

Beverly Branton interviewing Mrs. Nicol on May 9, 1985. The interview is being held at 3801 Farr Avenue, which is Ridgewood Manor, in Ridgeway, Ontario.

B.B.: Hello, Mrs. Nicol.

H.N.: Hello.

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

H.N.: September the 14th, 1900.

B.B.: And your place of birth?

H.N.: Sherkston.

B.B.: What is your maiden name?

H.N.: Hazel..

B.B.: Your maiden name.

H.N.: Sherk, Sherk.

B.B.: Is that what Sherkston comes from?

H.N.: Sherkston was named after my grandfather. And they came from Pennsylvania, he and a number of brothers settled in Sherkston and some in Point Abino. And they were originally from Pennsylvania. So..Casper Sherk, he was buried in Pennsylvania.

B.B.: Who was Casper?

H.N.: That was my great-grandfather. And they, at that time, they had to swim horses across the Niagara River with, they had pitched wagons with pitch so that they could float and bring their supplies across the river. Although they didn't have very much but they swam the horses across at Fort Erie. And then they settled in various places around in Sherkston, and Point Abino and Shisler's Point. And that's where the limestone company come in at, number of years, I forget what year that started but Carrol brothers bought, they were from Buffalo, and they started up this quarry and they use to ship boatloads of sand. The sandhills were immense at that time. And they would load the boats with sand and take it to Buffalo for construction work. But the docks are all gone now. I don't think there's anything left out there. It was a real settlement at that time of Hungarians and Italians. There was a little town out where Hollman's have their big place now. Their recreation park you know, well it runs from Beach Road to Wildwood Road. And when they bought it over..what started the recreation park, the quarry all of sudden filled with water, 60 feet of water.

B.B.: What caused that?

H.N.: Well there was a seam that broke I guess from the lake. And the lake water came in and they couldn't pump it out. They use to keep pumps going all the time but they got the best of them. They couldn't use the, the pumps couldn't pump it fast enough, it filled up. A lot of the machinery down there

the little engines that run on the, took the sand up to the, to the..where they elevated it up to load the boats. And they're all left down in there. They couldn't recover them. Now it's used for a swimming pool, the quarry. People come from Toronto and Buffalo, all over to swim in the quarry. It's nice cool water. So, now Hollman's taken all that over. And what else is new...

B.B.: Do you remember when that first opened?

H.N.: Not, no that opened in the 1800's, I think. In the 1895 or I forget what year it opened. It told in this book we've got I guess but it was before my time.

When we went to public school a lot of the foreign children from there, we use to..they were Sherk's and Italians mostly. The school was all Sherks' at that time besides this settlement from out at the quarry. So..

B.B.: What brought your family to that area?

H.N.: Well, I guess they just immigrated on experiment, I guess. They just wanted a new country to go to and they come over here. As far as I know they thought it was a nice place. The Sherk Station was just a little tiny thing. We use to go to high school, I took the train from Sherkston to Port Colborne to go to high school when I was young.

B.B.: Where was the Sherk Station located?

H.N.: Right beside the..you know where the railroad tracks crosses the road, at Sherkston? It was just a stones throw from that crossing there, east..west off the crossing. And it's long gone now. The tracks haven't been used for years.

B.B.: Did many trains pass through there?

H.N.: Oh, we had four mails a day; Eight o'clock in the morning and at noon, and six o'clock at night. Those were the mail trains. And then we had a Dummy come in the summertime. There was a Dummy that run from Bridgeburg to Port Colborne. The rich people come over from Buffalo and they lived at Lorraine. That was quite a settlement up there of the elite of Buffalo you might say.

B.B.: Where was that located?

H.N.: Well it's west of Port Colborne. No it's east of Port Colborne, east of Port Colborne. Just a little stop they called it.

B.B.: Right in Humberstone Township?

H.N.: Yes. So, that ran all summer. It'd go up at ten o'clock and come back at eleven and then it would, a trip in the afternoon and one in the evening, that Dummy ran. So they had quite good service. Better than we have now a days, as far as train service or bus service, it's all cars now a days. Cars

spoiled it for the other transportation, so they just had to give it up. They also had a bus from Port Colborne that ran to Buffalo every day but that didn't last too long, two years. And that was quite..it would stop at your house and pick you up and go to Buffalo for the day. And now they've brought the Canadiana back, it's been in Ohio. It sunk in the Cahoga River, isn't that the way you pronounce..Cuyhoga River a couple of times and they retrieved it, brought it back up in the..and they fixed it up and it's running this year from Buffalo to Crystal Beach again.

B.B.: Do you remember riding on that ?

H.N.: Oh yes. We went to Buffalo lots of times on that. They danced on there. They had a new band, I forget the name of..the Ferguson Band is going to open on May the 31st. And they are going to have that boat running. I don't know if I would want to go one it after..it's so old but I guess they wouldn't run it if it wasn't safe. But we had lots..they'd dance of the deck, the little deck and it was really something to go across to Buffalo. It would take an hour to go..there was two, the Americana and the Canadiana, and when the one would dock at Crystal Beach the other would dock at Buffalo. See they passed on the lake. And what else happened...

We use to draw maple sugar in our sugar bush down in, well it's near Hollmans, the land pretty near joins Hollmans, our,the end of our farm. And we had an evaporator and we use to always draw maple sugar down there. And we didn't get thirty-five dollars a gallon though. I think three dollars a gallon was the highest we ever got for it. And what else...

B.B.: What were most of the people employed at?

H.N.: Farming. They worked at the court. Frank Heckadon was an engineer at one of the little engines out at the quarry. I forget the others but I know he was one. And he ran that little engine down there in the quarry, I remember. And that was the thing Sherkston was proud of, the quarry. Outside of that the Sherk's were mostly farmers, they had land. It didn't take as much land to make a living, not then as it does now.

B.B.: When did other families start moving in?

H.N.: Well about..what year would it be? About the thirties.

B.B.: Not until then?

H.N.: I don't think so. It was pretty well Sherk's 'til then. And they kept, the older people kept dieing off and..my father died in 1947 and there were a few older ones left yet but he was ninety, two months short of being 90 and there wasn't too many left at that time because he was one of the younger ones.

And the school house that I went to was a big square, two room, school house and then that was rebuilt in what year..I don't know if it tells in here or not. And they built a one, three room school house on the level which wasn't, didn't have to go up and down the stairs. We use to like to slide down the bannisters and the teachers would of course catch us and didn't like, the girls especially riding down the bannisters. So now they call this new school house the Sherkston Centennial Building. And they have, I think they have card parties and they have different picnics, people who have family picnics and they'd rent it for the day and any..well, what else do they have there.. all kinds of public things, we have our bazaars there, our church bazaars there and anything you want a public..they tell me you can rent it for a house, um,when they have open house and they'll greet their friends there and they'll have it decorated , you know and come and meet their friends and have tea and goodies.

B.B.: Where was the original schoolhouse located?

H.N.: Right in the same spot.

B.B.: Which is?

H.N.: In Sherkston.

B.B.: Whereabouts in Sherkston?

H.N.: On Empire Road and Sherkston Road, right on the corner there. Oh, what else is interesting..

B.B.: You were mentioning that more families were coming in the thirties. What would have been the reason for them to come?

H.N.: Well, they just wanted to, people from town I guess they worked in Welland and Port Colborne and they commute in cars by that time. And they could go to and from work in their cars. And they could buy a small farm and live on the farm and then work besides in the town, where they could..Nickel Plant in Port, that was built in 1918 started and that brought a lot of people, give a lot of people work. And then they would get a small farm to live on you see and work at the Nickel Plant. At that time they employed, oh, numerous, oh, I don't know, two or three thousand people maybe. So, there wasn't work for everybody but that's kind of petered out so, most people with small farms can hardly make a living.. There's a farmer up at Gasline, he works at the dipper..and then he had a farm, he has a dairy herd and he makes it good like that, with his cows. He deals with Augustines now, Augustines don't have their own farm cows, anymore, because they couldn't do both, run the store and do the farm work so they get their milk from Shutters, Gasline.

B.B.: What were the roads like?

H.N.: Oh, roads! We use to clean the house up on Saturday and invaretably we lived on the south side of the road and we'd get a north wind and the dust would just be so thick on the roads it would, when the cars went through, you'd run and shut the doors to keep the dust out. It was so dusty! I forget what year they paved the road or oiled it but oh, it use to be dust two inches thick. We use to play, when we were kids, we use to gather up the dust in a little pail and make mud pies out of them. That's the way we entertained ourselves, you know instead of going to the beach or park or someplace, they didn't have the Humberstone Park at that time.

Now Humberstone has its own park and it's very nice out there to have picnics and well, family picnics or church picnics or Sundsy School picnics or, it's really cleaned up nice now. And that's the only water front. Nickel Beach, I don't know if they pay to go in there but Humberstone Park we don't have to pay to go in, anyone in the township anyways. They use to have to pay if you were out of the township I think. But it's still the only water front we have for public bathing. It's a nice park too.

B.B.: Do you remember the first time you went to Sherkson Quarry when it became a swimming, a popular swimming place?

H.N.: Well, that was after Hollman bought it I guess. I don't know what year it was. Yes, I remember that quite well.

B.B.: Has that changed much?

H.N.: No, they still have their diving boards, there. And they have a little beach, they filled the west side of the quarry with sand so they could wade out, in the quarry and they have a little beach there for children and people that want to wade in the...they like to swim, dive off the wall there, around the quarry. And there's also an old, old cemetery out there and my Uncles's twin daughters were buried out there. It's just a little tiny place, with a fence around it.

B.B.: Where exactly is this?

H.N.: Well, east of the quarry. And it's quite a sacred little place you know. And you don't have to pay if you want to go into the quarry or into the ceme tery, to see the cemetery. Most people don't know that, that it's there so....

The highway wasn't even built, Number 3 Highway, the main road through Sherkston was the main drag. And then in 1914 I think the highway was built. And we had men working on the highway that got meals at our house. And it took, I forget how long it took to build that from Fort Erie to Port Colborne. Then it became Number 3 Highway, after they built that. Now we can..from

Gasline to Fort Erie it's four-lane highway. Before it was only two-lane.
What else is interesting...?

And my first teacher was Miss Stewart, Lillian Stewart. And Lillian Babion was in the upstairs room, she was.., Miss Stewart taught downstairs and she was a lovely teacher.

B.B.: How many students would have averaged..?

H.N.: Oh, we had over a hundred in that school, around there. It was filled right up, in both rooms. My brother remembers when they had, there was an old schoolhouse there before when I went to school in. There was a log schoolhouse and they just had benches to set on. I don't remember that but he, my brother remembers that. He was thirteen years older than I was. He's still living, he'll be 98 this fall. He's in Sunset Haven. He's a good visitor. You can go and he remembers better than I do, maybe lots of things that happened. He's really interesting to talk with.

B.B.: What else did you use to do for entertainment?

H.N.: Well, a lot of the Sherkston kids use to go to the dairy. They had Sherk's Dairy on Point Abino Road and they'd, if they had enough money they'd buy a quart of ice cream and he'd give them bottle tops and they'd go out on the lakeshore and eat the ice cream with the bottle tops. I remember that. They had lots of fun just with little amusements you know. And have weiner roasts and corn roasts out in the lakeshore. The lakeshore belonged to us in those days. You know, there was no Americans around and we, the Americans settled in Point Abino you know, up at Lorraine. That was there favourite location to have cottages.

B.B.: When did they start coming?

H.N.: Well, they came over in '14 when I was going to high school. They were, as I said..they use to call that station up there 'Solid Comfort', what did I call it before? At Lorraine, they had this station that the Dummy ran, too, they called it Solid Comfort and then they called it Lorraine after that.

B.B.: And what brought them here?

H.N.: Just the cottages on the lakefront. Our lakefront was beautiful. The American lakeshores are all stony out along Lake Ontario and they don't have nice sandy beaches like we do here.

B.B.: Did they build, themselves?

H.N.: They'd build their own cottages along the lakeshore. Well now from all along the lake, it's practically owned by cottage people. You can go clear out to Low Banks and there's cottages all along the lakefront. It goes up, well in fact, all the Lake Erie shore up to Windsor practically is beautiful, the sandy beaches. I think there's a lot of Canadian owned, they own cottages

along the lakes, too, now a days. So, people liked the water. We didn't have allergies back in those days and that, what do they call that slimey stuff?

B.B.: Seaweed...algae?

H.N.: Algae. They didn't have that when we were kids. That was clean, nice water. We use to take the horse and democrat, we called it, and piled in there after a hot summer day and go out in the silver bay. And go in the lake there, tie a horse up under the tree and we'd have a good swim out there in the lake. Our cousins would go with us and that is all that would be out there. You can't go out on the beach now alone.

B.B.: What is a democrat?

H.N.: It's a four-wheeled buggy without a top. And it has two seats, one in the front and one in the back. I'll tell you something funny. We had people from Buffalo who use to visit us and we were going to go out swimming one day and this little kid couldn't wait, she wanted to go in swimming. She said: "When can we go to the lake in the hypocrite." She didn't know what a democrat was and she called it a hypocrite. We thought that was funny.

B.B.: Were there any mills out in Sherkston way?

H.N.: Well, yes up at Troups Road. There was a saw mill and a grist mill and a carding mill. And Ben Sherk owned the saw mill and Alan Troup owned the grist mill and Leslie Troup owned the carding mill. At least they each run that mill. I think, I don't know if they owned them all together or if they owned them separately but they each run one of those mills. And that pond was up there too and they had water power of their own to run the mills with. But that pond is all dried up now ~~it's nothing, nothing~~ back there. And it seemed a shame to see that..that was, the grist mill was busy every, the farmers would take their grain there and have it ground you know and unload your load there. And take a load of wheat or oats or whatever you wanted ground and bring it back.

B.B.: What street was this located on?

H.N.: That was at Troups Pond they called it. It was Troups Road back, off the Sherkston..off Number 3 Highway it would be. So that was quite a busy place when I was young. We had to wash the, shear the sheep and wash the wool and take it up to the carding mill and then we'd make quilts and put these batts in the quilts, wool batts and boy were they ever warm. You don't need them in the apartments now a days. I couldn't, I didn't have any room to store one when I came here. People use quilts and blankets now a days. But it, you'd get in the dead of the winter with those wool blankets... old Albert Graf, he use to weave wool blankets too. You'd take your batts from the sheep and take it to him and he'd weave nice wool blankets for you.

B.B.: He didn't have a shop?

H.N.: Ya, he had a little weaving shop.

B.B.: Where was that located?

H.N.: That was on the corner of Brookfield Road and Number 3 Highway. That was Graf's Weaving. So all of those little places have disappeared and the big cities have taken over the these we use to enjoy doing. And now you go and work in factories, big factories now a days. The little things have disappeared haven't they?

B.B.: Can you think of any other small industries there was?

H.N.: The skating on Troups Pond, that use to be a big thing when we were young. We'd go up there and have skating parties. And Troups had a, My and Ben Troup had a what they call a 'cook house'. And she go out and cook her meals and so they wouldn't have the food, the smell of the food in the house you know. And we'd go in there, it was nice and warm, and change our skates in there, and then have a skating party out on the pond. That was on the entertainment things we had. And what else did we do...?

John. M.Sherk use to boil syrup too and Jimmy Craig and our place, was about the only places I can think of that boiled maple syrup around. I don't think any of them do now. Trees aren't tapped. What else did we do?

B.B.: Did you have a post office?

H.N.: Oh, yes. That post office was right up by the station you know in those days. Then they built this new one down by Hasselmans. And Sherkston post office, you'd go down there at eight o'clock at night to get your mail and the mail train would come in, why they'd be a whole people, bunch of people waiting around, you know like they hang out around local stores and post offices. And the boys went there to meet the girls you know. We had good mail service. Now it takes two weeks to get a letter from Buffalo, pretty near. And look at the difference in the postage, 1 cent stamps on post cards and 2 cents on letters. That's the way I remember postage. Can you imagine that, now it's pretty neat 40 cents for a letter. It has to evidently go to Toronto before it's delivered back to the local, if it comes from the States, I think our mail all goes to Toronto, with the zip code on it, then it comes back to us. Well that takes time.

B.B.: Where would you go shopping?

H.N.: Well, in those days you didn't shop like you do today. You went to a grocery store and you went to a counter and if you wanted a pound of sugar or a bag of, or two pounds of sugar, they'd weigh it out for you. And you would get

cinnamon by the pound. When we'd make sausage, we'd butcher in the fall, we'd go down and get a pound of pepper. And you'd buy, we'd get our own wheat to get ground, you wouldn't have to buy flour. You'd buy sugar by the hundred pounds lots of times. And I know in the war time it went up to twenty five dollars a hundred. And we thought that was terrible you know. And lots of times you couldn't get sugar in the war times. And you didn't pick out your things you just asked for them at the counter, for what they wanted and they would weigh it at the counter, for you. And there was a summer store in Port Colborne, I remember mother taking me there. And Sherkston had a store too in the post office. They always had a store there. And then A.N. Sherks had a store, too., had another store across the tracks on the other side of the road, and it was a grocery store. And they did good business too. G.W. Smith, my uncle had the store at Sherkston for a long time at the post office and then G.W. Smith's took over and he had it delivered. He had a big business delivering groceries. And Schoenberg, up at Gasline, he use to be a butcher. He use to go along with a butcher wagon and all of his beef hanging in the wagon and he'd go out and cut the meat you wanted, and weigh it and you'd pay it right at the door. He'd go around from house to house so you see there's been a lot of changes.

And I can remember when we didn't have telephone. I was about seven years old I guess, or maybe older, twelve, before we had a telephone. And electricity..we had free gas until I was thirty years old. We had two gas wells at our place. They drilled them, well they were drilled before I was born. And so we had free gas until I was about twenty-nine years old. Then we got electricity soon after that. So that was quite a big change.

B.B: Where was your telephone office located?

H.N.: Well, there was a Aunt, we called her Aunt Hattie Sherk. She had the Sherkston Telephone Exchange and they had a little..what do you call them, where they'd plug in the different plugs?

B.B.: Switchboard.

H.N.: Switchboard. They had one in their house. I remember she and Grace operating that. And the telephone was on the wall in the kitchen, one of these long things that you had to stand up and take the receiver off and hold it to you ear and talk in the mouthpiece. ~~TE~~

B.B.: Where was the house located?

H.N.: East of the A.N. Sherk's store. It's still there, the little house that Aunt Hattie live in and then it went to Ridgeway after she couldn't do it anymore. Then they had the Bell Telephone went half time down at Ridgeway. What else did we...Oh, we never had running water either when I young. You'd have to wash, pump the water out of the cistern and put it. We had a big brass kettle we heated the water in and then you'd take the water out, the kettle in the water machine. And I never had to use a washboard, we always had a washing machine that I can remember. Hang the clothes out on the line. I wish we could still do it, they smelled so nice when you'd bring them in and fold them up. We did a lot more ironing then when we do now a days. Boy you'd stand and iron for two hours at a time. Great big petty coats and nightgowns, that's what I always wore, I can remember doing them yet. And shirts, the white shirts all had to be ironed you know. Sprinkled clothes, you'd have a whole basket of sprinkled clothes that you had to iron. People don't know what work is now a days, push buttons and electric washers and dryers and...But I think we were happy. We had a big garden and we had.. I think all that, my mother was a Zavitz and they were all, had green thumbs, they like to watch things grow. And it still sticks with me, I can't hardly give up a garden but I don't garden anymore. I live in an apartment, they have gardens out back here but I can't manage one anymore. I still have my plants, I like to watch them grow and I don't have room for them but I have a few anyway.

B.B.: Would you go into Ridgeway often?

H.N.: I, we went to Port more. I don't know why and then we use to have a laying hens, we had quite a big hen house. Not like they have now days but in those days but in those days. We had, we'd take eggs to town, we'd have a crate of eggs maybe every week and we had private customers we sold our eggs to, and maple syrup and breast fowl. We would take that in, go around to our customers that we built up and that's the way we got rid of our eggs.

B.B.: Was that mostly in the Port Colborne area?

H.N.: Ya, we went to Port with a lot of produce and peas , if we grew a lot of peas we would pick them. And winter pears, Elli J. Hopkins, he was a butcher in Port Colborne, and he always wanted a basket of those. They would ripen after Christmas and we'd pick them over when they ripened and every week he'd want a basket of those, those

winter pears. We had quite a business of our own you know. Customers that you would supply with food that you had on the farm.

B.B.: Would you go to Crystal Beach often?

H.N.: Oh, when we were kids we did. Yes, we always had our Sunday School picnic down there. That was another quaint thing, your lumber wagon, they had a hay rack on the lumber wagon and they'd go down to our cedar bush and they had holes all on the outside of the rack and they'd put little cedar trees in these holes and all the Sunday School classes in this lumber wagon. And two teams on the wagon and we'd go down to Crystal Beach for this picnic, Sunday School picnic. Oh, and the rides were nice and they weren't a noisy as they are now I don't think. And the swings of course. We'd have a hundred, a hundred and fifty at the picnic you know. A great big long table and it was lovely down there. The park for eating was beautiful.

B.B.: Describe the park.

H.N.: Well, nice tree groves, grove of trees and it was sandy, some grass not too many trees to grow in the lawn but it was clean and nice. And they had individual tables around and they would have, we would put these tables together to make enough to seat our group. And that was separate from any amusement, it, on the north end of the beach there. I don't know if it's still there or not. They, it's mostly taken over by miniature rides for little children, that picnic area. They might have a few tables, I don't go down there anymore. I don't know, it's, when the boat came in it was lovely to watch the people come. That pier would just be full of people coming off the boat and it was nice to sit under the covered walk and watch the people come off the boat. And now they charge you by the..I don't really know how they charge you to go in, but then you could just go and find a parking place for your horse or whatever.

The farmer's picnic was an ideal day. Everybody from all over the township would come to the farmer's picnic. And we'd take a bag of hay on the back of the horses. They had to stand all day down there and we'd take our coolers and we'd see people you wouldn't see any other time of the year.

B.B.: What time of year would this be?

H.N.: That would usually be around July. I think it would be over the first of July, maybe Dominion Day or around there, that we'd have farmer's picnic day. Or was it in August? Maybe it was the first Monday

in August. And that was really nice. You'd see so many people that you didn't see any other time. And then they'd all bring their food and have their individual tables or whatever family picnic they had. It was, they use to take the democrat and go in that too. That was before we had cars. And the road would just be a procession of horse and buggies, going down to the farmer's picnic.

B.B.: What road would you take?

H.N.: Sherkston Road. When we took the wagon for the picnic, there was this hill at Butlers, went down..would that be Erie?..no, I forget what the road was. But there was a steep hill and they always had to put chains on the wheels from the front to the back of the wagon. Because with a wagon you had no brakes, no way to brake it and the wagon would run over the horses if they went down there. So they always changed the wheels and they would, the horses would drag it down, so that it wouldn't run too fast.

I wonder if the Beach is going to open, Crystal Beach I guess is going to open now and Hollman's I don't know what they are doing out there. They have that new restaurant. Have you been out? It's nice out there isn't it? Yes they have a nice restaurant there. That was opened all winter. But, I imagine they'll keep that opened.

B.B.: Were you ever to Erie Beach Park?

H.N.: Yes. That, I was quite a kid when I was down there. It wasn't as large as Crystal Beach but they had rides down there, too. And I remember when the Peace Bridge opened, '27. And the Prince of Wales was there that time and it rained everything but..we saw the opening anyway of... And the Fenian Raid, I don't remember that but that was quite an event. My uncles remembered that. They were in that Fenian Raid. Some of the Weaver's..they came over and expected to take Canada before breakfast.

B.B.: Do you remember some of the stories?

H.N.: Not exactly. I know the Athoe house there's a hole in the door where they shot a bullet through there or may be I'm mixed up, maybe that's in Pennsylvania. There was a bullet hole in a door out there where I visited. What war was that? That, that..the hole was so large because people would put their finger in the hole where the bullet went through.

B.B.: Let's go back to the Peace Bridge opening..you were at the opening?

H.N.: Yes.

B.B.: Could you describe that in a bit more detail?

H.N.: Well, you couldn't get too close to it to hear just what exactly was going on but it was a big crowd there and the Prince of Wales of course made a speech and of course the mayors took part too. There's something else, too...Oh, before they built the bridge they use to line up with cars up as far as the Ridge Road here to go across the ferry on a weekend. People would be over here to the beaches and they, going home on a Sunday night it was a hassle just to get across on the ferry.

B.B.: It would be backed up on the Number 3?

H.N.: Ya, lined up from Fort Erie to Ridge Road here so they needed the bridge badly. I don't know what we would do without the bridge now, to go across to Buffalo here.

B.B.: Can you describe in more detail, too, Erie Beach, what you remember of that?

H.N.: Well I don't think it had as nice as picnic grove as we had at Crystal Beach. It was just more amusement park there was no boats or anything. I don't think they ever landed there. And they just had the rides as far as I can remember. That seemed a long time ago since they opened that, or closed that. Did you ever hear of Erie Beach through your parents? Ya, well it wasn't as big as Crystal Beach.

B.B.: Do you remember the dance halls?

H.N.: Oh, at Crystal Beach the ballroom, yes, after they built that. I remember the old, the skating rink that use to be up on top of the sand hill. It was a big sand hill out on the lakefront there and you had to go up about thirty-five steps to the skating rink. It was right on top of the sandhill. It was nice and cool up there though. It was a nice skating rink. You'd look right out over the lake and it was beautiful but that's long gone. All the young people use to go down from Sherkston to skate. We use to skate and that was a nice evening to spend.

B.B.: Was it roller skating or ice skating?

H.N.: Roller, up on top of the sandhill. They had a nice rink up there. It was lovely. But they took that sandhill all away.

B.B.: Would you describe the dance hall to me?

H.N.: Oh, it was, the new one is very..have you been in the dance hall?

They had a crystal ball in the centre and it revolves. It's quite spectacular, the lighting on it. It was beautiful and the ballroom was quite large. And I liked to watch them dance. They were so graceful, they didn't do all this jitter-bugs, more waltzes. They were nice to watch in those, they were so graceful. And there were seats around where it was roped off and then nice seats up to sit and watch.

B.B.: Do you remember when the Queen Elizabeth Highway was opened into Fort Erie?

H.N.: Yes, but I don't think I attended that. I remember when it was done but I don't remember when. The Queen Elizabeth has made a lot of difference in going to Toronto, hasn't it? We use to go Highway 20 and all these back roads but I still like that way to go. 401, that's a hassle too. I use to drive out to Janatte's on 90. That's a pretty highway, going out that way too. Much nicer, the median is large, wider than the Queen Elizabeth you don't have all the lights at night to face.

B.B.: What was your husband's occupation?

H.N.: He was an engineer of, used a lathe, what do you call them..a machinist.

B.B.: Did he work in this area?

H.N.: He was a Toronto man and he worked in Toronto. He did work around here for awhile at some of the marinas in Port Colborne. But we lived in Toronto quite a few years there, then we came back here. He's been gone twenty-five years, twenty-three. It'll be twenty-three this year that he...He use to make sump pumps on his own outside of his regular jobs. He had a nice little lathe that he use to love to manipulate. We lived on Cedar Bay Road after I left the farm.

B.B.: Where was that located?

H.N.: Our farm was just the first farm on the left hand side of the road going west from the school house.

B.B.: And where is Cedar Road located?

H.N.: That's in Gasline. There's a school in Gasline and Cedar Bay Road is just opposite the school house. And Bodner's Store is on the corner there.

B.B.: Mrs. Nicols is there anything else, as you reflect back that you can remember?

H.N.: Well, we didn't mention the pedlars. They use to pedal from door to door, with shoelaces, needles and pins and little trinkets that they had. Henry Hice had a cane and they walked from door to door

and when it came night time we'd maybe wherever they happened to be, give them lodging and they'd stay over night.

And Mary Stuart was another older lady that pedalled and she was a nice old lady. Harmless as a chicken. And she, would, you would just make a bed for her anyplace, she'd be happy.

B.B.: What would they peddle?

H.N.: Needles and pins and they'd just have little suitcases tha they would carry and just small articles. And then they would, Mr. Brown, he use to have a wagon and a horse and he had all kinds of pots and pans and dishes and he'd even have things hanging on the outside of the rack in the wagon. We called him thunder mugs for hanging.. do you know what a thunder mug is? What you use to have under the bed. And he would have that hanging on the outside of the wagon and he was, he had a horse, he never stayed over night I don't think. He travelled with a horse, that was later years. They were quite interesting. Sometimes you would get one that would come, they were nasty, you wouldn't want to invite them in even. You had to watch who you were letting in the house, even in those days you know. People would, who had kept them..don't let them come in. So, we had quite a few old pedlars. And Henry Hice, I have a picture of him up, there use to be a bridge up at the gas company, an old wooden bridge and his picture was taken of him standing on that bridge with his bag, his baggage and cane. He was a harmless little fellow too.

And then Anne Hannigan, that I..she lived in a little log house just across the fields from Number 3 Highway from our farm. And she would weave or spin yarn and she smoked a pipe. And she would be out with her, weaving on her wheel, doing her, weaving her yarn. They spun it in those days. They'd take a piece of wool and hold her and make it into yarn. They'd just take the wool and like you had a card you know and just take a little roll of it and they would hold it so, make yarn, a skein of yarn, or a hank of yarn they'd call it in those days. And that's what you used for knitting socks in the winter time. I don't remember of every seeing her but she lived back there. I have a photograph of her living back in the highway there, in the little log house. I don't know if she was ever married or not. I don't recall that they mentioned, she was always Anne Hannigan that lived there. I can't think of anything else. Did I mention anything that I should bring up? I guess that covers all

I can think of today.

B.B.: Well you have done fantastic Mrs. Nicols and I appreciate very much you letting me come and talking to you.

H.N.: Well it's kind of, recalling old times, it's kind of fun.

B.B.: Thanks again.

H.N.: Your welcome.

B.B.: Mrs. Nicols, you said that you have something else you wanted to tell us.

H.N.: Well, I forgot about washing the sheep. Dad always had a flock of sheep and in the spring before they sheared the sheep they would take them up the highway a mile to Silver Bay Road from our farm. And go out to the lake and make a corral of wooden gates for the sheep to be washed. They'd dry them in this corral and then they would wash them, with their hands, just wash the sheep down nice and clean. And then they would come back home a mile down the road and they never lost one. It was very interesting. I know one time my cousin and I wanted to go along to see them wash the sheep and she had to have her hair combed first and they got out of sight and mother wouldn't let us go and catch up. We were so little she didn't want us on the road. And there was only horse and buggy in those days. She wouldn't let us go and we of course felt very bad, I think we both cried because we couldn't go along and wash sheep. It was very interesting but it made the wool easier to wash if they had that winters dirt washed out in the lake. And then we could wash the wool afterwards when it was sheared. So that was very interesting we thought.
