quite a difference. I wasn't still going to school when they built the Central Avenue Bridge but it made quite a difference.

They had, I had a year of high school in what they called Wintemute School at that time. And that was later a public school, been torn down to make room for the Senior Elementary School. But that was the high school when I started. And I had one year there when they built the other high school. I had the rest of my high school at that one.

B.B.: Up the street from the old Wintemute School is where they have the Sugar Bowl and Oakes Park. How did they come about?

W.P.: There was no park there at the time I was a child. It was quite a little gulley right on through down to the river there. And that's where they made that.

A park, the only park I can really remember was at Bowen Road, the lower part of Bowen, below Central, before Central, it went sort of through it. And they use to play baseball there and they use to have sports things there, once a year or so I think. My father was a great sportsman and so was his younger brother. And I could run. That was the only thing that I could do but I usually win a race or two. That wasn't very big but I could, I was speedy I guess. But my father was expected to win quite a few things you know.

B.B.: Was baseball quite the sport around here?

W.P.: I think so because as I said I was very impressed with Jack Williamson being on the town baseball team. I don't know if Ethel Williamson would still be alive, she may be.

B.B.: Just to go back to Erie Beach for a minute, do you remember when it closed down?

W.P.: Yes. It was during the Depression? I think they went bankrupt at those times, we all thought they were valuable because by that time

I was old enough so we'd walk to the Erie Beach, you know, you didn't have to worry about the..I don't know if they discontinued the Peanut Train but it hadn't been running for some time. And there were ferry boats from Buffalo but I never went by boat. I did take the trip when I got older from Crystal Beach. We'd drive up to Crystal Beach and just take the boat trip on a Sunday afternoon because you could dance on the boat you know and just go to Buffalo and back on that time. But that was after I was married. But I can't tell you the exact year. It was owned by some people called Bardol. And I met one of the sons. His name was Bob Bardol. I can remember I was very impressed because he had a Packard car. He was the only one who ever took me out in a Packard car. My husband worked for Packard for seventeen years...

B.B.: Was there any talk after Erie Beach had closed about what they would like to do with that property, or re-opening it?

W.P.: Oh, they talked about opening it again but...I think the Bardol's owned it for years, maybe they still do. No I guess not because some development company bought it, didn't they. They were going to do a great deal with it. I don't know whether they've done anything. It sounded very good when they did. It's nice, it's a nice property down there, could be, a lot could be done with it I think.

B.B.: Did you ever hear of plans of an English, Normandy Village?

W.P.: No, no..no, I'm thinking, the only thing I can think of is the old Fort Hotel Fort Erie which at one time was known as the Mather Arms, and it was built in that style. That was built shortly, right around the time the Peace Bridge opened, shortly after and apparently it was a Mr. Mather who developed all through there. I think he had something to do with the bridge too, whether he was in the building of it I don't know. But that's when that hotel opened. And that had quite a large dance floor. They use to have dances there all the time. And then it became the Hotel Fort Erie. Later it burnt down, a few years ago.

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

W.P.: Yes, yes. I remember it. I don't think I was impressed with the fact that it was a bridge because I always liked the old nickel ferry we rode on you know. But my mother, well she was an English lady, pure born and bred right to the day she died she was an English lady and she was so impressed because the Prince of..I think it was the

Duke of Kent that came. And I can remember us being up there as close as we could be, and she was so thrilled over it. And they had sort of a pageant at Erie Beach to celebrate this thing. And my mother was in it, she must have had a speaking part, if they had such thing. I think I was in it, but presumably as part of the crowd, or anything because I don't remember ever doing anything, you know.

Later on when we had, I think a Canada Centennial, they had a pageant at the race track here. And they had, there was some controversy about it because they got an American director but he was a very clever chap and he put together a history of the whole district here. And at that time I had been pretty active in the dramatic group they had. And he called me and asked me if I'd like to help. And I said I'd be delighted to. But I didn't realize that he wanted to speak to me. And they did this, they use to use local citizens but no one spoke, they acted it out. And there was three men and three women who did all the voices, and I was chosen as one of the women. I, it was quite thrilling because you know you'd do everything from a child on, so..and ah, my voice doesn't carry well but I can project, but I didn't have to because they adjusted our mikes for our particular voices. And we had three men and three women who did all the voices for all the parts. I think, I'm thinking since, I don't remember if we put it on for a whole week or for three days. I rather think it was for a whole week. It was quite a big effort. It seemed very good to me. But that's of late years you know, that's not..late years as far as I am concerned. I know I often say, 'oh, that was only back in 1930 something.' You know that doesn't seem like much. It's very difficult to realize you are getting old. When you called and asked me about talking, I thought you must mean my husband, you couldn't mean me, you know.

B.B.: How did the Depression affect Fort Erie?

W.P.: Oh, it affected it but..I think there was a different attitude in those days. I mean I don't think that crime increased for instance. Now if people don't have it, they'll get it. Do you understand what I mean? Now they were prepared if they went, well Welfare, they called it Relief then, they got it from the Town and they worked for it. They worked so many hours for this. And naturally they worked full days, if there was enough people doing it, but that's how they

managed. Now we had no money. When I married my husband he was making \$13.00 a week, working part time at the Dominion Store in the south end. And we lived at home with my parents for awhile. We really were very poor. But all our friends were exactly in the same boat we were. So we didn't suffer at all. And we'd have a good time. We'd get together once a week or so at somebody's home, maybe play cards and we managed a pie or a cake and some coffee. And no one drank, because we couldn't afford it to begin with but we weren't really accustomed to it. My parents didn't drink and my husband's mother didn't; I think his father did a little on the side, but there wasn't very much found around the household. But we didn't need it in those days either, we had very unsophisticated type of pleasures.

B.B.: What else would you do for entertainment in Fort Erie?

W.P.: Well, you'd stay close to home then. Sunday afternoon we really splurged and drove to Crystal Beach and rode the boat to Buffalo and back, as I said, cost you a quarter. But that wasn't done too often either. As far as going out to dinner or anything like that I would say that wasn't done very often.

B.B.: Were there many restaurants and hotels in Fort Erie?

W.P.: Well the Royal Hotel was always there, as long as I can remember, when I was a child that was there. And there was one, it was The New Drake. Is it still called that, up on Courtwright Street? I think that was there then. And the Barnea House was there, I remember that very well, because that was right opposite the station. I remember that very well because there was a stream down there by the..and one time my cousin and I and I guess, I don't know if we'd be school age or not but we decided to go bathing in the nude in this thing. And undoubtedly it was a drainage ditch or whatever, but it was right opposite the Barnea House. That's how I remember it so well because the lady who owned the Barnea House came out and really scolded us and promised she would tell our mothers the whole thing.

I went to church on the, on Courtwright Street too. You know where Spear's, Dave Spears place is on the corner and then there is a bowling alley or there was a bowling alley. Well then there was a building right next which was a Knox Presbyterian Church at that time and that's where we went to church and Sunday School.

And then the churches joined, the Methodist Church as it was and the Presbyterian Church mostly joined and became the United Church. So Methodist Church in Fort Erie is United. But some of the Presbyterians wouldn't do it. They wanted to stay..so they built their own church over where it is now. It did burn once but it's still the same church, the same place.

...I wish I could tell you more interesting things. I just remember things that made an impression a kid I guess.

B.B.: Do you remember a store on Central Avenue? An older man ran it. It was between Emerick and Highland.

W.P.: Yes, yes, I do. I almost had the name. Oh, yes that was there for years! Sure we dealt there too. That was a grocery store, sort of general store, most of them seemed to be. Oh, I know the name.. there were two brothers, I think ran that. And they lived down on Phipps Street. I think they lived on Phipps Street, maybe they lived up over the store eventually. Oh, my goodness yes, I had forgotten that.

B.B.: Was the north end as residential as it is now? Were there farms located in the district?

W.P.: No, I don't think so. It was largely railroad. The north end was largely railroad people.

B.B.: What about Amigari, was that basically railroad people too?

W.P.: I would think it mostly was. That was the real reason for Bridgeburg to be there because of it being a railroad depot. And not Fort Erie so much perhaps but ah...

B.B.: Do you remember what the majority of the people in Fort Erie would be employed at?

W.P.: No, I was just trying to think of that myself. I don't remember any industry down there particularly. But there undoubtedly were, there'd be some customs, immigration, even when the ferry was there but not to the extent there was after the Peace Bridge was built, I think. I don't think that would be a major thing. No, I don't, sorry.

B.B.: Do you remember when Fleet came to Fort Erie?

W.P.: Yes.

B.B.: Did that employ a lot of people?

W.P.: Yes it did. During the war my sister-in-law was living with me at that time, she went and got a job and she met this chap who was boarding some place and since he was at my place three times a

week for dinner anyway, I finally gave in and let him come live with us too. They were on shift. My youngest one was born while they were with me. I think they raised him more than I did. They're both dead now. Not my son, I mean my sister-in-law and husband. They'd go to work at six o'clock at night and work 'til six in the morning, a month or so on shifts, it sort of complicated things. I guess it was a busy place..My husband worked there as an inspector.

B.B.: [beginning of question on second half of tape was cut off]...
...how that's changed?

W.P.: Well, I can remember particularly my grandmother lived on Phipps Street and there's a large house, a large brick house on the corner which Dr. O'Mulvoney built but the first house up, it's still there, that was my grandmother's home. And that was right across Phipps Street from Bertie Hall. Now at that time I think a Mr. Pattinson, Pattinson or Patterson, and he was I believe a collector for Customs. So perhaps there was more of Customs than I thought of, you know when I think of it. But I remember with interest when Mildred Mahoney started this talk about the tunnel. Well when we were children we talked about this tunnel all the time. It seemed to be taken for granted there was a tunnel, we were all dying to get in there you know. And then down, from there on down it was a bowling green, lawn bowling. And the men and women use to bowl in the evenings because I remember going, they had a sort of railing, iron, pipe thing. We use to chin ourselves on this and watch the lawnbowling. But then up Phipps Street from the Hall, there was quite a large tennis court. I don't know who owned it, it wasn't a private place. It was, perhaps it was a tennis club that owned it because there were two or three courts I think.

B.B.: This was right on Phipps Street?

W.P.: Yes.

B.B.: Between Central and the Boulevard?

W.P.: Oh, yes, just, just back of Bertie Hall. Right behind that. Right opposite to where Klauck Street comes out. And there was a big, brick house beyond that; some people named Climenhage were there because I can remember I use to be allowed to go and play there because they had a pile of sand there in the yard. I don't know why, doing some sort of construction or something, but I remember it.

B.B.: ~~What~~ would they use Bertie Hall for?

W.P.: Just as private residence at that time as I said. Mr. Patterson owned it.

I think he was a widower and had a housekeeper. I could be wrong about that but that's the impression I have. But I saw a great deal of it naturally because of my grandmother living right across the street. It always seemed to be very quiet. There was never anyone around there at all, closed up. But we thought it was sort of mysterious. And then along a little way there was a house set back, that we really were frightened of. I can't think of the lady that lived there, it was an old lady that lived there, by herself I believe.

But the other way, like where Dave Spears is, that was Herb Guess's garage at that time. And Herb Guess later on was mayor of Fort Erie for some time. And he built a place at the bottom of Bert., Dufferin Street. I guess the Town bought that property from him eventually. And the Arner Co., no the Arner Company wasn't there, the Arner Company was down on the bottom of Lavinia Street at one time and then they moved down there, next to the Bridge, just under the International Bridge. I think they've made that into apartments since then. Mentholateum Company was always just up Lewis Street, ya Lewis because my aunt worked there. I remember that, I got samples of Mentholateum. There were quite a few factories of one kind or another up that way. When I first went to work I had a job, as a, in the office with the Phillip's Trucking Company and they were based there, although I didn't work there. I worked in one room in their apartment. But they were really where Markel Electric built later. And that was about the last place I ever worked.

B.B.: Back to the tunnel in that home..what do you remember as a child the story was?

W.P.: I don't think I know. They say now it was used in this bootlegging thing but I don't remember bootlegging being mentioned and if they had I probably wouldn't have known what it meant, I was young enough for that. And as for being used for slaves, that's another theory, I don't think that was ever mentioned, to my knowledge. But we were all fascinated with the thought of the tunnel that went under the river you know. We would have just loved to get in and see it, well you know kids, it'd be a great thing. Now when I lived on Dufferin Street, we'd have been on the north-east corner and

that down. That was quite a thing.

B.B.: Well, is there anything else as you look back, any changes? What about, you have recently been living in the Ridgeway area?

W.P.: Well, all I know is the things that my husband has told me; his grand parents told him. He was born here in this house, and his mother was born here and his grandfather. And his great grandfather built it, in time for the grandfather to be born, in 1829. So that's how Jim knows exactly how old the house is, you see. But he does remember his grandfather telling him about the Fenian Raid. And apparently some of the Fenian's did come up here, up at the corner. You know where I mean, the light, right up here at the corner of Farr and Gorham. And they shot down this way and there was a large woodshed so Jim told me, just out here. This house wasn't extended out so far, this parts been built on later. And he said there was two shots that really scored it up there. And apparently these men were just forageing, you know they had just broken loose from the main group and he said because people that lived up in the corner there, they got in and overturned and smashed all their apple butter. The apple butter seems to stand out in his mind, but whatever supplies they had they just destroyed it. And his grandmother said that the women and children all went to the safesthouse and I've enquired about that because I thought, what is a 'safe' house. And apparently it was a stone house down, I think on Prospect Road and it's known as the Claus House. It's still there because I inquired about this and I suppose to stay in a frame house, if someone wanted to come down and set fire to it they, you know there was nothing they could do. So the men stayed and sent the women and children went down there for protection in the stone house. Oh, he knows a great many interesting things. This old house has seen a lot of history I think.

B.B.: Can you think of anything off hand that your husband has told you, other things your husband has told you about this home and how Ridgeway has changed?

W.P.: Well, he lived here until he went to war and I think he was about to be the first one in Ridgeway to join up, in 1914 and he didn't get back to '20 or so because he wounded by an airplane propeller. He was in the British Air Force for this time which is the Royal Flying Core. This is a sore point with him because I've been reading an American book which talks about this boy being so fascinated with

early flying and in 1915 he and his friend went to Canada to join the Air Force and there was no Canadian Air Force in the 1st World War. And it irks me you know because it's Canada and it's an American book. I told my son how I felt and he said they probably think it doesn't matter if the Canadians read it whether the research..but they talk about training in Sopworth, sopwith..Sopwith Pup. Well Sopwith Camel came first and that clock is made out of the hub, the propellor of the Sopwith Camel, and my husband is one of the few who flew one and lived to tell about it. But the reason he doesn't walk to well is because he was hit by that propeller. But that's the hub of it and my son made a clock out of it for him. But the Sopwith Pup was a different thing and they did use it a great deal afterwards but not to train in Canada

But to get back to my story he came here and then he went to Detroit to work. I think he worked a year or so in Buffalo first and then he went to Detroit to work, with Packard. And then during the Depression, I guess things were getting pretty tough and he came down here and his grandfather had left the farm to only daughter, Jim's mother, and her surviving children. Well I think her daughter was dead by then but there were the three boys left. But when Jim came down they were about to lose the property for taxes. And he loves this home dearly. And he had to borrow the money but somehow he raised the money for the taxes. And he raised enough money to buy them all out with the provision that he supply the home for his mother and he bought out the shares of his other brothers which is how he..well he had to borrow all the money and he was only working part time so his wife..he had no children of his own but they were raising his wife's sisters little boy and girl because she died when the little girl was two. So she and the two children came down here and Jim continued to work at Packard in Detroit. And he came down here every Friday night after work.

Well Kate ran a restaurant here. She got the idea that she could make these dinners. She was famous cook apparently, she came from Alabama, Birmingham, Alabama..there is a thing with us, Birmingham you know. But of there family there was on e girl who did the sewing, the laundry that type of thing; one did the housekeeping; one did the cooking and Kate was the cook. So she decided that she'd put on these chicken dinners. She saw a place in Detroit where they

did this, all you could eat for a dollar, like in a farm style, sort of dealt on big tables. And starting with homemade soup, homemade bisquits, all the fried chicken you could eat and all the vegetables which they grew here and numerous fruit trees around, and strawberry shortcake. And Jim said she'd be up to two o'clock making pies , in the mornings you know. And she'd do this and I presume straightened them out because, but Jim would come down af, every night, drove all the way from Detroit on the Number 3, on those old roads, in those old cars and work for the whole weekend getting these chickens all taken care of. And then he killed enough chickens that you know would do her for all this. He won't touch chicken to this day. I love it but we can't have it because if you'd taken care of as many chickens and killed them and cleaned them as many as he had you never want to see another one either. Then he'd go back Sunday night late and go into work the next morning and work another week so that..She had this room and this room and two rooms over in the other side for the restaurant. And she took appointments really , you know she didn't just make, cook meals.And she'd only cook the chicken and occasionally she cooked steak or something if someone wanted it, if they had specifically ordered that ahead of time. And at that time Crystal Beach was going great guns and they had all the big bands there and they use to bring them all here to eat. So Jim has met all these band leaders and he tells me about it, it's sort of interesting to know.

B.B.: What was the name of the restaurant?

W.P.: Maybe Homestead or Home.., The Ole Homestead or something on that order. I'm not positive but something like that.

And so he was getting less time at Packard, two days a week or so and driving back and forth so then came down to Fleet and got a job as an inspector there. And he worked there until the war was over. And then he worked part time for a funeral director down here helping out for funerals and things for awhile, for a few years. But he was also doing a bit of farming by that time, as there's quite a bit of land around here as you see.

And that's another thing he and Kate did, they sold corn, country corn and eggs..I guess some of the chickens, I guess they weren't all small chickens but they sold eggs and not...he had a cow at one

time because I remember him telling me about a horse he had..this was apparently a very lonesome horse because if it had to come in for a drink or anything it made the cow come in, it use to nip it at the cow to make it go with it. And Jim said he put an electric fence up so the horse wouldn't go stray away and they eventually took it down but the horse would never go any further than that fence, it knew where it had been. He raised pigs at one time, that's why he has that pig collection there that people buy him. And he had a big fire out in the barn, apparently the Toronto paper referred to it as the 'Pork and Bean' fire because he had close to 100 pigs, so his son says if you count all the little ones or close to a 100. And a great crop of soy beans that had just been put in the barn and he lost all of this. So he built the barn that's out there himself. He's built most of these buildings. He's been a man that could do anything. Now he's having trouble, he broke something, he's taking it to be welded that's what he was just telling me about.

I like Ridgeway very much, get to know it. It's a quiet place but it's still..what should I say..you can go downtown here, and it's quite busy even in the winter. Naturally in the summer, with the summer people it's always busy. But there's quite a bit going on. There's people that know one another a lot. Now if I go to Fort Erie I can go and shop and come home without seeing anyone I know. I still go to Fort Erie, I still belong to Bridge Club, I've belonged to it for thirty-five years, so I go every two weeks for that. But you know I have the odd bit of business down there but I don't go very much anymore. I've been out here eight years now.

B.B.: Are you still painting?

W.P.: No, not too much. I've got quite a few paintings, that's suppose to be my studio but things are..I don't have much room anymore. But it's when I worked, I use to get up at six o'clock in the morning and paint for two hours before I went to work. That was just a routine with me. That's when you really paint. But if I don't paint first thing in the morning other things come up. I have quite a bit to do here. I've got fourteen rooms if you count the bathroom. I've got quite a few flower gardens as you can see and a vegetable garden, that means a lot of food processing and everything and I really don't have much time. We usually, up until last year, we'd go south for two months in the winter so and that room is rather cold over there, working in the winter . This year we went to Hawaii for a month

instead.

B.B.: Well, is there anything else you can think of as you reflect back?

W.P.: I don't really want to get into my personal things, that's not really what you are interested in. I'm trying to think if there was anyone knew...I probably will sometime but I can't right at the moment, there's no point in me taking your time.

B.B.: Well you've done fantastic. I thank you very much.

W.P.: Well, meander I know but...

B.B.: You've done well, thank you.

W.P.: I don't know how much good it will be to you but well perhaps it will tie up with something that someone else says, and get something from it you know.

B.B.: We will. Thank you.