

This is Shelley Richer interviewing Mr. Ken Ellsworth in his home at 172 Cherry Hill North on July 10, 1985.

**S.R:** Hello Mr. Ellsworth. What is your date of birth?

**K.E:** January the third, 1902.

**S.R:** Where were you born?

**K.E:** Right here in this...the little house as we called it on the end of this house.

**S.R:** Where is this house located?

**K.E:** On lot 27 in the first concession of Bertie Township, the county of Welland.

**S.R:** So you've lived here all your life then?

**K.E:** Well I, when I was town clerk I lived in Ridgeway for sixteen or seventeen years.

**S.R:** Could you tell me what school you went to and where it was located?

**K.E:** I went, first to public school number twelve at Point Abino. And it lasted...one teacher came one day and resigned the next. It was kind of a tough school I guess, and it was a big school. My parents sent me down to Cherry Hill School, number thirteen and I went there for a couple years and then I went back to number twelve for one year and I passed entrance and then I went to Ridgeway High School, or continuation school it was then.

**S.R:** What's continuation school? Oh that's right, you said high school.

**K.E:** It became a high school later on.

**S.R:** Where were the schools located?

**K.E:** Well, there was the Point Abino School, the Cherry Hill School and the Ridgeway Continuation School.

**S.R:** Street names?

**K.E:** There was three seperate schools.

**S.R:** No, do you remember the streets?

**K.E:** The streets?

**S.R:** Yes.

**K.E:** Well, Point Abino is on the Michener Road, ah, Cherry Hill School was right across the road from the golf...Cherry Hill golf club on Cherry Hill Road, and the continuation school was where the Masonic Hall is in Ridgeway, on Ridge Street. They only went as far as junior matric (matriculation). That was as far as I could go. And

after I got my junior matric I went to O.A.C.College.

**S.R:** Where is that?

**K.E:** In Guelph.

**S.R:** Do you remember any of your teachers names, or the number of students the school held?

**K.E:** Yes. Well when I was going to school there was, forty-six I think it was, and the teachers name was Miss Zavitz in 1908, and 1909 next teacher was Miss McGovern. In 1910, we had A. W. Reavely. In 1910 for half the year was Miss Meek. Then we had Miss McQueen. She came one day then resigned the next but she had to stay and teach for thirty days. And that was the time that my parents took me out of Point Abino School and sent me down to number thirteen, Cherry Hill School, because my father owned property in both school sections and paid taxes in each school section. I went there for a couple of years and then back to Point Abino in 1914, and the teacher was Mr. Alvin Benner. I went one year with him and passed entrance. I tried the entrance exam at Ridgeway with a teacher from Port Colborne as the presiding officer. I then went to Ridgeway Continuation School for three years. Two years in lower classes and one year upstairs and got my junior. Then in 1918, I went to O.A.C. in Guelph and got my degree in Bachelor of Science in Agriculture.

**S.R:** Could you describe any changes that took place in the school?

**K.E:** I'm not just sure of the date, but they eventually, about ten years ago or better, put two new rooms on the school. And for a while, I think it was about in 1962 that they built the, rebuilt the school. Before that they had an assistant teacher, and then they remodelled and added the school...and they had two teachers. The school was closed down in 1964 and was purchased by a private individual. Just a short time ago I see a sign on it that it was for sale.

**S.R:** Do you know why the school was closed down?

**K.E:** Some of Darcy McKeough's doings I expect.

**S.R:** Who is Darcy McKeough?

**K.E:** Well, he was Minister of Municipal Affairs I think in the Ontario Government. They closed several schools in Bertie Township.

**S.R:** How did you used to get to school?

**K.E:** Walk.

**S.R:** Was it very far? How far was it from your house to your school?

**K.E:** Just about one mile.

**S.R:** How long did it take you to walk?

**K.E:** Oh, twenty-five minutes probably.

**S.R:** Could you describe what your school looked like, inside and out?

**K.E:** Not very well. I'm not much of an artistic describer. At first, around, from 1892 until the... '62, it was just a one room stone school house. When I went there we had a big long stove to put in four foot wood and that was the soul source of heat. The toilets were two little building out in the back of the school. There was windows on each side. If I remember correctly, when I first went the teachers platform and desk was at the east, the east end of the...no the north end of the school. And later on they changed it around and put the teachers platform at the south end of the school. I don't know why that was done. There was cloak rooms just when you come inside the door, there was two cloak rooms. The one on the right was the boys and the one on the left was the girls. We'd put our dinner pails on the shelves and hang our coats and hats up on hooks.

**S.R:** Do you remember any interesting stories from when you went to school, things that happened?

**K.E:** Well the only, the only thing that really comes to mind...we had a little English Bernado boy that couldn't tell the difference between mine and thine. He used to take our lead pencils and sometimes he'd take some lunch out of our dinner buckets.

**S.R:** What's English Bernado?

**K.E:** Well, I thought everybody knew about a Bernado home. It was a charitable organization in London, England and they would take these boys, and oh I guess girls too and send them out to homes which were considered suitable. Like a little charity arrangement, some of them had very good homes and some of them didn't have such good homes. But I guess on the hole it proved satisfactory and it did carry on for many years.

**S.R:** Are you a member of a church?

**K.E:** Yes.

**S.R:** And what church would that be?

**K.E:** The United church of Canada.

**S.R:** Whereabouts is it located?

**K.E:** In Ridgeway, on the corner of Ridge and Dominion Road.

**S.R.:** Did you always attend that church?

**K.E.:** Yes. It used to be a Methodist Church, and then in 1925 it was united with the Presbyterians and the congregations, and we called it the United Church of Canada.

**S.R.:** Do you know what year it was built?

**K.E.:** Oh, it's been built and added to a long time. I couldn't tell you what year it was built...1872.

**S.R.:** Do you recall any special events the church had to offer?

**K.E.:** Well, they had the hundredth anniversary in 1972. I can remember, ah, I think it was in 1916, they raised the church up and put it on blocks and built a basement underneath. They sold blocks of, cement blocks to the people. You paid for the block but they put the blocks under the church. That was the way they raised the money to pay for it.

**S.R.:** Were there any other changes in the church?

**K.E.:** Oh, there's been changes every once in a while. They spent several thousand last year, didn't they? They remodelled the ceiling and put in insulation and fixed up the front of the church...what do you call it, the narthex...and a new stairway. And before that, I don't know just when it was, we had Sunday school rooms in the basement. And in the thirties, the dirty thirties, they built a gymnasium on the east side of the church. And then later than that, they put the ladies parlor, they called it, it was further on the east side. When I was ten or twelve years old we built a scout cabin on the church property. Dr. Laidman was the minister at that time and Reecer Laidman, his son, was the scoutmaster. G. Barrett Rich was a property owner at Point Abino, he had a summer home there. He was the first man that brought scouting from England to the United States and Canada.

**S.R.:** Who is the first political representative you can remember?

**K.E.:** I guess W. M. German.

**S.R.:** And what were his duties and his title?

**K.E.:** Well he was, he was just a member of the Dominion of Canada, Dominion...what do they call it...the Federal Government I guess it is.

**S.R.:** Do you know about what year that would have been?

**K.E.:** Oh, 1912 or something. And then we had a...I can't think of his

name...but he came here. And Bertie Township and the Niagara District here was generally always a Liberal stronghold. And then we had...what was Mitchell?...and then we had two outsiders that came in, and were elected in Bertie Township. But, ah, right now I can't think of their names.

**S.R:** What are some of the changes that have taken place in the area?  
Like differences in neighbours, size of the farms then and now.

**K.E:** Well, there's very few farmers anymore. I guess I could pretty near count them all on one hand. And they used to be, every hundred acres was a separate farm. I know the feedmill in Ridgeway, it's now in the possession of John Stickles and he has hardly any farmers. It's mostly natural foods and garden seeds and so on, is what he sells. We used to have chopping mills and so on, but they don't have those anymore. There aren't enough farmers to make it worthwhile.

**S.R:** What's a chopping mill?

**K.E:** Oh. We used to take the grain to the mill and get it chopped up so to feed the animals. In our own case, after we had to quit, Reigle's Mill it was before Stickles bought it...we had to go to Stevensville to get out concentrate to feed our pigs and it cost us about a thousand dollars each and every month, year 'round. We grew our own feed, but we had to put the concentrate with it to make a balanced ration for the livestock. We kept around three hundred pigs at that time.

**S.R:** What did the area have to offer for stores?

**K.E:** I beg your pardon.

**S.R:** Stores.

**K.E:** Storage.

**S.R:** Stores in the area. Like clothing, barber shop, candystore.

**K.E:** Oh. We had Beeshy's China Shop, Kinsmens had a china shop and wools, and Quinzy had a china shop. If you go back before that, they had a gunsmith, a foundary, a brick kiln, made bricks. There are several houses on Dominion Road that are made out of the bricks that were made on the property in Ridgeway. How far back would you like to go? Way back? '74 and so on?

**S.R:** As far back as you can remember? 19...the early nineteens after you were born.

**K.E:** Some of the things I can remember. Arnold Teal, he was the gunsmith.

I remember him tell me, I guess he thought I was kind of gullible. He made a shot gun and he came out in the main street to try it out. He pointed it down and he was going to shoot it off, and there was a snake there. And he said the snake jumped up and run right up the barrel of the gun. And he said, after I shot it you could see the riffling in the gun. Just made a riffle out of it.

**S.R:** Do you remember any of the other old stores?

**K.E:** Oh, I don't know. Beeshy's China Shop has been there for a long, long time. That's right next to the, where the Imperial Bank is. When they used to have the Imperial Bank, it was on the corner of Disher Street and Ridge Street. And then they build a new bank, oh, twenty years ago or so, and ah, there used to be a private house where the new bank is. And Beeshy's China Shop, Milton Beeshy was the name, ah when the business of the china. He used to go to England and get his china from over there. And his uncle owned it before. And his Uncle's wife, every once in a while she'd have a spell and she could just whisper, I don't know what was wrong with her voice but I can remember that, Mrs. Beesy just whispering.

**S.R:** Do you know about when Beeshy's was opened?

**K.E:** Oh, I suppose 1908 or somewhere around there.

**S.R:** Do you recall any of the prices?

**K.E:** Prices?

**S.R:** Yeah, just prices you can remember from way back when.

**K.E:** No, I don't think so. I ah, I wouldn't be able to quote prices. I know we used to take eggs and butter to the store and if you took it in cash you got a few cents a dozen more than you did if you traded it for groceries. Usually, the butter and eggs and, I guess that was the main thing, that supplied the house with groceries. We never had any money. But we'd take these, mother always looked after that. And ah, dad would have ah, ten or fifteen acres of wheat to pay the taxes in the fall and he'd have four or five pigs he raised, and generally a beef. Well, part of the time we'd kill three or four pigs in the fall and we put them in brine, that is hams and shoulders and baccon...I don't remember how long we put them in, six weeks I think. And then we'd take them out and put them in the smoke house and smoke them with hickory or maple wood and that would...and mother used to take newspapers and sew them up along the edges and make a big bag and put them over the hams and shoulders so

the flies couldn't get in anything and we used to hand them up in the grainery, and that was our meat. And when we killed a beef, why we generally traded part of it with the neighbours...they'd kill one one time and we'd kill one another time and trade meats. We didn't have refrigerators, all we had was ice boxes. I can remember, I used to, we used to have an ice house outside here and we'd cut the ice from Crystal Beach from out on the lake, bring it in and pack it in saw dust and keep it through 'till next fall.

**S.R:** Is there anything else you'd like to discuss about your childhood days?

**K.E:** No, I can't remember too much.

**S.R:** Disher feedmill. Did you have any dealings with Disher feedmill?

**K.E:** What is it?

**S.R:** Disher feedmill.

**K.E:** Yes. I used to buy coal there. We used to take our wheat there and get so many pound of flour, so many pounds of shorts and so many pounds of midlands and so much bran. Incidentally, before it was Disher's mill it was Isaac Pounds. And Isaac Pound married my father's half sister.

**S.R:** And what would her name be?

**K.E:** Francis. She was Francis Ellsworth and she married Isaac Pound.

**S.R:** What year was the feedmill built?

**K.E:** Well. Back in the eighteen something?

**S.R:** Do you know approximately eighteen what? Like within ten years.

**K.E:** How many years?

**S.R:** Like within ten years. Was it eighteen sixties, seventies, eighties, nineties?

**K.E:** Well I imagine it would have been seventies.

**S.R:** And where is it located?

**K.E:** On Disher Street. It's all torn down now. I can well remember when we used to take a bag of wheat in, a bag of wheat is a hundred and twenty pounds, it's pretty heavy, and they used to have a rope come down with a loop on it. And they put this rope around the bag of wheat and lifted it right out of our wagon and take it into the mill and put it through the machine. And it so happened that in 1956 I was in Europe on Marn and there was a grist mill there and they had the same arrangement to take the wheat out of the farmers wagon and pull it up, in '56 there. In 1956.

**S.R:** Do you know why the feedmill closed?

**K.E:** There was no business.

**S.R:** Oh, because of the decrease in the farming. Well, would you remember Young lumber?

**K.E:** Yeah.

**S.R:** And what year was it built?

**K.E:** I don't know. Mr. Young, that would be the grandfather of the present Charlie Young, made my father's wedding suit. He was the tailor at the time. That was in 1901. So, it was shortly after that that he started. Well then, about, oh, 1960 or something they bought the present property from the Manny Near estate. I guess Manny had died, and that included...well first, they bought the Wil Mathison lumber business on Disher Street and then they bought the Ridgeway Planing mill, they called it, and that's what the present operation is.

**S.R:** Do you remember anything to do with fire departments?

**K.E:** Yes. In 1913 we pretty near burnt the fire town up. And, ah, then in 1937, they burnt nearly the whole town down. That was the beginning of the present fire department. After that they decided they should have a, some kind of a connection, a barn or a house, you'd call it, back at the town hall. And they bought a Ford fire engine and they used to keep it in that building. And they had a volunteer fire department. Ward Sherk was one of the chiefs. Corky Baker, Warren Baker was his name but they nicknamed him Corky, he was another fire chief. He was put on, on salary. They defined an area and they used to charge fire department tax to pay this first salary and buy supplies and so on. They bought an International tank wagon which which would hold, oh, several hundred gallons of water to bring water to the, to the fire. That was before they had any water works here in Ridgeway. They had water works in Crystal Beach in 1922 I think it was, but Ridgeway didn't have any until...I can't remember the date that they put it down though. I helped issue the bonds to pay for the water works system. They were paid for in a twenty year basis.

**S.R:** What was there to do for entertainment such as on a date?



**K.E:** Well, the Oddfellows used to have three night dances. There used to be a picture show in Crystal Beach , and there used to be two hotels in Ridgeway. Mostly for entertainment you provided your own. We used to have card parties and dances in private homes.

**S.R:** Do you remember the names of the hotels or the picture show?

**K.E:** Well there was the McLeod House, was one hotel and the Queens Hotel was the other one. There wasn't any hotels at Crystal Beach. And then about twenty or thirty years ago, I guess they got eight or ten for a while there.

**S.R:** Do you remember the Ontario Hotel?

**K.E:** At Crystal Beach, yeah.

**S.R:** What year would that have started?

**K.E:** Well, I suppose around '22 or 3.

**S.R:** Was it a very thriving place?

**K.E:** Oh, I guess in the summer time. In the winter time it was pretty dead.

**S.R:** Why the difference in the summer time?

**K.E:** Well, in the summer time they used to have boats bring people from Buffalo. They'd have thirty-five hundred on each boat, and two boats running.

**S.R:** What were the boats?

**K.E:** The Canadiana and the Americana.

**S.R:** Did you ever travel?

**K.E:** Oh yeah, lots of times.

**S.R:** What did they have to offer?

**K.E:** What do you mean? It was an hours ride over to Buffalo and back.

**S.R:** Did they have any entertainment?

**K.E:** Not particularly. Sometimes they had big orchestras playing at the ballroom in Crystal Beach and sometimes they'd play on the boat coming back and forth.

**S.R:** You said a time?

**K.E:** Well it would be between, maybe, '22 or 3 up until I suppose the thirties.

**S.R:** And how long did it take?

**K.E:** About an hour to go from Crystal Beach to Buffalo.

**S.R:** Do they go all year?

**K.E:** No, just in the summer.

**S.R:** Do you remember the Bertie Fair at the Old Fort Erie Race Track?

**K.E:** They used to have it in back of the town hall for a while and then they had it at the Fort Erie Race Track.

**S.R:** What town hall?

**K.E:** In Ridgeway.

**S.R:** What did the fair have to offer?

**K.E:** Well it had samples of vegetables and grain and soya and potatoes. And they had horse racing and I guess the women had knitting and sewing and so forth and so on.

**S.R:** Was the race track in operation then, like it is today?

**K.E:** Well not as big as it is today. They've improved that too.

**S.R:** Do you remember the years that the Bertie Fair took place?

**K.E:** Well, it would be ah, in the '20's -25 someplace around there.

**S.R:** Was it opened very long?

**K.E:** Oh it would be opened about a week. That's all. I don't know, I think it run five or six years.

**S.R:** Do you know why it stopped?

**K.E:** Not enough enthusiasm I guess.

**S.R:** Did you ever visit Erie Beach?

**K.E:** Yes.

**S.R:** And what year would that be?

**K.E:** I remember being there in '26.

**S.R:** How many years was it in operation?

**K.E:** Well, I think it was around the dirty thirties that Crystal Beach bought them out.

**S.R:** Oh, Crystal Beach owns it now.

**K.E:** No. They just bought most of the rides. Bardol estate I think owns it yet as far as I have heard. Although there was some other outfit that was gonna take it over. But the Bardol estate owned it for years and years.

**S.R:** What did it have to offer?

**K.E:** Well, they had amusements about like Crystal Beach I guess. The rides, the merry-go-round.

**S.R:** Do you remember the names of any of the rides?

**K.E:** Oh, I forget just what they did call them. It used to be years ago, we'd call it Snake Hill and they used to run a trolley up up from

Buffalo...A train come up from Buffalo.

**S.R:** What, to get to Erie Beach?

**S.R:** Could you describe the dance hall and I think there was a pool there too.

**K.E:** Well the dance hall was a nice place hall. There was a stone building and they ah...after the beach was closed it stood around for years. Somebody had some fires in it and burnt all the wood out of it. I haven't been down for thirty years to look at it so I couldn't tell you anything about it now.

**S.R:** What was the pool like, and do you know why they put in a pool?

**K.E:** Well, I guess...they say the dirty thirties, when they came along, nobody had any money and a lot of things closed up at that time.

**S.R:** That's when Erie Beach closed up?

**K.E:** Around there.

**S.R:** Do you remember very much about Crystal Beach ?

**K.E:** Well it used to be a police village first and then around 1920 they incorporated it and made it a village.

**S.R:** What do you mean by police village?

**K.E:** Well that's, you take the municipality and you get a congestion of people in another section, they can make a police village out of it. They have three trustees and they're appointed every year, like a council. After it gets a little bigger they make it a village.

**S.R:** Was the amusement park in Crystal Beach very much different from Erie Beach?

**K.E:** Well it was always a little bigger and better.

**S.R:** You think Crystal Beach was better?

**K.E:** Bigger, more better, more rides and so on.

**S.R:** There was a riot in 1969?

**K.E:** What happened in '69?

**S.R:** A riot in 1969.

**K.E:** Oh, I don't think so. There was a few darkies got some strong Canadian beer and caused a commotion on one of the boats. That's partly the reason they quit the boats I guess. But it wasn't much of a riot.

**S.R:** In 1969.

**K.E:** Ya I guess that would be about when it would be.

**S.R:** What's the sand quarry?

**K.E:** There used to be the sand train, it went out every...sometimes oftener...I don't know how many times a day from Empire Beach when they took the sand across to Buffalo. The break wall in Buffalo is made out of stone that was taken from the...Hughes Brothers and gangs I think they called it. That's down about lot fifteen, something like that, in the lake concessions. It was quite a quarry down there. The Burgers and son own it now. At least they did the last I heard. I haven't heard lately. Up until '53, I used to know everything that went on pretty well but since then things change so fast I can't keep up with them.

**S.R:** How old were you when you got your first car?

**K.E:** I was twenty-one I think.

**S.R:** Do you remember the year of the car and the model?

**K.E:** It was a new Superior 1923. I paid nine hundred and ninety dollars for it...coupe.

**S.R:** Do you remember the price of gas?

**K.E:** No.

**S.R:** Would you know how far you got for your gallon, like how many miles per gallon, at all?

**K.E:** Oh, I suppose around twenty. I know I only drove it four thousand miles and the tires were wore out. The roads were so rough around here and the tires weren't very good. I had to buy new tires at four thousand miles.

**S.R:** What were the roads like then?

**K.E:** Well they were just a stone road.

**S.R:** Oh, so there were stone roads already and not just dirt anymore.

**K.E:** But they didn't have paved roads like they do now.

**S.R:** Did you have to have a license to drive? Do you remember what year it was required?

**K.E:** No, I couldn't even guess. I know when we bought the family car in 1916 or 17, something like that, it was a Chev touring...and we got the license for the car and I went out with the dealer that we bought it from, drove around a little bit and drove him home. I was already to drive a car. Then quite a few years later they sent everybody that was driving car a license. That's all there was to it.

**S.R:** It was a lot easier the, than it is now?

**K.E:** I didn't have to take a test until 19...or until I got to be eighty.

**S.R:** Do you recall the speed limits on any of the main roads?

**K.E:** Well, it used to be fifteen miles an hour to start with.

**S.R:** How did your cars handle it a fifteen miles an hour?

**K.E:** Oh, they chugged along.

**S.R:** Do you remember the shipyards?

**K.E:** Yeah.

**S.R:** What took place there?

**K.E:** Well they used to build boats there.

**S.R:** What kinds of boats?

**K.E:** I don't know what kind they would be. There was a lot of people around here that used to work at the shipyard. I think it was in the first world war that they built a couple ships. I don't know really what they did carry on the boats.

**S.R:** Could you describe the community they had down there? Do you remember the name of it?

**K.E:** Just the shipyard is all I ever heard it called. They had a couple slips where the boats were built. The road used to go around like that.

**S.R:** They had a little community out there then when the shipyards...

**K.E:** Well one store is all I ever knew there was.

**S.R:** Do you remember the Biltmore Club House?

**K.E:** I guess you could...that's where the school is, isn't it?

**S.R:** Niagara Christian College. You never visited there? Do you remember hearing any stories?

**K.E:** Not particularly. I think they was pretty hard up when they got it built.

**S.R:** Oh, it made them go broke?

**K.E:** I guess.

**S.R:** You live here on a farm, have you always lived here?

**K.E:** Well except when I lived in Ridgeway when I was town clerk.

**S.R:** Who was the previous owner?

**K.E:** Abe...Crayton Sherk.

**S.R:** Is he the one that got it when the government was giving out the hundred acres?

**K.E:** No, it was, ah, I think it was Cornelious Bowen who got the crown deed and he sold it to Abe Sherk, and Abe built the house there in 1857. And Crayton was Abe's son. Crayton died when I was a couple years old and my dad bought this farm then.

**S.R:** What year did the crown give the property?

**K.E:** I couldn't tell ya, but I could make a rough...

**S.R:** What kind of farming is done?

**K.E:** It's mixed farming. But when I was a boy they used to have about three or four acres of fruit trees. We used to pick apples, then a man would come and pack them in barrels and ship them over seas in the fall. I think about '33 or something like that, most of the trees got killed. It was such a cold winter it split the bark and rotted the trees. We haven't an apple tree on the place now.

**S.R:** What's mixed farming?

**K.E:** Well, we have some vegetables, and wheat, oats and hay and corn.

**S.R:** So it was never animal farming?

**K.E:** Oh, there was some animals. My dad used to keep beef cattle.

**S.R:** And that was all the animals there were?

**K.E:** Oh there was a few of them started in and kept milk cows. They seemed to pass frequently well.

**S.R:** Were farms of this size...is it still a hundred acres?

**K.E:** Yes, we've got more than that now.

**S.R:** Back when you were small, was the farm enough to support everybody, or did anybody have to have extra jobs?

**K.E:** No. When my dad owned this farm, his brother lived across the road, that's the old Ellsworth home over there. It's a century home and always been in posession of the Ellsworths. They'd run it together. If they sold a pig each took half, if they bought a cow they each paid half and when income tax came along, they put it in they each took half and they wouldn't accept it. So they got two new forms and put down just half of everything, half a pig died, or they bought something and just paid half for it, so that was the last they heard of it.

**S.R:** So then they allowed you to do it that way again?

**K.E:** No, they always made there own out after that. Then when I got big enough to work, why Uncle Walter had a couple boys and they

sort of split up and each ran their own show then. Of course I never done any farming. I was only 25 I guess when I was appointed town clerk and I worked there most all the time.

**S.R:** What were your duties as town clerk?

**K.E:** Well, you made up the tax role, collected all the taxes, kept the minutes of the council, recorded in the book without note or comment the resolutions of the council.

**S.R:** Was it a very profitable job?

**K.E:** I started in at a thousand dollars a year.

**S.R:** Compare that to farming.

**K.E:** Well, a thousand dollars was quite a bit in those days.

**S.R:** So it was a pretty profitable job then?

**K.E:** Oh, it was a good job I guess.

**S.R:** Was that the first job you had?

**K.E:** Well, I got out of college in '23 and I worked with school four work for three or four years. I got married in '26 then in '27 I started in as town clerk.

**S.R:** Do you remember any interesting stories about when you were town clerk?

**K.E:** Oh, an awful lot of stories but I couldn't tell you too much about any one. It was a long time ago. But I was going to say a while ago, my father worked here, paid for the farm...he only paid four thousand dollars for a hundred acres with the buildings on it. He sent me to college for four years, he sent my sister to Mack Hall, that's a girls school in Guelph in connection with Ontario Agriculture College. And after she got through there she went to Millard Fillmore Hospital in Buffalo and worked over there and then she was Betty Bright for the gas company until, I guess she was Betty Bright for the power company. See, we don't have hydro in here, we're the Canadian Niagara Power Company. But dad made enough, we never had much money but we always had enough to eat and half way decent clothes to wear and we got an education.

**S.R:** How did the depression effect the farm and the family?

**K.E:** Not too bad. Not near as bad as out west where they had the dust storms and the...times were worse out there, much worse then they were here.

**S.R:** Was the farm a family project or how many people did it employ to run the hundred acres?

**K.E:** Right now it's a family project, I guess you could call it. My two sons and my grandson do most all the work.

**S.R:** What about when you were small?

**K.E:** When I was small my father and my uncle, had a farm across the road, and they worked together. We all worked of course when thrashing time and silo filling. The neighbours would all come in and help and they'd fill up your silo and thrash and you'd go and help him. We used to have hes and so forth and so on.

**S.R:** Well that was part of your entertainment then. Do you remember the prices of any of your dairy products, or eggs or wheat or grain?

**K.E:** No. Not very well.

**S.R:** Who did you sell your farm produce to?

**K.E:** Well, we used to take the eggs and butter to the local stores and we used to keep a lot of sheep and we sold a lot of lambs to Mr. Dawson in Niagara Falls, mostly. And the wool went to the Co-operative Wool Growers Association of Ontario. And the beef, well, there was a butcher in Stevensville who used to get them and butcher them...in a big hurry. Just outside of Stevensville, they used to get a lot of our beef.

**S.R:** Do you remember anything about the railroad era, when the railroad was a really booming business?

**K.E:** Well, I remember one time we had a stock yard, I guess you'd call it on the railroad property and the farmers used to bring pigs in here and Mr. Nogel bought it out and they'd put them in this little enclosure and shoot them up into the train loading there.

**S.R:** Anything else, like where were the train depots?

**K.E:** Well the train station in Ridgeway used to be one of the most beautiful railway stations going. I've got a book up there on railway stations.

**S.R:** Is it still there in Ridgeway?

**K.E:** No. They moved it to Fort Erie.

**S.R:** Oh, the historical museum on Central.

**S.R:** What did Fort Erie, Ridgeway, Stevensville and Crystal Beach have to offer tourists?

**K.E:** Have to offer what?



**S.R:** Tourists.

**K.E:** Well, there was some homes that would open their doors to tourists. I can't say that they had much to offer. When Crystal Beach was first open, there wasn't automobiles, they used to have buses pulled by horses, they go it up to Lake Shore as far as Point Abino. Then ah, for amusements there was merry-go-round and ferris wheel and...in 1926, I think it was, they built the big dance hall at Crystal Beach then they put in the big, what do you call the thing, you'd get on cars and they'd zip you around upside down...There used to be quite famous bands that come here and played...I can't think of the names of them. There was a lot of them that used to come. Before '26 there used to be an old dance hall. We used to dance there quite a lot, I can remember.

**S.R:** At Erie Beach or at Crystal Beach?

**K.E:** At Crystal Beach. They moved the big sand hill down and built the Crystal Palace I guess you'd call it. And there used to be a dance hall up at Fort Erie Beach, Erie Beach.

**S.R:** You mentioned before about describing Bertie Township. Could you describe...explain Bertie Township, the boundaries, the changes?

**S.R:** Thank you for the interview Mr. Ellsworth.

**K.E:** I hope you can make anything out of it, I don't know.