

Beverly Branton interviewing Mrs. Sullivan in his home at 78 Niagara Boulevard. The date is June 3, 1985.

B.B.: Hello, Mr. Sullivan.

C.S.: Hello.

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

C.S.: Ya, the 24th of April, 1900.

B.B.: And your place of birth?

C.S.: Wingham, Lancashire, England.

B.B.: And your occupation?

C.S.: Merchant, retired.

B.B.: Pardon me...

C.S.: Retired.

B.B.: Retired merchant.

What brought you to Canada?

C.S.: What attracted me to Canada? Well things were bad in England at that time, unemployment. So we come to a new land.

B.B.: What year did you come in?

C.S.: 1925. We got married on Thursday and we set sail for Canada on Saturday.

B.B.: Did you come straight to Fort Erie?

C.S.: Ya, we arrived in Fort Erie on the 1st of November, 1925.

B.B.: What brought you to Fort Erie?

C.S.: Well I had an aunt in Buffalo and I had friends in Fort Erie.

B.B.: When you first arrived in Fort Erie did you open up your restaurant right away?

C.S.: No, we opened the restaurant, was it the day the Peace Bridge opened.

B.B.: What brought you about to open up a restaurant?

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: What made you decide to open up a restaurant?

C.S.: Well that's a long story really. We lived at Wilkenson's house then and Mrs. Wilke..some lady was going back to England, she was homesick and her husband couldn't get a job. So she said she would like some good fish and chips. And Mrs. Sullivan said: "I'll make you some fish and chips before you go back." So she made the fish and chips. Mrs. Wilkenson said: "Why don't you open a fish and chip shop." And that's how it started down the street where the Ming-Teh's parking lot is now. There was two old boat houses stuck together, no sewers, no nothing. Mr. Wilkenson had tool shop in the back and Agrettes had

the food store in the front. But something happened, I don't want to say what it was, that old Mr. Agrette was away from the place and the fruit that was in there was going rotten, so Mr. Wilkenson told us we could rent the building. And so he got out and we put the two boathouses together. And that's where the fish and chip shop got started. And then from there we moved here, we got this property here.

B.B.: How many years were you in the two boathouses?

C.S.: Four, five I guess, I don't know which exactly. I don't know when we took our first trip back to England exactly from there, for a visit..we went for Christmas. But after that we bought this place we had to, the top was down on the bottom here, so we had to have the roof raised, the apartment raised up and a new building put underneath.

B.B.: Has it always looked basically like this..the size?

C.S.: Ya.

B.B.: How many, what capacity of people..?

C.S.: There was forty-six I think or forty-two, I don't know which.

B.B.: So, what type of changes have you seen the south end go through?

C.S.: Well, nearly every building has changed. Except the Hawley block and that's not changed much yet.

B.B.: Which one is the Hawley block?

C.S.: That's right across from Ming-Teh's, where Marinoccio's is. It use to be Habgoods and Hawley stores. Hapgood was the grocery store. He left here and went back to Toronto. And Mr. Hawley passed away, he was the Reeve of Fort Erie at that time.

B.B.: What do you remember of him?

C.S.: He use to sell the licenses too, for cars. I got to take my test tomorrow. I failed last week. This is the sixth time I failed. This time I failed in the written test. I thought I was going to fail in my eyes but I didn't.

B.B.: Mr.Hawleyhe was the Reeve of Fort Erie?

C.S.: U-huh.

B.B.: How long was he Reeve for?

C.S.: Oh, not long. I don't think, I'm not sure. But he was the hardware dealer. But John Charlies he use to run the clothing store there, next door. And there was an old lady, I can't tell you her name, now she lived in a house that burnt down now. And the Salvation

Army is where John Charles was when we came in. And this old lady she was, she worked for the telephone company..I think, I couldn't tell you her name. But she was quite old when we came in, she passed away shortly after. And Dr. Douglas was where the Bank of Montreal is now.

B.B.: His Doctor's office was there?

C.S.: Yes, that's where I had to go first, he's the only doctor I knew.

I got sciatica and he had Mrs. Sullivan put plaster on my hip. And she went to work, she was working at the dressmaker store in Buffalo at that time. And I had a blister just like that, what a job it was trying to walk. I'll never forget it.

B.B.: Did Dr. Douglas ever come to eat here at Sullivans.

C.S.: No, we wasn't opened then, we wasn't in business then. He had passed away before that. But Dr. Derbyshire, he did. We had Dr. Derbyshire nearly, after Dr. Douglas passed away we had Dr. Douglas, or Dr. Derbyshire.

B.B.: What do you remember of Dr. Douglas? Do you remember when he first proposed for the hospital?

C.S.: Yes, but I couldn't remember the ins and outs of it when he left the money for it. There was quite a talk about it. Because somebody enjoyed some of the money, 'trippin' around, but whether it was true or not I don't know. But they've built a beautiful place now.

B.B.: With Sullivan's fish and chips, now at the Baby Hole here beside you, there's quite a few Americans come over, quite a few people sit out there, was it the same over the years?

C.S.: Not then as it is today. No, there's not as many, there's more people. You see the Kinsmen started this up there, they made the beach. Then when they got a lot of people starting to come here they wanted to charge because I think at that time they wanted to put rest rooms in. But the Parks Commission owned the property and they wouldn't let them. So the Kinsmen pulled out of there but they had put a lot of sand in there. And they had a guard there. Now there's no guard. Even the Park Commission don't put a guard there no more.

B.B.: When was the guard there..for how many years?

C.S.: Well Jim Barnhardt, I don't know where he's working now but he was the last and that was twelve, fourteen years, maybe longer than that. And at that time there was a gentleman up at the top

I can't think of his name, he use to teach how to swim outthere and I think he was a bit of a guard once but I'm not positive. And, but there use to be a drowning every year but after that there wasn't. It's a long time since we had a drowning here. I think the last one we had was a fellow from Buffalo went in, you know where the bass come, he went in, just looking for something and he never came out.

B.B.: What type of customers would you have here at Sullivan's then, were they mostly local people?

C.S.: No, eighty percent of it was from Buffalo.

B.B.: Did they use to commute over..drive over, just to come to the restaurant?

C.S.: Well you see when we started out they come over on the ferry. You see in the summertime the Newton and the..Iforget the other boat that was running at that time, was it..the Orleans run all the time but the other two boats was the Newton and..I can't think of the other but they use to, one would leave one side and the other like a .. But the bridge cut the ferries off.

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

C.S.: Oh, yes.

B.B.: You must have been able to see the construction of it too.

C.S.: Yes.

B.B.: Tell me what you recall.

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: Tell me what you recall of the bridge being under construction, as it was being built.

C.S.: Well, we was out 'round the front of it but there was very little of it, taking pictures. And I had, my relative in Buffalo, rivetted on that bridge. He's long time out.

B.B.: There's land that has been filled in underneath the Peace Bridge, is that right?

C.S.: Oh, yes there's a lot. The Park Commission did the filling of it. You see the 'dickey' run right up here, it made a turn and run right up that way, all besidethe grass part. The Sandfly Special, that's what they called it at that time.

B.B.: Now where exactly did the rails run?

C.S.: Ya, all the way up here.

B.B.: So closer to the road?

C.S.: Right to the Old Fort.

B.B.: And the rails were closer to the roadway than the riverway?

C.S.: Yes, yes oh yes. At that time it went up the roadway.

B.B.: What memories do you have of the Sandfly Express?

C.S.: I, I think I only rode on it once because it started at our back door there.

B.B.: It started there?

C.S.: Yes.

B.B.: Did that use to bring in a lot of business for you too?

C.S.: Ya, well we had a big sign. We had a big sign at that time facing the ferry for the fish and chip place. They, it probably did for starting. It was tough going. The first Thanksgiving we opened and, we didn't open all day we opened in the evening, and we went for a ride as far as Chippawa and back and we had a two-seater then, and when we came home, you'd die if I tell you, the whole supper come to \$1 and a quarter. I said if that's Thanksgivin' we won't open no more.

B.B.: What do you think changed the business? Why...what do you think changed it? Why did more people become coming?

C.S.: Well more people liked it. Even today they want us to open up again. They don't figure that we got old. I don't think I wait one week before somebody says, 'when are you going to open up again.' I was in the mall Saturday and I got that question twice. My grandson wants to open it up but he's only thirteen. His birthday is Saturday, they were both born on the same day.

B.B.: Well maybe someday Sullivan's will be opened up again.

C.S.: I'll learn it before long and it's up to him. I told my son that he could have the building. It's no good to me.

B.B.: Were you at the Peace Bridge opening?

C.S.: Ya.

B.B.: What do you recall of that?

C.S.: Well, the Prince of Wales was there that day. And the legion and the ex-service men and some of the troops, I don't know whether the Welland Regiment was there or not. Oh, they had a big day. I took pictures down here. I have a few pictures, the other day of the inside of the bridge where, with all the paraphernalia going on. And one on the street, on Godrich Street with the crowd all waiting but them days has passed my memory.

B.B.: What about the roadways along here, have they gone through changes, the way the streets are set up or...

C.S.: Fort Erie Roadway to the Park? Ya, they changed quite a bit where Andy lives now he use to have to go past his house to go down to the Falls. Now you cut right across. That roads been cut straight. You use to go 'round in a circle. We had my mother here on a visit from England one time and I took her to the Falls. She thought I was, she didn't say nothing to me, she waited 'til she went back home and then she told her daughters that she thought I was going to drown her in the river, on account of the bends, we'd get so close to the water. Ya, she had never met her sister in thirty-nine years, her sister lived in Buffalo. From here to Chippawa..from here to the north end, it didn't change much on the Boulevard, not very built up, there was the lumber yards and they've almost gone, there's not very much left. The one lumber yard is changed into a boat place and the other ones gone all together, the one right across from St. Paul's School. That's gone.

B.B.: There's quite a few Chinese Restaurants around here now.

C.S.: Yes.

B.B.: Do you remember when the first one opened up?

C.S.: No, the New York Cafe, here..the second one what is Happy Jacks now. That was here when we come.

B.B.: And that was called the New York Cafe?

C.S.: The New York Cafe.

B.B.: What type of restaurant was it?

C.S.: The Chinese. He went back to China. And then one of them..oh, what's his name..he took it over and then he got married and he passed away and she kept on with it, and she sold it to Happy Jack. And Happy Jack worked in the Parkview here.

B.B.: So the Parkview was here the same time the New York Cafe was here?

C.S.: Ya, but it was their lot because Tom Shaw the baker opened that as a restaurant and then I think his father worked in it, I'm not sure. Somebody worked in it but I forget. But Tom Shaw cut out in it and Eddies father, I don't know where he come from, Barrie, Orillia or someplace out there and he took over here. And then Louie at the Parkview across the street, he worked in there ..I think he got married in there, I'm not sure..no he didn't get married in there, he got married in Burlington but he managed it for a long time, I think. Eddies father died and they didn't give Eddie the job, he

left the lease to Louie. And that's when the lease ran out, Eddie took the place back over and Louie moved across the street in Dr. Hayes's old place. Dr. Hayes was a dentist there. His wife is out in California, not California, out in Vancouver Island. She lives out there, she moved out there after..I think the Doctor went out with her, I'm not sure when he passed away.

B.B.: What else use to be in the large, red brick building?

C.S.: There..what's the guy with the..there was a fella and his mother, he was a bad actor. He was on customs and got fired. And then I don't know whether they sold it or not but lawyers went in there.

B.B.: So this first fellow did he have a business?

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: Was it a business this first fellow had?

C.S.: No, it was private family at first. Then it become..I don't know whether it was a business before I come or not. I can't think of his name. It was him and his mother lived there. She had money I think but he got rid of it for her. And he couldn't keep a job, I don't know whether he was on Customs or Immigration. Then it was a law office. And then from the law office the barber was in it, ah what was his name, I know it as well as I know myself.. Ferguson. He was in there, a barber and then he went in the army and it was vacant for a long time. And then after the war he didn't come back here, an Italian took over, the guy that's in the place at the mall now..the Italian hairdresser, there's a big place..it's in the mini mall I think. And then a Chinese woman came and bought the building, from Montreal. She wanted her husband to come here. And her husband wouldn't come. So she sold it to these people who's in it now.

B.B.: What about the Anglo Hotel..do you remember..?

C.S.: Well Mrs. Hunt was in there then when we come here.

B.B.: What was it then?

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: What was it then, what type of business?

C.S.: It was a hotel. She, her daughters in the second house up here and her son is in Cleveland. Ya, who did she sell to? Oh, I think she sold to Stevey and another guy, the other fellas died. Then Stevey sold to Chuck Blair. He was there when it went down. He wanted to buy this place. There's a lot of people that want to buy this place.

A guy stopped me this morning. He said the people at M&J wants to buy it. He says he's got the money. And I said, 'I'm not wantin' the money.' I said, 'What do you do with money when you're old?' I don't know why people fight for it. It's nice to have but when you're old where are you going.

B.B.: What about the Queen's Hotel..how has that changed?

C.S.: Well, the Queens Hotel it was akind of a hotel then, a rooming hotel. Mr. Hawkins had it at that time. And there was no beer or wine or anything then.

B.B.: Is that because of the Prohibition?

C.S.: U-uh. When we was down the street we use to sell 4.4 beer, it was so weak..although when my mother when she was here said it was good beer.

B.B.: What do you remember of the Prohibition?

C.S.: Well, right at my back door the bootleggers was in full force. They use to load the boats, and take it, they'd get a permit to go to South America or someplace. They'd run in a boat, take the booze over and the next morning they would be back with the boat at the dock.

B.B.: Was there a lot of bootleggers down at this end?

C.S.: Yes, my namesake was mixed up in it at that time. I was sorry at that time that I had the name of Sullivan. Some of his family is living here yet. His daughters, not sons. I don't think he had any sons. But..ya there use to be an old Dutchman take care of the motors there and I don't remember his name. He was always called 'The Old Dutchman' 'Dutchy'. But they got away..there was a rowboat going over with booze and the coast guard came after them and they tipped the boat over, let the booze drop to the bottom..but them are stories left alone.

B.B.: Did you ever hear stories about the Chinese smuggling..

C.S.: Uh?

B.B.: Did you ever hear stories of the smuggling of Chinese?

C.S.: Oh, ya, oh, yes. I heard that the guy at the Queens did that. They'd drown them if they couldn't get them over. And even the superintendent at the Peace Bridge. He'd smuggle them over and got caught. That's what they did for money. That's what I can't understand. They'd say to me, 'Well you sold good beer didn't you'. I said I never sold good beer in my life. I don't think I drunk one in my life. Nope I never tried to break the law. It don't pay. Ya, the Queens changed

all over now. They use to rent rooms and they use to be, and they use to run bookies out the back there. If you got caught somebody else took the turn for it.

B.B.: Has this gas bar across the street always been there?

C.S.: No, that's been put up since we come. It use to be, there use to be a big warehouse there for the truckers. I don't know who they was at that time. Was it one of the Ziff's with the show, I think they had something to do with the gas station, or what part of it I don't know which but there was trouble over one of the walls being over someone elses property. So I don't know how they settled it. But that's changed hands and changed hands and changed hands. I don't know how long it's been there altogether. It's been there fairly a long time. Then there was not gas station 'til Catharine Street when it was a Mercury dealer and Fretz had it. I don't know whether he was related to the M.P. or not. But he was a Fretz anyways.

B.B.: Had you ever rode on the ferry?

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: Did you ever ride on the ferry?

C.S.: Oh, ya I rode on it every day. In fact, I use to work across in Buffalo before we opened fish up and a lot of time I'm come down the hill just, to go to work and the ferry would be pulling out and leaving. Ya..when we first came here in 1925 to 1927 we rode it up and then you see we was fortunate, my aunt in Buffalo she had a brother-in-law that was on the border patrol and he got us to see the head of the Black Rock station there so he gives us a permit to cross back and forth. You use to have to stay over here before you could cross over but it was only a few weeks before we crossed over. But as I say we was fortunate that my aunt had a relative that worked the tricks. I have the first picture yet of my first 'body' crossing 'guard'.

B.B.: Your 'body crossing guard'?

C.S.: Ya, a picture of it ['border crossing card'] you had to show it when you crossed over. And then my relatives said to me, 'you know you don't have to be out of work , you could get a job over in Buffalo, but you don't have to be out of work, you've got a card there that!. so that's when I went to work over there for awhile until we opened this place up. But we use to have to travel that..we'd walk over

to Ferry, get the street car out to downtown Buffalo, the Stattler and get another street car and go way out Seneca Street to my aunts. We use to take that trip every Sunday. Sometimes my cousin..she's in Florida now, were hoping she will die because she's 92, she'll be 93 this next month, she had both her legs taken off with gangreen. So we sometimes stayed overnight in her place, Saturday night 'til Sunday.

B.B.: Do you remember when the hydro lines were put in?

C.S.: No, that was always..this tower? ..no. That's a good thing for this property for light ning. It's got a conductor on it. I was never afraid of the light ning with it..The Park Commission has made a lot of changes in this last while too, the parking places they put for people you know. They never, they would never let you go on the grass before.

B.B.: Did you ever go up to Erie Beach; when that was opened?

C.S.: Not, not often. We was too busy working. I don't think, I don't think I was ever..I was only at Crystal Beach twice. I, my electric stove in there I bought in Crystal Beach, out from the Beach when they sold out. But we never had a chance, we had to work hard. Wasn't much money made at twenty-five cents a 'carp'.

B.B.: What were some of the prices again?

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: What were some of the prices on your menu?

C.S.: Well hamburgs was 25¢ and hot dogs was around a dime, even out the back we sold hotdogs for a dime. We sold french fried potatoes at 10¢ a bag. When we was at the other place, a guy use to come around, Oakes, Cletus Oakes he use to pedal ice here there was no such thing as this refrigeration cooler, and he took the stove and we took it to the Fort Erie Race Track. It use to be pretty fervent there every year. The first day we took it up there to sell french fries and the first day we didn't even take the salt. "Cause there was hardly any people there. I think some of them was a little scared eating french fries. But the second day we made out all right. But it didn't pay us anything. We quit

B.B.: Did you do that again?

C.S.: No, we didn't go back no more. Once was enough. But it was a tough job gettin' people eating fish and chips in them days.

B.B.: Was it?

C.S.: Ya, unless you got English people you know they was always use to it. But we eventually go bigger and bigger and bigger.

B.B.: Why did you eventually close?

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: Why did you close?

C.S.: Age. You see Mrs. Sullivan was three years older than me and I was seventy-two when we stopped. And I had arthritis bad in my hip. I had a new hip put in and now that's bothering me. I worked all day yesterday and I hurt like blazes this morning when I got up. But I fell in the basement, you wasn't around here when the water works blew up there on Catharine Street where that new building is now. This is only a few years back. It was all through the gas stations, the gas going through the sewers. So when the heavy rains come we had water coming through the basement and I came in and looked in the basement and saw the water. I knew then that the pump wasn't going so I jumped in the water with my shoes and my feet shot from under me like I was on ice and boy did I hurt my back. But the doctor said that it didn't do no damage. But it's bothered me ever since.

B.B.: Do you miss the restaurant days?

C.S.: Ya, you miss the people.

B.B.: Who were some of the regular people?

C.S.: Uh?

B.B.: Can you think of some of the names of the regular people that use to come in? Did you have regular customers?

C.S.: Oh, yeah. There was Mr. and Mrs. Rusty Ross from Fleet, there was Tom..oh, I can't think of his name now but he use to take them home all the time, and Mr. Elliot in the drug store, we made steak pies and he use to come for steak pies, he loved them. And I just tore up the bill for the pie machine we bought. Mrs Sullivan took my son off when he was this big to see his grandmother and during then she bought this machine while she was over there. I just had the bill the other day and I just tore it up this morning. She took my son over to see my grandmother but he never seen her, he only seen her in the casket. She passed away by the time she got there. That was a sad day for me as well as the one a couple of months ago....

B.B.: A lot of customs officers came in to eat?

C.S.: Ya, and a lot of them use to take them home too. Ya, then on a

holiday Paddy Fix use to pay for their eats because they was on the job all the time. So some of them use to come here and go upstairs to eat.

B.B.: Who was this?

C.S.: Paddy Fix, the owner of the ferry. He use to pay for their meals on big holidays, the 4th of July and that and Labour Day.

B.B.: And they would go and eat upstairs in your apartment?

C.S.: Ya, ya we'd seat them up there. Ya, there was Chuck Williamson, he died young too. And oh, isn't that funny how you forget names. Jimmy..Jimmy..Jimmy, he was customs at that time. His wife was an Irish woman, after he passed away she moved out to the west coast somewhere...I forget, forget proper names you know. The faces I can remember but names I forget. But I always remember Jack Williamson, he played a lot of baseball for the teams at the north end. And then there was Jack Spencer too, he passed away. Jimmy Graham, he was the boss at the ferry..the biggest part of it moved up to the bridge.

B.B.: What is that?

C.S.: The biggest part of the ferry moved up to the bridge especially when the ferry quit too..it had to quit, there wasn't enough business. Ya, they put them out of business. They use to come in here first to the ferry and they use to come in down the side of my building on the side of the butcher shop next door..the one that's the paper store right now. That was the butcher shop.

B.B.: Do you remember the merchants name?

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: Do you remember the name of the owner of the butcher store?

C.S.: Ya, Fred Wolfe.

B.B.: Fred Wolfe.

Do you remember with the winter times here..with the river, were you here when they put in the ice boom, to prevent the ice from coming down?

C.S.: Oh, yes, yes. But I never paid much attention to it. Because it didn't bother me at all, you know I didn't think anything about it. But it's not been in so long. It's not been out more htan a few years. I think it was caused on account of the ice down at the Falls wasn't it?

B.B.: Yes. Did it change much, the Niagara River in our area, Fort Erie?

C.S.: I don't think so. The only time we ever got a real bad storm here was back ten years ago when the ship went down in the lake and they was all drowned. That's when the water smashed my windows here in the basement. It was flooded, we had nearly four feet of water in the basement and we tried to, Mrs. Sullivan and I tried to keep the window, close the window down, and it smashed right off, and we said 'come on' and we run on upstairs. Oh, yeah that was the worst I ever seen, the water was up Princess Street, all 'round the back there.

B.B.: Did you ever see the ferry get caught in some of the ice?

C.S.: Ya, but it didn't bother so much with the Orleans. It was a pretty good boat. It got pushed down near the bridge down below there once but it wasn't any serious trouble, I don't think. Ya, it was a good boat. But the paddle steamers wouldn't have got through it.

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

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: What would you and Mrs. Sullivan do for entertainment in Fort Erie?

C.S.: Oh, not much. The odd time we went to the show over there or to the north end. They had a show in the north end then. But outside of that we was pretty well at home working. I don't think we got much out of life then. I think the first trip we took was back to England..six or seven years I think we took a trip back to England but I'm not positive about it but we went for Christmas and I was sorry.

B.B.: Where was the show located then?

C.S.: Where the Bank of Montreal is now, on the Douglas property.

B.B.: Who was the owner?

C.S.: Ziff's.

B.B.: So they owned both the shows..'cause did they not own the show in the north end, also?

C.S.: Ya, they had both shows. I think there was a sister from England in it, mixed up in it, but who they all was I couldn't tell you. But when we was going to the show she pretty near got knocked down by a car.

B.B.: What happened?

C.S.: She went to run across the street and never saw the car coming. There wasn't many cars around in themdays. Ya, that was funny.

B.B.: Was there any sort of a bus service?

C.S.: Ya, the bus was the Buffalo bus. That use to run all the time but it didn't go 'round the streets 'til they come aroun Jarvis Street.

B.B.: Can you think of some other changes as you look back over Fort Erie? Do you remember..you would remember when Fort Erie and Bridgeburg am algamated?

C.S.: Ya, but I was in England then. That was when I took that trip. I never voted on that.

B.B.: So they had a vote before hand to decide whether they wanted it? Do you remember hearing what majority vote was?

C.S.: No. I think Lou Douglas was the Reeve here.at that time. I think so, I don't know..I think Lou Douglas was the Reeve at that time. And who became the mayor of Fort Erie, was a doctor, was it Dr.... oh, that's going back a long time, he use to have a grocery store in the west end. It was always a Reeve before and then it became a Mayor. I can't think of his name.

B.B.: What was the feeling of the people in the 'original' Fort Erie?

C.S.: I don't think the people here liked it at that time.

B.B.: Why?

C.S.: I don't know but, because they had more debt than we had. That's what they didn't like about it.

B.B.: Bridgeburg and Amigari?

C.S.: Ya, ya it was funny. I always said I never voted for that 'cause I wasn't there. And they had a bigger population than we had.

I think we have some menu cards right here. But there's no prices on them.

B.B.: What was on your menu? What was on your menu other than fish and chips?

C.S.: Well we had all these on the menu.

B.B.: Steaks, chicken..

C.S.: It wasn't the regular steak. It was the, one of those steaks they usually sell mixed in hamburgers, chopped steak.

B.B.: Was the recipe, a family recipe?

C.S.: No, Mrs. Sullivan started all this.

B.B.: So it was her own recipe..she didn't learn it from her mother or..?

C.S.: No, she didn't right it down.but it's easy.

Harry Wilkenson, he use to say he helped me but I would like to contradict him. Ya, I carried potatoes from his place on the top of the hill. I had a fifty pound tin on my shoulder and Mrs. Sullivan

was always generous with everythings and I use to say to her, 'why don't you cut them down there, I've got to carry too many down there.' Ya, it was a long walk from top of Queen Street to the store down here. Then we got a little cart to pull it with. You know the kids carts.

B.B.: It was hard work.

C.S.: I'll say.

B.B.: What hours were you opened?

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: What hours were you opened?

C.S.: Well, at that time we use to open at 11 in the morning 'til 11 at night. We never opened in the morning time during the week.

B.B.: Were you opened seven days a week?

C.S.: Ya and we cut Sunday out. And later on in life we cut Sunday and Monday out. Ya, you never got to go anyplace. And the stove, that's the original stove. It use to have doors on it. We took the doors off. We got that through Mr., Harry's father. But the first potato pot we had, Harry and I built it.

B.B.: What did you build it from?

C.S.: From an old barrel and we cut the doors in it. And then I had a friend, he lived up the street here and he worked in a plant and he got us a steel barrel. And Harry and I put stalls in sheet metal all over it. And we turned it inside out and lined the barrel with it. And then we got a crank handle off a car. You wouldn't remember crank handles off cars. And then we put the holes and filled it full of water and turn it 'til the skin was all off. Ya, we come up from the boot straps.

B.B.: Would you do it all over again?

C.S.: I think so, I think so. It was hard, it was tough going. But today they're living the life of clover. I think I was spoiled as a youngster but I think today kids is out of this world. They've got everything on their fingertips. I had to work when I was a youngster. I went to work when I was fourteen. But when I was small, I was sickly and they pitied me. But unlike they are today, they want a pocket full of money, car to drive, a boat to drive in, a snowmobile..it's really something. It's the same with the hockey players, they're getting too much money and it's killing everybody.

B.B.: Did you use to go and see the hockey players in Fort Erie?

C.S.: No, it's too cold. I didn't go for a long time. I went once to see my

Patrick play. That's the only time I went, that's maybe three years ago. It's too cold up there. I use to go in the early days but I use to go to Buffalo. I had a seat taken in over there at the old International team, not the Sabres. A few times I went to Toronto. Sometimes I went by bus and sometimes I went by car.

B.B.: I wanted to ask you once again, when the Peace Bridge was being constructed..

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: When the Peace Bridge was being constructed, when it was being made.. can you describe that to me, as you use to see it going up, bit by bit? It was right in your side yard here.

C.S.: Well one of the pier, the concrete, I think this concrete pier here was in the water when we come and the others were built after, across there. But I never noticed them because I lived on Catharine Street then, I didn't live here. But we use to walk up there when it was being built. But I never really saw it being built because I lived on Catharine Street and then I use to get the ferry to go to work.

B.B.: What year was it that you moved into this building?

C.S.: I don't know. I think 19..1940 something..I can't tell you. I think John was three years old when we moved here.That's fifty years.

B.B.: That's a lot of years.

C.S.: Ya, a lot of waters gone by hasn't it.

B.B.: Can you think of anything else that's..

C.S.: I stood here one time, outside here before we had this building, if I could have walked, if I could of did like Jesus, and I could have walked across the water, I would have walked it back to England..I was so homesick. That's when the arthritis had started. I had no thoughts of fish & chip business then, I had no job. The first job I had in Fort Erie was cleaning all the steps down at the Jello Co.

B.B.: Where was the Jello Co. located?

C.S.: Right at, right at the bridge down there, where the apartment, where the big apartment building is.

B.B.: The old Mentholateum building?

C.S.: No, the old Arnour Co. Mentholateum is back up the street. Mr. Stratton was a big customer of mine, George Stratton.

B.B.: What other jobs did you have in Fort Erie?

C.S.: I think that was the only job I had in Fort Erie.

B.B.: That's when you decided to open up the 'fish & chips'. Was it always

called Sullivan's Fish & Chips?

C.S.: U-uh. No it was called 'Ye Olde English Fish & Chips'. Sullivans was on the bottom.

B.B.: Well that definetly made its mark in Fort Erie.

C.S.: Yep, ya it did. I had, I got the Buffalo News one day and there was a piece in there that somebody had written in, "OH, FOR THE DAYS THAT YOU CROSSED THE PEACE BRIDGE TO SULLIVAN'S FISH & CHIP SHOP."

B.B.: That's something to be proud of. Maybe your grandson will let that legend go on.

C.S.: Ya, I think it would have been better..I think we would have been happier together if we had sold, because when you get old the place starts to bother you. You got to keep going up and down stairs. Mrs. Sullivan never went out unless she was going out eating someplace or going to the chiorpractor or something like that. I asked her to go and join the Senior Citizens but she wouldn't go..nope.

This was all nothing but clay for a long time 'til the Park Commission worked on it. I think it was Mather give them this land wasn't it. But 90 percent of these people are from Buffalo. Some times it's good, sometimes it's bad just depends on what kind of people they are because some of them drink booze out here. You hate to call the cops on them.

B.B.: What was the feeling of the town, especially this area, when Niagara Parks Commission took over that property?

C.S.: Oh, I don't think it bothered them so much. I think a lot of people at that time was able to enjoy it.

B.B.: Did they ever try to buy..

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: Did the Niagara Parks Commission ever try to buy, like say your property and down..some of the businesses, along the waterfront?

C.S.: No, no. The only thing they bought was the back there from the ferry company but know they've left it to the town.

B.B.: What happened to the old tracks?

C.S.: I don't know. They just disappeared. I never noticed it.

B.B.: Well, can you think of anything else Mr. Sullivan?

C.S.: I don't think so, no.What I'm trying to think of is what changes there would be. The side streets are all alike except the big changes on the ..Walnut Street and Queen Street where all the Bro kerages are now.

B.B.: Did you have a police station in the south end, when it was the old Fort Erie?

C.S.: I don't remember. I remember that Jimmy, and Sam Brown was the town cops in them days. I don't remember..I think where the legion is built, I think that was the police station at that time. Because it was the Town Hall at this end.

B.B.: The legion was the Town Hall?

C.S.: Ya, at this end. ..So what there going to make of Queen Street yet ... This street hasn't changed much except the gas station. It's funny how things build up like that. Now the Chinese are reaping the benefits of the discount with the money. Because they flock over here to that exchange. See it was only 3% when we quit here, difference in the dollar.

B.B.: These are still the original tables you have?

C.S.: U-uh. But when we was down there we had wooden tables. Although some of them is different. Some of them got broke and we had to..this is an original..some of them got broke. They break easily. We had a truck driver in one day and he was havin' his dinner and he bought a quart of milk, and it was a glass bottle then, and when he finished I said, 'are ya takin' your bottle with ya?' So he picked it up like that and tried to catch it and he missed it and he hit the next table and he smashed it. So his company had to buy one. This showcase came out of the Chinese Restaurant in the north end.

B.B.: Ski ppy's?

C.S.: I think before Skippys was in it. And that came out of a tobacco store in the north end.

B.B.: It's a beautiful cabinet.

C.S.: Ya.

B.B.: Is that the original cash register?

C.S.: Ya, it's original.

B.B.: Did you sell ice cream here too, ..ice cream cones?

C.S.: Ya, they'd reach for the cones themselves. And we sold cones out the back too...french fries. We had a big stove in the back like that one.

B.B.: So you had the two stoves?

C.S.: I think the reason we put all the glass around here was in St. Catharines..but we lived in Florida for quite a long time..I think we bought all this glass from a restaurant in Toronto brought it here. I forget the name..

was it Orange..Orange, Orange something.

B.B.: How old is that clock?

C.S.: I couldn't tell you but when I bought it..he's gone a long time. He was a , he was cobbler down the street, a shoemaker down the street. He lived in one of these houses here . And when he turned sick Dr. Derbyshire asked me to take him to Toronto. He was an English war veteran and when he sold out I bought his clock. And Derbyshire told me when I got him to Toronto to leave him at the hospital, t he Vet hospital. He said come out as soon as you get him in there because he said if you don't they'll send you back with you. I think he had cancer. I'm not sure but I think so. He didn't last long.

B.B.: Do you remember his name?

C.S.: No, I can't but the..I'll tell you what happened that day we took him in. Come out..old Skippy Miller had a store next door,..shoecobbler right in this lot near mine and he died , he was an old man and that finished that, but old Skippy Miller use to play the bag pipes you see here on the beach and he was a vet and he was in the Vet's Hospital and I think we was the last ones to see him alive, 'cause we went in to see him and he had been ramblin' you know and he opened his eyes and he said, "oh, for christ sake Fort Erie." I think those was the last words he ever spoke. His two sons live in town here. One of them follows his father and use to play bag pipes up here. But that's a long way back.

B.B.: Well, is there anything else..?

C.S.: Pardon.

B.B.: Is there anything else Mr. Sullivan? Is there anything else you can think of ?

C.S.: I don't think so. There's not much else I can think of because it's 'round here.

B.B.: Well, I thank you very much. You'v e done fantastic. It's been an honour and I mean that.

C.S.: Oh, you're welcome.

C.S.: Ya, a week last Sunday I was going out, I was going to go for dinner. And I came out and he said, 'you're Mr. Sullivan aren't you.' I said ya. He said, 'do you remember me.' I said no, I can't say I do. He said,

'I talked to you and Mrs. Sullivan two years ago.' He said, 'I've come for fish & chips. Well I said we don't have them no more. And he said, 'my mother brought me when I was this big.' So his mother come over talking to us and his sister. She said, 'ya we loved to come here. Every time we come up to Fort Erie.'

B.B.: And where were they from?

C.S.: Ohio.

B.B.: Did you get many customers from Ohio.

C.S.: Oh, yeah we got a lot of customers from Ohio. Ya we had lots of them. Every year they come back, same people every year. And we had different ones come from Pennsylvania too. And the other day a woman came to the front window there and she said to my sister in-law, 'no you're not closed!' Oh, she said ya we're closed. She said, 'here I've come from California. I told people I was going to come to Fort Erie and have fish & chips at Sullivan's.' And she said, 'I can't get them!'