

This is Shelley Richer interviewing Mr. William Athoe in his home at 3836 Highland Road on July 26, 1985.

**S.R:** Hello Mr. Athoe, how are you?

**W.A:** I'm very well thank you.

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

**W.A:** May the 2nd in 1902.

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

**W.A:** I was born on the corner of Ridge Road and Bertie Road, in Bertie Township. That's the old brick house where the Fenian Raid was fought in.

**S.R:** Were there hospitals then or did the doctors come to the house or were there midwives?

**W.A:** We had doctors. There was Dr. Schneider in Ridgeway and...oh heavens, I can't think of the fellow in Stevensville now. Dr. Buell was there, but he came later. Oh, we had doctors and we were advanced a few years ahead of midwives I guess.

**S.R:** Were there any kind of hospitals at all, home hospitals or anything like that?

**W.A:** I don't know. I know when my oldest son was born my wife had to go to Fort Erie to...Mrs. Jimmy Qusted had a maternity home that she ran. It was a private home and two of my children were born there and the other one was born in this house upstairs.

**S.R:** That maternity home, where would that have been in Fort Erie?

**W.A:** I believe it was on Dufferin Street, but I don't know the address of everything anymore.

**S.R:** Have you lived in the area all your life?

**W.A:** All but three years that I was in New York City.

**S.R:** Where in Ridgeway did you grow up?

**W.A:** Well I grew up on the farm there on the corner of the Bertie Road and Ridge Road. I was there until I was ~~about~~ sixteen or seventeen.

**S.R:** And then you moved here?

**W.A:** And then I went to Niagara Falls for a year or two and worked down there, then back to Ridgeway and in 1925 I went to New York City and work there '25, '26 and '27. Then I come back here and built this house in '28 and got married and have been here every since.

**S.R:** Back then, who would have helped you build the house?

**W.A:** Who would have helped me? Well Carl Pooler and his sons were

the carpenters that I had help. John Benner and Morris Huffman were two brick layers that I had helping me.

**S.R:** Could you tell me what school you attended and where it is located?

**W.A:** Well, my childhood school days, public school days, was in number ten and that was on top of the hill there...do you know where Frank Nashes used to be, or you must know where number ten...?

**S.R:** Do you know the street?

**W.A:** Well it was on the Garrison Road, but it was just about two or three hundred yards from the Ridge Road on the Garrison, Number Three Highway.

**S.R:** How far away from your home would that have been?

**W.A:** Half a mile.

**S.R:** Oh, so it was just walking to school then?

**W.A:** Well, it was pretty rugged in the wintertime when...no snowplows or anything...I mean big truck snowplows or anything like that. Everything was, any banks or anything had to be shovelled out by hand and it was only horse and buggies or cutters anyhow. Walking to school, I know we used to walk and be looking down at the fences, the road was drifted in between the fences and we'd be above the fences looking down at them.

**S.R:** You still had to walk then, there was no other way?

**W.A:** You had to walk, yeah. There was no buses, no...well there weren't any buses that's for sure...no teams or horses or cutters or wagon sleighs or anything.

**S.R:** Do you know approximately what year your school was built?

**W.A:** Well, they wouldn't let you stay...I think now they except them at five years old in school, but they wouldn't until you were six at that time. So I started at, when I was six, and my teachers name was Miss Gleason. And the teacher before her was, originally went to Fort Erie, and was Mrs. Oscar Teal, and her name was Anna Murphy. But I didn't go to Miss Murphy, I went to Miss Gleason, but my brothers and sisters all went to Anna Murphy which was Mrs. Oscar Teal, later...lived in Fort Erie, Jack Teal's mother.

**S.R:** Could you describe your school, how it was when you went and if there was any changes or anything like that, any additions?

**W.A:** Well, the seats were, when I first went to school were awful old and they were more or less slatted seats. Boards about that, 2½-3inches wide and probably four of them. And once in a while one would

go down and the other one was coming up, you'd get a nice pinch. But later they were all renewed with new seats, all one piece with rounded backs and nice curved seats and everything. The sides were wainscotted up about four feet high, all dark grey colour, and plaster above that. High ceilings, about twelve feet high I guess and the heat, in the wintertime the heat was all up at the ceiling and your feet were freezing.

**S.R:** How did they heat it?

**W.A:** With a big, long wood stove and the wood they used to take and burn, it was three feet long. It was long enough you could put three foot wood in there. The farmers around used to supply the wood and we kids always had to carry it from the woodshed built on the back of the school. We had to carry it in and keep a big wood box full of wood out in the boys coatroom. It was carried from there into the stove, and later they got natural gas around. They had a big long gas pipe in there, with holes drilled through, that gas used to come out, and they used to light that and then put two or three blocks of wood in and turn this gas on and start the wood. And as soon as the wood got burning they'd turn the gas off to save gas. While we had it, it was very scarce. There were very few wells around and, but now that later they got a lot of wells and it was piped in from other places too and they have more of it. I guess...I think the last few years there, quite a few years there, it was heated with gas only, no wood at all.

**S.R:** Could you describe the outside of your building, like how many rooms it had, colour, anything that you remember about the building itself?

**W.A:** Well, it was a light-red brick building and it was brick all the way as far as what could be brick, all but the roof and the windows. It was all one room and all the classes were from..., that was before grades. They all went by readers at that time, first, second, third, fourth readers and then they had first and second in each one yet. Your junior fourth, then you went senior fourth and from there you went and tried the entrance examination and if you passed that you went to what they called the Continuation School here in Ridgeway, which is the old Masonic Hall next to Bickell's Store in Ridgeway, now at the present time. But it wasn't high school work, they called it fifth grade work, but it was the same as, about the same as ninth grade would be today in high school.

**S.R:** That's just as far as education advanced then?

**W.A:** That's as far as I went was grade nine, yes. It would be the same as grade nine now.

**S.R:** Did they have it any farther than that?

**W.A:** Pardon?

**S.R:** Did they have education any farther than that, or was it just on to college?

**W.A:** I think that if you wanted to advance any farther than that they had to go to college and I think it was Hamilton where most of them from around here went. And the normal school of course for teachers was in there too.

**S.R:** Could you describe any changes that took place in your school? Is your school still there, or if not why?

**W.A:** Well, Buffalonians I think, got coming over here in large numbers and built cottages and some year 'round homes, in, what is now called Ridgewood and Oakhill Forest, and they got so many kids come in there that this one room school was not sufficient anymore and it was torn down and this four room school was built there, that's there now. But that's no longer used.

**S.R:** Do you remember approximately when it was torn down, what year?

**W.A:** No, approximately I would say maybe twenty years ago, that's probably twenty years old that school that's there now. That would take it back what, sixty-five? 1965, I would think would be somewhere near close to it, when it was torn down, the old school.

**S.R:** Are you, or have you been a member of a church?

**W.A:** Yes I belong to the United Church here in Ridgeway. It used to be the Methodist Church when I was a kid and went to Sunday School.

**S.R:** And where was that located in Ridgeway?

**W.A:** Its on the corner of Dominion Road and Ridge Road.

**S.R:** Do you know approximately when it was built or who it was built by, or have there been any changes in it?

**W.A:** Well, there's been numerous changes. The Sunday School was built out on the north side. That was all new and the room on the east where they have their dinners and everything out there now. They play basketball out there, that was all added to it. I don't know what years, but not too many years ago. The big auditorium where they hold their dinners and things out in there, I built that, laid the blocks and bricks on the outside and plastered it on the inside.

That must have been about, oh, it must have been close to twenty years ago too, I guess. But they were all added new, the Sunday School rooms. Then they had a, they had a...oh what do you call it when you sit up on top?

**S.R:** Balcony?

**W.A:** Balcony, yeah. They had a balcony up above, on the west end of the church, and a stairway leading up to it. You could go up there and sit up in there. We used to ride a bicycle from our farm into Sunday School and mother always saw that we got there too. We always had to tell her what the lesson was about and everything after we got home, or we found out what. There was no way of going and playing ball someplace and come home and say we were at Sunday School.

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

**W.A:** My own family?

**S.R:** The church families. Any special events the church had to offer for the families to attend or participate in somehow.

**W.A:** Well, the weddings, many of the weddings took place there, and a lot of the funeral services were held there. In fact, most of them, or all of them practically, were held there until Mr. Hary Dell, the undertaker at that time, built a funeral home where Larry Williams is now. And after that a lot of the funerals, of course, especially unless it's an extra large one, then they go to the church, but most of them are held at Larry William's Funeral Home now. That was built by Harry Dell originally.

**S.R:** Did churches always have weddings or did weddings used to take place in the home?

**W.A:** Well, lots of them do in the homes and lots of them used to have them in their archways out in the backyard if it was a nice day, and if they had a bad day they'd have to go in their houses. If it's the archways...I can remember being to a couple different ones under archways.

**S.R:** Was it a very popular practice to have them in the home or in the church?

**W.A:** Well, I think the biggest part of them especially if they were white weddings, were in the church.

**S.R:** Do you remember any prominent members of the church or community and the special things they may have done?

**W.A:** Well, four of the south windows in the church were put in with nice coloured glass and leaded glass, by different church members. I know the one was put in there by the Sherk family, the Hugh Sherk family. There was another one by the Mann family. They were wonderful windows, big, high, gothic windows, and all the pictures of a shepherd carrying a lamb with a big crooks in one thing, and another on one of them. Oh, I don't know what the others were, but they're beautiful windows and really cost a lot of money. Even in those days it would cost a lot of money.

**S.R:** And yet they were donated?

**W.A:** Yes, they were donated by the families. The families would put it in honouring their...like, I think Ward Sherk put the one in for his father who was Mr. Hugh Sherk. I don't know the Manns, who put that in. Old Adolph Mann, I think his one son George probably was the one for that. I don't know who the other two were actually...I don't know who put the other two in. The four of them are all on the one, south side. They're beautiful windows...still there.

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

**W.A:** Political representatives? Well, you mean local or...Bill Wilson I would say was out first member that we had right here from Ridgeway. He was a local Ridgeway man.

**S.R:** His duties and his title?

**W.A:** He was a Conservative. I don't know whether he ever...I don't think he ever got to be a Cabinet Member.

**S.R:** Do you remember what duties he had to do in the town?

**W.A:** No, not specifically, only the, whenever he was called upon, people would go to him and want something and he'd have to go and take it up with his, whoever was the Cabinet Minister you know, and they'd have to take it up with him and try and get it for him if he could.

**S.R:** Do you know what time this was, how many years ago or what year?

**W.A:** Ah, back in the...he had the Model T Ford Agency, so it was back around, about 1916. His first opponent was Dr. Schneider from Ridgeway. He was the Liberal that Mr. Wilson ran against. Schneider left here and sold the business, his doctoring practice out here and went to Niagara Falls, because Niagara Falls used to be in this riding. At that time it was combined. I think he went down there...the talk was he went there figuring he was going to make

a lot of friends. If he went there about two years before the election, he'd make a lot of friends and garner a lot of votes down there. Whether it worked or it didn't I don't know, but Bill Wilson beat him by quite a majority anyhow.

**S.R:** And yet he was from a little town like Ridgeway.

**W.A:** A little town like Ridgeway, yeah.

**S.R:** What are some of the changes that have taken place in the area, like, at one time it used to be Bertie Township?

**W.A:** Yes, we used to have our own Bertie Township Council, County...Township Council here in Crystal Beach likewise and Fort Erie. At that time we used to have a Reeve, and a Deputy Reeve, and three Councilmen, and they had the same at Crystal Beach. And then they come along and told us it was going to be a lot cheaper, they'd have a lot less men if they got the...oh what do you call it now...the...I've gotten terrible...the Regional Government. They come out and told us Regional Government was going to be much better and cheaper and everything, and they wouldn't have near as many, it would save us a lot of money. At that time our Reeve was getting about seven hundred dollars a year, Deputy Reeve was getting about four hundred. I know, my brother was Deputy Reeve for quite a few years. It was going to eliminate, out of the five years, it was going to eliminate them all but one. We were going to have one Aldermen here, and one from Crystal Beach, and one from Stevensville I believe at that time, and the Mayor, and four or five Aldermen from Fort Erie. If it had stayed the salaries on the same levels they were when they went to Regional, it would have been alright, but right away they turned around and upped them. I don't know, heavens, what they get now. Up in the thousands...I believe our Mayor now is getting twenty-six thousand or something, maybe even more.

**S.R:** What is your opinion of the amalgamation of all the villages?

**W.A:** I think it's...I think it's the worst thing we ever had for this community, I honestly do. For this reason...if I was to go down there now and attend the council meeting with a complaint, our representative from here in Ridgeway, and the one from Crystal Beach, would be probably the only two in there that would know what I was talking about regarding a street, or a cutoff street, full of mudholes, or potholes, or something. They're the only two that's listening to what I am saying, the other two are sitting there gabbing about

something entirely different. And at that time when I went in with a complaint to the Council down here, they all knew exactly what I was talking about, and they all sat there listening and everything, and when I got through...well I think we should do something about this or that, and they got busy and did it.

**S.R:** Now Ridgeway is one of the little people?

**W.A:** Yeah, we don't count at all up here now. Well, we do, but what I mean, our one man has a say, and the one down there, and I don't mean...but what I'm saying...I don't mean that they aren't giving us a fair shake, but we got four or five from down there, I believe at least four, plus the Mayor for five, voting against our two from up here.

**S.R:** What was your opinion on the name they chose?

**W.A:** The Regional Government?

**S.R:** No, Fort Erie.

**W.A:** Well, that's, that I haven't any fault to find with that. That was alright. It used to be Fort Erie and Bridgeburg 'till they changed it, and went Regional I guess. That was all Fort Erie, and we're supposed to be Fort Erie here now, but yet, our mail all comes Fort Erie, Ridgeway mostly on it, or a lot of it. And the LOS-1N0, the code number, is the post office. It goes by the codes I guess more than anything now.

**S.R:** And not by the names?

**S.R:** Could you take me down a memory walk down the main street in Ridgeway, stating what the street name is and approximately what year you're describing? And tell me the stores that you remember and the store owners, and anything that...any points of interest to do with the stores, like whether they were hangouts for kids or anything like that.

**W.A:** Well, starting at the southerly end of the town, the first big, bigger building at that time years ago, was a print shop, and it was operated by Bob Disher's father, and I think his name was Merrit Disher. It's no longer continued now, the Ridgeway Dry Cleaners are in that same building now. Then on the same side of the street was the Public School building and the fifth learn work that they taught in there. Proceeding on northerly, there was a big brick hotel, a three storey building, called the Queen's Hotel. It's torn down and the Brewery is on that site now.



**S.R:** Do you know what happened to the hotel?

**W.A:** The hotel was just torn down.

**S.R:** Lack of business or...?

**W.A:** I think, more or less, lack of business. It was funny, it was a far better hotel of the two. It was...the one that's there now, the frame hotel, the old McLeod House...yet the McLeod House for some reason really got the big end of the business. I don't know why. The other one wasn't getting enough work and taxes kept going up, and up, and up, and finally they...it was sold and torn down. And then the Brewery was built in there, the Brewer's Warehouse. Then on the other side of the railroad track, going back when I was a very small boy, there was a grocery store in there, and that was run...the owner that run it, his name was Dick Hardison. It was groceries only, and they had a bake shop in the back. And they had a one horse wagon that used to go around the country and peddle groceries if they were ordered, and bread. Next to that I guess, was a plumbing shop, that was run by Ben Zavitz. It's...the building is still there...I can't think of the fellow's name, the electrician that's in there now. Then there was a poolhall there, and barbershop run by Frank Clark. It was burnt out in the second big town fire. And then there was a bank in there called the Royal. I think it was the Royal Bank. It was also burned down. A store on the corner...I don't know what the name of that street is. It's the corner where the post office is on the corner of now. It...Don Kinsmen had a store there, and McMorrans had a good men's furnishings store in there for years. McMorrans was there first. It burned down in the second town fire. Then going the other way, on the corner where Cameretta's Store is now, north, the store was there and a lady ran it by the name of Mrs. Holmes Anthony. She had a dry goods store and also a millinery shop connected with it. She made ladies hats in there. Very nice hats too, for way back in the styles of those days. Then next to that, there was a little insurance office. Alan Collard was in there I guess the last that I remember of. And he was there when it burned down. Next to that there was a big drugstore and it's there yet, only he rebuilt, The drugstore's still in the same place. At that time this drugstore was Schwartze's, Jack Schwartze's Drugstore. It burned down. Then there was a post office in there. It...and a post office on one side and a shoestore

on the other side, a combined store. It was run by Murray Hibbard. It burned. I think, I think that was the last of the stores and houses that was in along there at that time. There has been a couple new ones built in there that was vacant property. Don Kinsmens and Bill Quinseys, they are the stores there now, new stores, but they were vacant property at that time. Then on the corner of the next block, I don't know what the...I should know after living here eighty years, I should know the name of the streets, but I don't. I don't think a lot of them have any street signs up on them now yet today. But there was a store there called Boxen's Store, run by Harry Boxen. It was, I think mostly men's furnishings and groceries and shoes. A shoe store in the back combined with that...a house out on the north side where he lived in. Then there was several houses along in there. As I got down on the corner of the main street and the Dominion Road, and on the corner there, it would be the south-west corner, there was a, where Newmans Store is there now, that used to be an undertaking establishment in there. The fellow that ran that, his name was Milton Brewster. And after he got out of there, it was put into a store. That takes us down to the corner, and then there was a big brick house on the opposite corner, and Jessie Finch lived in that. It was torn down and the big new bank is there, the Royal Bank is on the other corner now. I think that cleans up the north...I mean the west side of Main Street. Then going back, I don't think there was anything much 'till we got to the store beside the railroad track. Ward Disher owned that and ran it at that time. I think he had...yes I know he had, men's wear there and groceries. Then later Harry Benner went in there and Seymour Rubel. It's still there. Then on the other side is the McLeod Hotel. It's always been, as far as I can recall back, the McLeod Hotel. But my Uncle Bill Athoe...his name was Bill Athoe too...he owned it and ran it for quite a few years...a lot of years in fact. The McLeod is still there. Then next to the McLeod was the hardware shop, and it was owned and run by a family by the name of Stone. I don't know what their first name was...I believe it was A. L., but I wouldn't say for sure on that. But the last name was Stone. That's where Tom Jone's Law Office is now. That building has a new front on it now of course. Then next to that was the big stone building there, that was the old original Imperial Bank. Then next to the bank

is Ward Sherk's, the son of this Hugh Sherk that I was telling you, that the nice windows were put in in honour of. Ward Sherk's Hardware Store, it's still there...hardware and furniture. Next to that was Beeshy's China Store. And then there was a couple of old houses in there and the old implement sales barn like. They were all torn down and a new bank put in there. And then next to the bank, there was a butcher shop, and that...as far back as I can remember, the first man that was in there, his name was Keiffer, who ran a butcher shop. The building is still there, run by Mrs. Cooper. Later she issued car licenses in there. Then next to that there was a little new building put in there. McMorrans put it in after the big fire, when McMorrans store burnt, they went over there and built a smaller place in there. And that's where Natalie Morgan runs it in there now...a gift store. Then next to the gift store is Davidson's Fruit Shop in there now. Then on the opposite side of Davidson's, on the opposite side of the corner, is...Jerry Davidson up here, had an electric store in there, sold electrical appliances for quite a few years. I don't know what's in there now. Something new's in there...books and gifts I guess. I don't know, I haven't been in it for years. Then it's all houses in there after that, I guess, down as far as the United Church. That's...and then going on down past the United Church a ways is the new Fire Hall that had been built in there of course. It's been there quite a few years too, now. It must...

**S.R:** Approximately?

**W.A:** Oh I would say approximately twenty-five years maybe.

**S.R:** Where was the old Fire House located?

**W.A:** Well the old one was built in behind the...it was built in behind the Davidson's Fruit Shop, on the, I guess that would be Disher Street. It's on the...one behind the fruit shop anyhow.

**S.R:** Do you remember who started, who built the Fire Department, who the chiefs were, the approximate year when it was started and what the equipment used to be?

**W.A:** Well, they had old hand-fighting equipment with the self pumps. Two or three men on big pumps on the original one, but then they got some old Model T Fords that were, come in along later and kept building up...and had some big newer ones, still newer ones. I don't know what the later ones that they have now, the name

of the make of them are, but the original chief that I can recall is Warren Baker, better known as Corkey Baker. He was the chief, the first one I can recall there.

**S.R:** Do you know approximately when?

**W.A:** No, I don't. Corkey's about my age, he's dead now. I would think that we would have been thirty or thirty-five, probalby thirty-five at that time, that would be fifty years ago that he was probably near it when he was chief. They've had several since.

**S.R:** You mentioned about this second fire in Ridgeway a couple of times. What were the first and second fires?

**W.A:** Well, the first one I was twelve years old. That's when I told you I rode in on my bicycle to it in there. And the next one I was contracting, married and contracting, and I was building a, stuccoing a house out on Number Three Highway, up near Cherry Hill Blvd., Cherry Hill Golf Course, when we heard the fire sirens all blowing. We could see all the smoke. We didn't know what it was. And we were stuccoing this house and stuccoing is a job that you can't quit. You've got to...when you're starting one side you've got to finish that side or you show a lap when you join onto it. So we couldn't stop and we didn't, weren't able to 'till we finished...and was going home from work and got into town, and here the whole town, the west side of the road was burned out, and a lot of the buildings on the east side of the road were damaged...like Sherk's Hardware Store there, the windows were all either burnt out or blown out with water hose fighting the fire you know, and was damaged more or less. But anyhow it was saved, it didn't burn down. The same with Beeshy's China Store. It was damaged with water. I think the hotel was damaged some. A lot of the belongings from different places were taken and carried from the stores óver to the store on the...next to the railroad track, which is the one that was run by Harry Benner I guess at that time. But everything was carried from one store up there and put in there and what a mixup. When it came time to dividing it up, they didn't know what belonged to this one, or what belonged to the others, or anything. It was quite a mixup. But I guess they got it straightened away. If anything was lost it was likely paid for by the insurance companies.

**S.R:** Would you know how it got started or was there any...?

**W.A:** I don't know how it got started but I know where it started. There

was a little store on the back of McMorrans. A fellow by the name of Whitey Roberts, a return man, run a bicycle stand or shop back in there. He sold bicycles and repaired them. My youngest son Bob worked in there and helped him...more or less fixing wheels and whatever he could, and repairing them. It started in the back of that shop. What caused it I don't know. My son was home to dinner when it started, and he was on a bicycle, and he ran down our road, down on his bicycle. Rudder's Store was on the other corner then, at the time of the second fire, that's where Mrs. Holmes Anthony was in the first one. He peddled down there quick and jumped off his wheel and stood it up against, like a little garage, that Camerettas owned. In his excitement over helping Whitey get stuff out of his building, he forgot about his wheel, and when he went out to get his wheel, the tires and everything were all burnt off of it. But, so it started in there. When we got there on our way going home from work, they were working on the, fighting the fire in the front of that building, which was McMorrans at that time, and the men were up there on ladders. It had tin siding on it and they had these big axes with a spike on the one side and an axe on the other, chopping holes and breaking holes through the tin siding. It was all burning in the, between the floor and the ceiling, in between the joist, and they couldn't get at it to put it out,..and they were cutting holes in between every joist and squirting water all the way back through there. It was a losing cause. They couldn't keep up with it, and it finally got the best of them and burnt that store down, and the barbershop, and the hardware store. Everything's out but Hilborn's. There was a driveway there going back in, and they were able to cut it off there at that driveway. Hilborn's Drugstore is at...a dry-cleaning establishment in that part of the building now, and a real estate office in the other side of it, in the building. That was the last...that building was the only one left in the block from the railroad track north.

**S.R:** And all the rest were gone?

**W.A:** All the rest were cleaned out, yeah.

**S.R:** What did the Ridgeway area have to offer in sports?

**W.A:** Well, we had practically, I think the same at that time as they have now. We had a rugby team here, and baseball, two or three horseshoe courts where they used to have electric lights and you

could pitch horseshoes at night...of course the poolhall. We had a bowling alley at that time. The bowling alley was in part of what I said was the implement sales barn. I don't think there was anything else.

**S.R:** What kind of special events?

**W.A:** We had a dancehall up above one of the stores that burnt down. One of the big stores had a full size dance hall up there. The Oddfellows, which they called the Three Link Club, the Three Links with the Oddfellows emblem...they called them. They used to advertise or send out invitations to the Three Link Club Dances and they were all sponsored by the Oddfellows. But the...

**S.R:** What about this annual thing between Stevensville and Ridgeway, could you please describe what it was?

**W.A:** Well, they called that the 24th of May, they...what do they call...what's the 24th of May...it's Victoria day is it? I think it's Victoria Day, Queen Victoria's birthday, I think. They had...it was an annual affair for years. It started out early in the morning on a farm down on Nigh Road, called the Engelhart Farm, and there was a race track there, in there...a horse race track. It started out in the morning by having horse racing there, and the races were all sulky races. Trotting horses you know, not running horses, trotting horses. Oh, and there was a lot of people around here that had a little money and for, just for a hobby, had a trotting horse or a pacer, and they used to enter them. That was the first thing in the morning. Then in the afternoon they went to Stevensville for all the other games. The running games, the rugby, and baseball...all that was held in Stevensville. Of course the...like I said before, all these things were allotted on points. There were so many points given for each sport, and then whoever received the most points at the end, got this big urn...the big sterling coffee pot.

**S.R:** Could you tell me the story behind the coffee pot?

**W.A:** Well, when they first started the competition off between the two villages, this Mr. Beeshy that had Beeshy's China Store in the centre of the block, on the east side of Main Street, he donated this coffee pot. And I suppose he got it at cost because he sold that stuff in his store. It would have cost a lot of money even at that time because it was sterling silver, and the framework that it rocked in to pour it, being it was big and held a lot, it was heavy, and the weight

was all carried in this rocker. He donated that, and then the storekeepers and things used to give, donate prizes for running, and jumping and things. I don't know who they were anymore. I think pretty near every one of them gave some, contributed something to it. But the main thing was this big cup that they kept for...the big coffee pot that they held for the year. That seemed to be the one that they got in the fights over, and all this, trying to be the winner.

**S.R:** Is it still around?

**W.A:** That big coffee pot? Yes, our Lions Club has it. It's been all refurbished, you know, like I was...that comment that I cut out of the paper that Ted Hibbel had put in.

**S.R:** And what was that?

**W.A:** Well, it was this big sterling silver coffee pot and it was donated by Mr. Beeshy. It was held for years by this Ridgeway man by the name of Stokes. He was the captain of the Ridgeway team. He was holding the cup the last year when it kind of fell apart and wasn't continued any longer. He moved away to Brampton, Ontario and took the pot with him. When he was pretty near on his death bed and knew he wasn't going to live very long, he brought it back down, and Mr. Ben Zavitz, the postmaster, advised him to take it to the Lions Club, which he did. The lions have been holding it every since. Ted Hibbel, he saw it, and what a horrible mess it was, all black, and you wouldn't know whether it was an old lead coffee pot to look at it. After he got it all fixed, it had a few dents and things in it that was all taken out, and all finished, it was a beautiful thing. We still have it. It's in the cabinet in our lion's Office. Well know, we keep it there all the time, under lock and key of course, so...

**S.R:** It's valuable now.

**W.A:** So as nobody can break in...that would be one of the first things, if they broke in, they would make off with I would think.

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

**W.A:** Yes, I remember that. We used to take a gibbets down there. I remember taking a big, big pumpkin down there one time, and got first prize for it, and won sixty cents.

**S.R:** Was that a lot then?

**W.A:** Well, it was a small country fair and they didn't have...all the money they had was what was contributed by the Bertie Council here.

That was our own little local council, and I think maybe Fort Erie donated a little towards it at that time too, and maybe Stevensville...no, I don't think Stevensville, they were in with our council. Crystal Beach they have their own. They probably donated some. They didn't have a lot of money. They couldn't give twenty-five thirty dollars, or something for a huge pumpkin, they...sixty cents, well sixty cents was a lot of money at that time. You could buy a brand new pair of shoes for a dollar and a half.

**S.R:** Do you remember the years approximately it took place?

**W.A:** The Bertie Fair?

**S.R:** Yeah.

**W.A:** Well I don't know just exactly when it started, but when I won the pumpkin prize, I was in the...I would be about fourteen. That would be fourteen, and I'm born in 1902, that would be what?...about 1916. About 1916, I guess.

**S.R:** How many years after that did it continue?

**W.A:** Well, it actually was put out of business by the Welland County Fair. The county started this fair in Welland at that time, then and of course it was much larger, and the prizes were much greater...and who wants to go to a little fair like Fort Erie when the other one...twelve, fourteen miles away...all the exhibits started going over there. It was big. They had big buildings there, and good horse races, and cattle, sheep, chickens...everything exhibited over there which was more or less lacking down here. Outside of vegetables, and apples, and fruits, and the horse races...the horse races was the drawing event for down at the Bertie Fair. They used to have some excellent races there. Horses came from all the way up through as far as Chatham down here, west, and run and entered in the races down here. They used to have wonderful-trotting horse races here.

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

**W.A:** Yes, numerous times. Erie Beach started ahead of Crystal Beach, and was a very nice beach. There used to be a little railroad track ran from Fort Erie, and they used to come over on the ferry, and get on this little railroad, and run up the...ride up the Erie Beach. Erie Beach had a regular zoo in there, animal zoo. Not animals...of course not elephants, or big ones like that, but sheep and goats, and rabbits, and all smaller animals, all kinds of smaller animals,



and birds, and peacocks, and everything there. It used to be a big attraction. I used to ride a bicycle from our farm down there seven miles, two or three times a year, just to go down there and take in the rides, and see the animals, and rollerskate,...dance a little bit later, when I got old enough to dance. They had a nice dance hall there. Then Crystal Beach started up and they had the Canadiana, and this Americana that plied between Buffalo and Crystal Beach. It was an hour run, and they had good orchestras that played on there, and you could dance all the way over, or all the way back. It had a bar and you could buy drinks on it. And the boat ride actually coming over here, put Fort Erie...Erie Beach out of commission. They couldn't compete. People went for the long boat ride as...

**S.R:** That was a big part of the entertainment right there.

**W.A:** That was in the days before the automobiles were on the market. There was the odd one, but very few. I can remember running the length of two fields to see the...my first auto that I heard coming down Ridge Road, from Ridgeway, going out to see it. I heard it blow the horn and knew what it was. I'd heard about it and ran two fields to get down there and see it. All it was was an old buggy more or less, just a buggy with hard rubber tires about that wide, and that thick, and went boomp, boomp, boomp.

**S.R:** It had a motor on it right?

**W.A:** It had a motor, two horse powered. A fellow by the name of Herbert Haun run a planing mill at Crystal Beach owned it. I don't know what in the world ever become of it but...

**S.R:** You mentioned the little railroad going from Fort Erie to Erie Beach, would you remember the name of the railroad?

**W.A:** No, I don't. Unless it would have been the Erie Beach Railroad, I don't know whether that was right or not. It plied back and forth for years while Erie Beach was running. Of course soon as Crystal Beach started, that big Canadiana, and Americana running back and forth, and it was only a...forty-five cents one way for a boat ride. I know later years when it was still running, I used to take my three boys and go down there on a Saturday afternoon and get on that, ride over to Buffalo and never get off it...stay right on and come back to Crystal Beach, just for a nice cool boat ride.

**S.R:** How much was it then?

**W.A:** Oh, when I started going, I think it was up around fifty-five cents

or something, very reasonable. Beings it was cool, and a nice ride, and they could dance free, back and forth to the music...why everybody started flocking up here and left Erie Beach. The railroad couldn't pay for itself, couldn't make enough to pay for the operation, and it had to close up. Bardols that owned and operated Erie Beach...Bardols...I don't know what his name was...it was Bob Bardol's father. They had the...they were forced to close up too. At one time there was a great big hotel on the lake front there at Erie Beach, a beautiful big place...dormer windows on the roof. Every so far there was a dormer with a window, and every one of the dormers was a room in there...all looking out over the lake.

**S.R:** Was that the dance hall?

**W.A:** No, that wasn't the dance hall, that was the Erie Beach Hotel. The dance hall was just like any other dance hall, just a big dance hall, and confection stands in along the side where you could go and buy pop, nothing hard of course. You could buy pops, or I guess cigarettes, and candy and chocolate bars.

**S.R:** This Erie Beach Hotel then, it was right in the Erie Beach Amusement Park?

**W.A:** It was part of the park. It was owned I guess by the Bardol Company. Mr. Bardol and his sister...I don't know what...I can't think of her name now. I did know it because I used to do a lot of work for them later. They owned it. It burned down, and I don't know...you can't say whether things are set on fire or not, but it wasn't paying that's for sure.

**S.R:** It was suspicious.

**W.A:** It was under suspicion at that time, yes...but it couldn't be proved that it was torched. It was a real nice building, and bath houses on part of it under in the ground floor where you could rent a bathing suit. They had a beautiful big pool there. The reason for that was the stoney-bed lake bottom...very uneven, and rough stones. It was an all cemented bottom in there, and a big high wall, and they pumped the water from the lake over the top in there. Later years it all went to pieces. It wasn't drained in the fall and filled up with water, and froze, and expanded all the walls, and broke them all down. They're probably out there in the water yet, some of those walls. I imagine they are. I have never been out in there.

**S.R:** You mentioned rides and different attractions that Erie Beach

and Crystal Beach had to offer...

**W.A:** Well the rides...

**S.R:** Pick one, Erie Beach or Crystal Beach, and describe some of the rides.

**W.A:** The...I would say the coming attraction in both places for kids would be the Merry-Go-Rounds, and the kids used to flock on the Merry-Go-Rounds. Of course the bigger kids, the young fellows and girls went for these coasters, the giant coasters and things. They had dance halls in both places and they had roller rinks.

**S.R:** Was the dance hall and the roller rink...in Crystal Beach...both inside the park itself?

**W.A:** Both inside the park at that time. Later the roller rink moved outside the park. The roller rink is there yet today in operation on the north side of Erie Road. But at that time it was in the park, and the dance hall was in the park. The old dance hall was turned into a restaurant, and eating pavilion in there and there was a big sandhill, a huge sandhill there. When you went down on the midway you couldn't see the lake for the sandhill. Then they came in there with big pumps, and they started pumping water from the lake up onto the sand, and were forcing the sand out. In other words, they washed all that big sandhill out into Lake Erie, which the waves carried it away and flattened it all out...with big hoses and pumping water through it. Then they built the big dance hall on the site made by pumping the water onto the sand...pumping the sand away with the water, they built this big, huge, open-air dance hall there.

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

**W.A:** It's still there, that's the Ball Room that they're having big bands there...Sammy Kaye, Tommy Dorsey, and I don't know...some of the old bands are still playing there certain nights a week...one or two nights. I think they're there Friday and...I don't know...I shouldn't say if I'm not sure...but I see it in the paper. They're playing there a couple of nights just for attractions...the new owners are bringing them in. I don't know what's there the rest of the week, whether it...probably just closed up the rest of the week. Two nights a week at the...they have these big dances there now and these big drawing bands.

**S.R:** Did you travel by ferry much, the small ferries that took you to Buffalo?

**W.A:** Well, I don't think they ever had a ferry running from Buffalo that I recall, or ever have heard of, running to Crystal Beach. It was just a passenger boat.

**S.R:** No, Fort Erie to Buffalo. It went from Bridgeburg to Black Rock.

**W.A:** The ferry no. No, the ferry was in Fort Erie in the south-end and it went...it was there where...practically at the end of Bertie Street, towards the bottom of Ferry Street on the Buffalo side.

**S.R:** Was that Black Rock then?

**W.A:** No, Black Rock's down where the railroad bridge is.

**S.R:** Oh, so it was the Dummy that went from...

**W.A:** The Dummy run from Fort Erie over to Black Rock.

**S.R:** Were there any stories that you remember about the ferries, or the Dummy, or anything like that?

**W.A:** Well, I used to go with a girl in Buffalo, and another fellow and I, he had an old Model T car and we went over. I stayed with my girl longer than I should have I guess, and he didn't know what happened to me and he had to catch the last ferry back, which was midnight. When I got down there he wasn't waiting for me, he was gone. So I ended up getting the streetcar to Black Rock and came to Fort Erie on the Dummy and hitchhiked from Fort Erie to Ridgeway...walked the biggest part of the way. I did get a little ride.

**S.R:** You made it home by morning right?

**W.A:** I got home by daylight that's for sure. And another time I got on a freight train that I thought, I knew went through Stevensville, which would have only been two miles from our farm. I thought I could get off in Stevensville there, and only have two miles to walk. Where the walk from Fort Erie, straight up Bertie Road, was...our farm was on the corner of Bertie and Ridge Road.

**S.R:** Where's Bertie Road, is it still around?

**W.A:** Do you know Bertie Street in Fort Erie? Well that's Bertie Road. If you follow straight west up it, it takes you right to where I was born, on the corner of Ridge Road and Bertie Road. Well anyhow, I got on that train going to Stevensville, and I thought I could get off in Stevensville and only have two miles to walk. That thing was empty I guess, it didn't have too much of a load, and it was really travelling right through. I got scared and wouldn't jump off, and I went clear to Welland. I had to come back the next day

hitchhiking back and walking...I don't know what all. I didn't get home 'till the middle of the afternoon...I know the next day. That was the last time I ever attempted that.

**S.R:** Speaking of travel, how old were you when you got your first car?

**W.A:** I was sixteen when I got my first car and it was a Model T Ford Coupe.

**S.R:** Do you remember what year it was, how much you had to pay for it...?

**W.A:** It was a 1914, it was two years old when I got it. It was two years old when I got it and I paid four hundred dollars...four hundred and twenty dollars for it.

**S.R:** Do you remember the gas mileage?

**W.A:** Yes, we got about twenty-three or four miles to the gallon. It was a four cylinder of course you know.

**S.R:** Was that considered good gas mileage then?

**W.A:** It was good mileage at that time, yes.

**S.R:** Even considering the speed limits were low?

**W.A:** Well, the speed limits were low and the tires were thirty by three and a half, air tires, and they were fifty-five pound pressure in them. The three and a half inch tire, which would be about like that, and you could get fifty-five pounds of air in them. It was pretty near like riding on a lumber wagon. You just bang, bang, bang, and the roads were all full of little potholes at that time...stone roads and they'd get all cups in them until they were scraped again, and they put the stone back in them.

**S.R:** Do you remember the speed limits? Pick a major road, and where they different in town?

**W.A:** There wasn't much...we didn't have...there was no constables, no cops at that time at all. They had a town constable in Ridgeway and he was just a sworn in guy, sworn in given the authority to make an arrest...by the town council. His name was...the first one I ever knew was there, was Sam Anger, the Town Constable.

**S.R:** Did he have to make very many arrests?

**W.A:** Well, yes the kids raising Cain around, the odd drunk getting in a fight or something...not too many. I don't know...at that time wages were awful low and there were no really big factories around...the nickle plant in Port Colborne wasn't there, Horton Steel wouldn't be there, or any of them. Wages were very low yet everybody was

working. What you wanted to buy was very cheap. You could go out and buy a necktie for a quarter, and now you're paying eight, nine, and ten dollars for one. Like I said earlier, you could buy a good pair of shoes when I was a boy for a dollar and a half, a dollar and sixty cents...and they were good shoes...good, best of leather at that time.

**S.R:** Talking of prices, do you remember the price of gas or the price of milk and eggs and butter, any of the staples?

**W.A:** Well eggs...my mother used to go to...had customers, and her eggs were always genuine fresh, as fresh as they could possibly be. People used to call up and want so many dozen eggs delivered at the end of the week. She used to always go on Saturday. When I was out of school I'd have to drive the horse and buggy for her to deliver around. Then end up with...whatever was left over...customers didn't take, she'd take to Beeshy's Store...that was the dry goods store. They used to take them in as barter at that time. You could trade six or eight dozen eggs in at eighteen or twenty cents a dozen, trade them in for groceries, any kind of groceries you needed. About twenty, eighteen to twenty cents a dozen for eggs, and about thirty-one or two cents a pound for butter.

**S.R:** And gas?

**W.A:** Gasoline, oh I don't know. I don't remember what gasoline was. It was under thirty cents, but I think it was about twenty-eight or twenty-nine cents a gallon, the first gas that I used to get. Then it got up towards forty-some cents, and we thought that was terrible.

**S.R:** Now look at today.

**S.R:** When you grew up you used to live on a farm. Do you recall who the previous owner was, or who built it, or what year it might have been built, or anything like that?

**W.A:** Well, I told you that previously. A fellow by the name of Anger, from Chippawa, came up there and bought the farm. They got the farm and in later years my granddad bought it from a fellow by the name of Anger. I don't know what year that was. I know I was born there and I was born in 1902, so that's eighty-three years ago.

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

**W.A:** Well, we had general farming in there. We had, usually had about ten or twelve head of cattle, milk cattle. Everything was much harder...labour in those days and what it is nowadays. We used

to separate the milk and make cream in the cream separator that you had to turn by hand, like this, and spin it until it got so fast it separated the cream from the milk. The cream would come out one spout and the milk would come out another. You kept the cream a week and then you would have...I guess it soured and then you could churn it and make butter out of it. The churns used to be like a small barrel, about that big around, and a V-shaped framework...one on each side that this barrel used to turn in, and it had a handle that run up and down, and it run on gears that turned this churn 'round and 'round. Sometimes it was an awful job, depending on the temperature I guess more that anything else. If it was too cold you couldn't get butter quick. You'd turn and turn, churn and churn, to get butter, and if it was too warm it would be the same way. My mother used to put cold water in the churn sometimes and ...which it didn't do any damage because it wouldn't turn into butter. Nothing but the cream would turn into butter. When she put cold water in one time and churned it about two or three minutes and you had butter, and the next time you put cold water in you could keep right on for half an hour and you wouldn't get butter...put a little warm water in it and you'd get butter quick. Butter was about thirty-one or two cents a pound at that time. They had a little butter press that you could squeeze it all down into. It had a screen on the bottom and mothers was a leaf, a leaf and I don't know what...something else. When you get it all pressed down in there tight, you pushed on a...like a stem plug that stuck up through the top, and that would push the print of butter out of this mold and it would have this maple leaf and everything on it. You'd buy the papers, and wrap it all up in. You had to do all that, and churn it all, and separate it to get the cream and everything, and sell it for about thirty-one cents a pound.

**S.R:** A lot of work.

**S.R:** What affects did the Depression have on the farm and the family?

**W.A:** The farm...the Depression? Well, I guess it didn't have much of an...more affect on the farmers than it did anyone else. The people weren't working and therefore they were scarce of money and couldn't buy like they had been buying. They bought what the necessities were more than anything else. If you saw some nice...like the other day I bought a basket of huckleberries and I paid a dollar and eighty-

nine cents for a pint. Well you weren't spending money like that in those days in the Depression time.

**S.R:** Did you go and pick your own?

**W.A:** Well, you could go up above Port Colborne and pick huckleberries, yes, in the marsh up there...wild ones, but they were smaller than the domestic berry, but tasted just the same and everything. We used to go up there you know, in the Depression time. I used to go up there, another fellow and I, drive a car...that was an old Model T too...all the way to Port Colborne and pick huckleberries. We had two boxes. One was fourteen and one was eighteen quarts and they hooked together with a rope around them. We used to shove a piece of a board about four feet long, which was planed the corners off nice and smooth, put it through the rope and swung it up over your shoulder and hang on the board to carry it so it would hold it up out of the moss. You'd sink down in the moss that deep. You couldn't carry them in a basket without holding your arms like this (straight out in front) and you can't do that...carry a basket, an eleven quart basket of berries very far because they'd get going down and finally they'd hit the moss and tip the basket and out goes your berries. Then you've really got a job picking them out of that moss. But we used to sell them...I can remember when we were getting thirty cents a quart for those berries. And we were getting...picking...the bushels...we were getting thirty cents a quart, which was better than nine dollars isn't it? Thirty times thirty is nine dollars? Ten time thirty is three and three times three is nine...sure. We were getting nine dollars a day and that was real money at that time. You'd work all day long for...well, the first job that I had after I left the farm was in a quarry where they were crushing stone, down here on the corner of the Garrison, Number Three and Ridge Road in there. They got all the stone out of there to do the Number Three Highway...the first time it was ever stoned. That's going from clay to stone...not tarred yet. We worked in there for...and got a dollar...we didn't get a dollar. We got sixty-five cents an hour shovelling stone from down in the quarry into carts. And the carts were pulled on tracks, railway tracks up on the...lighter tracks of course, up onto a hopper where they were dumped and put through a crusher where they were crushed. Working down there in that hole when it was eight-five or ninety, it would be a hundred and ten down in there



and there wouldn't be a dry stitch on ya for perspiration.

**S.R:** And no breeze to help?

**W.A:** No, you didn't get a bit of breeze. But you were glad of the job.

At that time sixty-five cents an hour was a heck of a lot of money. That's over three dollars a day. We used to work ten hours...ten by sixty-five would be six-fifty. We worked for a fellow that had the quarry. The one at that time was Roy Law. In later years he opened a big one down here at Windmill Point where they go swimming in there. He opened that and operated that for several years afterwards.

**S.R:** Did you know why he stopped?

**W.A:** Why he stopped? Well yes. It was all one sided down here. All these roads that he was getting to build and having to bid on were more or less westerly and this down here...the river here and the lake here, Lake Ontario the other way...all he had was just a small, such a small end here. He went up above Port Colborne and bought a big quarry up there, right next to this huckleberry marsh and opened it up up there. Therefore he was near all the roads all around Dunville, and West Cayuga, and all up through there. He was more right on the spots. It saved an awful lot on transportation.

**S.R:** You mentioned to me before about the Fenian Raid. Could you please describe what you were told by your parents or grandparents about the Fenian Raid, having to do with your farm?

**W.A:** Well, the Fenian Raids were a bunch of Irish people that came over here on an old scow and landed down below Fort Erie from Buffalo. I guess they thought Canada was only a small place and only four hundred of them could come over and take Canada very easily...which they tried, but the people here put up quite a resistance and then the Queen's Own Army were sent down by train to Ridgeway, and marched all the way from Ridgeway out there. The main battle was fought right above, on our farm and the next one to it. That was in 1866. I don't know how many there were of the Queen's Own, but as soon as they found out that they were meeting a lot stiffer resistance then they anticipated, they retreated and went back and got on their scow and left.

**S.R:** The Fenians?

**W.A:** The Fenians left, yeah, and went back to the States. I don't know what they were. Just a bunch like the Irish today I guess, fighting over there and they don't know what they're fighting over. The,

of course I wasn't born then, but the older people around there and talking to different ones....some of the older farmers over there, the next morning before the battle, some of the Fenians went and demanded milk and things from the farmers to have for their breakfast...meat and eggs and whatever they could get. Then they got back up there in where the main battle actually was, right on the Bertie Road. At that time the fences were all rail fences. There was no wire fences at that time, they were mostly oak trees...oak splits very straight. They split them by hand into rails about twelve feet long and four or five inches in diameter. There was one of those on each side of the road. The Fenians...for I guess, two or three hundred yards...took the fence off the one side of the road and carried it over to the other side of the road. These rails were spread apart. It wasn't a solid fence. There were spaces between the rails and they put the fence from one side of the road over to the other side of the road so that it was difficult to shoot between them without the bullets hitting the rail. They were lower powered caliber guns in that day and if they hit a rail it stuck...it didn't go on through. Now, the newer rifles, like I used to go deer hunting with, that I owned, would shoot through that rail like a bunch of cheese now, but they wouldn't at that time. They were behind these rail fences.

**S.R:** Which was almost like a solid wall by putting the two fences together, right?

**W.A:** It was close to solid. It was, due to a little bit of crack, a little bit of crook in the rail...they couldn't get tight together but they would probably be like that.

**S.R:** Pecky holes to look through.

**W.A:** A bullet could hit on the edge of one and go through and find a mark in there all right. It found enough that they didn't last long. They turned, they turned tail and run back for the river and left. They did that. They moved the fence from one side to the other. I know my brother-in-law's father was on a farm. There was one farm Jake farmed that wasn't in the battle next to his. There was no buildings on it. It was a vacant farm in there. They went across this vacant farm over to his place and went in the barn when he was milking and took all the milk that he had milked from the milk cows, and took the pails and everything, and carried it away to drink or make for coffee or something, I suppose. My public school

teacher, I think I was probably in about the senior third in that time. What they call senior third book, and there was a junior third and a senior third. This old Mr. A. W. Reavely, he was old enough that he knew all about it and was telling about...he was the one that told us about them going there and taking the milk away from this farmer to drink. They took the pails and everything, yet never paid them a cent. I guess they were glad they didn't shoot. He also told about finding this one soldier lying with his stomach over this rock, dead there, and about two of them that were wounded. They carried them into our...it wasn't ours at that time...into the house that was later owned...it was run by Angers at that time. Where the Angers were, I don't know. Whether they were still there or not I never heard. They lost an awful lot of blood in there, and I guess it was quite a mess, but probably not near as much as it would have been today. Today they would have fancy rugs and everything on the floor. In those times a couple little scatter rugs or something is about all they had. They could wash the rugs, and scrub the floors, and it would be as good as new.

**S.R:** All the traces were gone.

**W.A:** Years later, when I was quite a good sized lad, I don't recall the fellows name, but I did know it, but I can't recall it now...came down here and he was the Queen's Own Soldier from Toronto. He was just coming down to inspect the Fenian Raid grounds where the battle was fought. He remembered the old Athoe homestead there. He remembered that. We were showing him the holes gouged out of the brickwork on the corner of the house where the Fenians would shoot, and it would hit this brick, and it would glance off and take, cut a gouge out of the brickwork about that deep and about that wide. It just cut a groove right out of it. Showing him that and then we told him...I happened to think about this bullet hole in the window jam. Showed him that and right away he wanted it. My father, beings he was a Fenian...Queen's Own Soldier...

**S.R:** He had fought there right?

**W.A:** He had fought there...been there yes. He told him that if he wanted to go to the lumber mill in Ridgeway and get a board the same width and as long as that one, a good planed, smooth, board, he could exchange it. Which he did. He didn't take the whole board. After he got down below the hole about that far, and was about that far above

the hole, and it split all the way from the hole to the top because it was, the hole was closer to the top than it was to the bottom. I suppose it split the way of the least resistance, which would be the short way up. He went down below it about the same distance, and sawed it off. All he took was the short piece away back to Toronto with him. I suppose he...

**S.R:** A souvenir?

**W.A:** A souvenir of the old battle grounds. But later people used to come from all over. They came over there from Buffalo, and all around, and wanted...said that they heard about...this was the battle ground and wanted to...heard of the bullet holes, the marks that were in the brickwork, and wanted to see them and everything. Why, we had, for years, people coming there. Not now anymore of course. That was over a hundred years ago (the battle).

**S.R:** Do you remember any other stories that your parents or grandparents might have told you involving the history?

**W.A:** Regarding the battle...the Fenian Raid Battle, you mean?

**S.R:** Or just history. Things that happened when they were younger or anything like that. Stories that they might have just told you, late at night stories, and stuff.

**W.A:** Well, I don't know.

**S.R:** Do you remember the ship yards, which is now the Marina on the Niagara Boulevard?

**W.A:** Yes, very well. I worked there. I worked there in 1918 and 1919 for the Canadian Alice Chalmers Company. They made four boats...three while I worked there and one after I left.

**S.R:** Do you know approximately what years the Canadian Alice Chalmers owned it and if anything was done before they had it?

**W.A:** Well, the war started in 1914, and I think it was going maybe a year or two before they came in there. Probably about 1916 that they started. I didn't work on the first boat, I worked on the next two, and I didn't work on the last one. I worked on the War Badger and the War Weasel, I guess it was. Oh, I guess there was about a hundred and thirty-five or forty men working...easily that many I guess working in there on all the different machine shops and the garage. They had busses that they took workers back and forth to Fort Erie on. They come up there in the morning and put them in...their busses in the garage. They weren't big busses. They probably carry

fifteen to twenty men. They put them in this garage and it was hid in the daytime. They'd work in there...the drivers would work in there all day cleaning them, and polishing them, and doing whatever they could. A machine shop, a blacksmith shop, pump house...

**S.R:** What was the pump house for?

**W.A:** Well, the pump house pumped water for any of the, anything that needed water there. The bathroom...they had a bathroom that used water at that time. They pumped water for that out of the slip into a, up into a tank. The tank was on a trestle, or a pedestal, or a tripod actually...a four legged tripod up in the air about thirty or forty feet. They'd pump it up into that, and then after that it was gravity. It would...the weight of the water in the tank would force it through the lines so all the other buildings where any was required, would get it. My brother and I worked there. We drove a horse and cutter in the winter and a buggy in the summer down there. There was a small barn owned by the ship yards across the road on a different property though, but they owned it and we could put our horses over in there . It was warm enough...I don't think we even had to blanket the horse in the winter. But coming out, we had to punch a time clock to get out, and also going in in the morning. We had to come out around the offices, up to where this time clock was. To do that we had to pass this big trestle that held this big water tank up on top of it. One night they got an, oh, terrific wind. The tank up there, being large like it was, got so much weight against it, it pushed on the tank to the east. I guess the pressure, it was so strong, it got it tipping a little bit, and then the water run in the tank that way and kept putting that much more pressure. Finally, the leg on that side buckled, the tank upset and came right down. The next morning when we went in, here was the tank all smashed to pieces in the driveway. All the windows were out of the office and everything because of the water hitting the ground and went sideways.

**S.R:** Like a tidal wave?

**W.A:** Yes. It took all the windows and everything out of the office there. That was in 1918 or '19. Up until 1920, I left in 1920.

**S.R:** And it was still...oh yeah. You said there was one more boat built after you left.

**W.A:** It turned out to be a lake freighter and plied the Great Lakes. It

didn't get into any of the army work at all, war work.

**S.R:** Do you recall your wages?

**W.A:** Yes. My...when I started there I don't know whether or not...when I started I don't recall...or when I was leaving I was getting sixty-five cents an hour. At that time I was running a drill and a reamer, drilling any hole that wasn't punched out in the punch shop, you'd have to put up what they call an old man...it was a...and you put your drill in between them...a screw in it where you'd screw it and put pressure on it and it would force your drill through the steel. Spinning by air of course...air driven. Sixty-five cents an hour I was getting. I think that was probably when I was leaving. I don't remember what I started in at. I was there three years...'18, '19' and part of '20...close to three years. I was there and the boss came and asked me if I'd go and ride the ship in when it was launched as a test crew. Each one of the hatches had a ladder from the top all the way down to the bottom floor. These were oil burning ships and they had a double floor on the bottom...a rolling keel floor like. That was all subdivided off into compartments of about three feet square. But they had a space left open, a small space left open at the lower floor. That was for the oil to pass back and forth. But these bulkheads in there kept it...on a rough water, waves couldn't get it, slopping in there and roll the ship over. It kept the oil from slopping. We were working on that and the...I think that there must of been close to a hundred and forty-five, fifty, thirty-five, something like that, men working on all the different branches of it. What...there was something you asked me about. Oh yes. About this launching. He asked me if I would like to go in on a test. I didn't know what he meant exactly and he was always good to me and very good and I didn't dare say no. So I says, oh yes. So there was a ladder went up to top of these hatches to the top deck, and soon as it was in the water...they launched them all in sideways on great big, about sixteen inch square timbers, all just saturated with grease...just as much grease...an inch of it thick, piled along on the top edges that they were going to slide on. When they got ready to launch, they had a man on each side of that timber with big, I think, ten pound sledges, and they were driving these wooden wedges between the boat and the skid. As they got enough...they got these driven in tight enough, the wedges started moving the boat. Then as soon as the boat moved and got

on that grease, they would slide sideways right in and kind of rolled over, and tip, and drop into the slip, and they rocked back and forth. We weren't supposed to go down there to go through on the inspection until after it quit rocking. Well, I remember when I went down the ladder, it was slipping back and forth on the hatch yet. We had to crawl through from one hole to the next hatchway where there was a solid partition. The reason for that being that there could possibly have been a rivet that was skipped...that wasn't driven and water would be spouting up in there. While it wouldn't be sufficient to sink the boat, it would take an awful lot of pumping to get it out and keep it out. A fellow would get a...they'd have to get in there and thread it with a pipe threader and screw a...instead of putting a rivet, they couldn't put a rivet in because the water would make it cold and they couldn't rivet it. So they'd have to put in a screw-in plug and then batter that over a little on the inside. So that's what I had to do, was crawl from this one hatch over to the other. Water had raised. It leaked down through there into these crawl holes in there and got it all rusty in there, and when we come out, what a mess. Our pants were just black, dirty rust and our shirt and everything. We all put up such a kick to the boss that he went and bought us each a new shirt and a new pair of trousers, and gave them to us free. A while ago we were talking and I was talking about the man I met, the superintendent, and I couldn't think of his name. His name is Sampson, Bert Sampson. He lived in Fort Erie down at Cozy Dell.

**S.R:** Where's Cozy Dell?

**W.A:** Cozy Dell is about a mile on down the river from Fort Erie. I guess it's all called Fort Erie now, but at that time it was called Cozy Dell, part of it down in there. We all got a new pair of trousers and a new shirt out of it anyway, for our dirty mess crawling through there on our hands and...more or less on your knees and your elbows. What we had when we went through there was a hammer and four or five wooden plugs, down to points up to about an inch in diameter at the top end. In case we did find a rivet that was out we had to stick the point of it down there and drive it down in tight with this hammer to stop the leak temporarily 'till they could get at it to get in there with a drill...not a drill, but a threader, and thread this hole so that it was able, they were able to screw the plug into it.

I don't know whether they found any or not but there was none in my section, fortunately for me anyhow. It was bad enough the way it was without water coming in yet.

**S.R:** Was that the first thing that was done there, the four ships being built by Canadian Alice Chalmers, or was there anything done in years before that at the ship yards?

**W.A:** Well, in 1907...I can remember it but just barely, I would be only five years old...they built, I think it was called the A. B. Ossler. Either A. B. or E. B. It was built there. I don't know...it cost so much after the one was completed they never started another one until the war was on in 1914. It started I guess, about 1916. They...well they might have started in '14. It was '16 before they got operating anyhow, building the first boat in there. And they built four in there after that...three while I was there and one after.

**S.R:** Do you recall the community that was known as Shipyards, Ontario?

**W.A:** Well, that was...they just called it the Shipyards. It was just called the Shipyards because that was where they made ships. It was the only one between here and Chippawa. It had this boarding house there, where the men could board there. I guess they'd most likely be single men, boarded in there and had their meals and everything there. It was called the Green Goose. And there was a store there where they could go and buy chewing tobacco for the chewers or the smokers, and groceries or anything. I guess men's working apparel more than anything else, heavy work shirts and trousers, and boots, in the store. I think that was about all. There was a couple of farm houses right near there too, but I don't think they had anything to do with the plant operations.

**S.R:** Smuggling. Could you tell me what you recall about smuggling or stories you were told about smuggling, or anything like that?

**W.A:** Well, my dad and one of the other neighbours used to smuggle oil from Buffalo across and...is that the one you would like to hear? They'd go over and they'd get six or eight barrels of oil on a sleigh in the wintertime and bring it across with a team of horses with sharp shoes, so they wouldn't slip on the ice, and bring it back over and...I don't know...they saved a lot. Oil was a lot cheaper over there then it was here. I don't know what they saved. They saved a lot and made it worth while. Anyhow, in smuggling...I guess...I don't think they had anyone watching, partolling for it or not, I never



heard of that...anything like that. But I know the one time I heard my dad say that, when they came back, there was a crack in the ice that always...because of expansion you know, a crack that ran from Point Abino to Windmill Point. It's always there every year. When I used to go fishing out there that crack was always there. They used to have two planks out there, one on each side. When we went out, if it was open we put one on this side over to get across on, and then throw it back. So whichever way we were going we always had a plank to get across on. Usually it never opened up more than about fifteen to twenty inches. But one time due to a bad wind or something, it opened up pretty near four feet, and travelled north...south...it travelled south. When they come back with this load of oil, the horses got up there and the horses where afraid to get across the crack. They had to get across because that's the only way they could get home. So they let the horses take a good look at it and they circled around and went back out around a hundred yards maybe, or so, got the whip after the horses and had them right up on a dead run so they couldn't stop. Because the weight of the oil pushing them, they'd have to go. When they got to the crack they jumped and the sleigh went boomp, boomp and didn't break through or anything, but they got over the crack and got home with their oil. But, I don't know, I guess that was a going concern for a lot of the farmers around at that time. There was probably a lot of them smuggling. That's the only one I heard my dad tell about was this one. He was I think, only about fourteen or fifteen years the time that that happened. He was riding with an older neighbour and the older neighbour was an old hand at it.

**S.R:** Do you recall any of the rum-running days?

**W.A:** Rum-running? Well, yes. The rum-runners are...it was dry in the States at that time and most of the booze that they did drink was made, I understood, up in the state of Connecticut. A lot of rum-runners here...you could export it. You could get a bunch, buying it from a liquor outlet here for exportation. They had exportations made to Puerto Rico and all over, and yet they couldn't get there with these small boats. But they didn't care. They...selling the liquor, were making it out for wherever they told them. They used to start out after dark to go to Puerto Rico and they'd go out and circle the lake out here before dark, and they'd go out and circle the lake

until it got dark and come back down the Niagara River and go over to the other side and unload it and it ended up in all the speak-easy's and everything in the States to be sold over there.

**S.R:** All the what to be sold? Did you say speak-easys?

**W.A:** Speak-easys they called them. Bootleggers, they were selling it illegally because they couldn't get a license to sell it at that time, but they'd still sell. They'd get a lot more for it than they would at a licensed house. I know, I worked for one fellow down in, his name was Sullivan down in Fort Erie, up towards Erie Beach and he and his two brothers were rum-running all the time. Of course, they knew me from being a contractor and heard of me so much that they knew they could tell me, or if they were operating under my nose and I'd never say anything. They were running all the time. They took all their booze in cloth bags, in bottles and bags. They'd have all these bags roped together with about three feet of rope between each bag. When they got going over down the river, getting over near the States...the rum-runners used to be plying the river up and down patrolling. Of course their boats would go a lot faster and they could catch the rum-runners. They used to when one, they'd hear one coming, they'd have this, maybe six or eight bags of booze tied on the ropes on the back of that boat. When they'd hear...and be towing it...and they'd hear a rum-runner coming, they'd take a knife and cut the rope and let all the booze sink to the bottom. They knew from the shore, they knew the shore real well and they'd know pretty near right where they cut it loose, within a hundred feet or so maybe. The next day they'd get out there with big grappling hooks which are about eight inches, and three of them...one this way, and that way, and one this way...and they'd drag those back and forth in there. Eventually they would catch the rope hooking this bag to this bag. Then they'd be able to pull the whole bunch up. Then they'd receive it all that they'd cut loose the night before. Of course they made...it was a rough racket but I guess they made a lot of money on it. But he used to tell me that because he knew I would never say anything. They're all dead now...and want to even repeat it now because they were a pretty rough bunch of customers. Then the...I know another fellow that, due to working on a house up at Burnaby, above Port Colborne. They had a gravelled road there, gravelled with lake shore gravel, which is little round stones.

It won't pack together, it will...unless it's mixed with dirt or something. If you get into it with a vehicle your wheels are going to turn in on it and you're apt to burry yourself and get stuck. We were working up at this Burnaby on a house, and we were staying...beings it was up out twenty miles to drive, we were staying up there, living in the garage. We built the garage first and we were living in cots, and cooking on an oil stove in the garage. We met this Duke...oh heck, what was his last name. I'll get it after a bit...we met him anyhow and he knew us, and we were working there, and he didn't have any fear of us. He was doing the same thing. He would work...he was operating out of Humberstone...it joins Port Colborne. It is Port Colborne now, the same as Fort Erie is all, and Bridgeburg's all one. Humberstone and Port Colborne used to be separate. He was operating out of Humberstone and had a lake shore cottage. He'd go down to the liquor stores and get a whole bunch to ship it out and it was to go to Cleveland New York or someplace and have it down there. He'd circle around until it got dark and he'd come in and store it in his cottage and he'd keep it in there maybe three or four days, just so they wouldn't be looking for him anymore, load it on at night after dark and take off and go down anyplace between Cleveland and Buffalo and unload it someplace where they have people going to meet him. So one night we were...there were three of us sleeping in this garage and about two o'clock in the morning we heard this engine roaring like all get out. We figured it would be Duke alright, or some of his men. So we went out to offer our assistance. When they saw us coming with their headlights, they didn't know us until we got closer...they had one fellow. He was Italian, and he told Wind to get around to the back of the car and watched 'till he found out for sure who we were. And he had a gun, a revolver. We got down there and right away he saw us and knew us and said, oh, it's alright, and called me by name. And he come around and was chucking his gun down in his belt...and the three of us pushing on it we were able to push him out. While he knew we wouldn't do anything, but to be a little bit safe, or keep on the good side of us, he gave us a bottle of whiskey. Well, we didn't go to bed anymore that night, it was about two o'clock in the morning. We ended up getting pie-eyed and went swimming and I don't know what all. So we used to have a lot of fun but...he used to...he was

a rum-runner. Duke, Duke, Duke Els...not Ellsworth. I can't think of his last name anymore. They still have the hotel in Humberstone, right as you go over the Humberstone Bridge. It would be the north bridge in...across the canal in...what is now known as Port Colborne. Well, we used to have a lot of fun. I know we was up there one time, four of us working, and that was after we were building the house. He came along there this one day, and came in and spent the time of day more or less, for a minute or two with us and brought in a case of beer. And at that time we were coming back home. I think we were up doing some repairs or some pick-up work, or something that hadn't been finished. We got pretty well polluted with the case of beer anyhow, and coming home to Ridgeway, the one fellow that was driving had a Model T Touring Car. That's the old fashioned, and it had the side curtains and everything on it. I don't know whether you'd remember them or not. Not likely. Isinglass in the sides for the windows. It was stuff that would bend. It's like the stuff that they have in stoves that you can see fire through or anything. You could see through it but it wasn't stiff like glass. That was what the car was built...had glasses like that...or windows like that. We got pretty near down to Sherkston then and I had...I had a date that night and wanted to get home early and we worked a little later between drinking and finishing. I was wanting to get home and I says to the guy driving, I says, won't this thing go any faster? I can run faster than that's going. He says yeah, I'd like to see ya. I said, let me out. But I got out and was running right along side of it. He let me keep even with him for quite a while and finally started going ahead. He got ahead of me for, quite a little bit ahead, and he stopped and waited 'till I caught up and said, well are you ready to get in or not? The rum-runners all got us into that. We used to have a lot of fun up there.

**S.R:** Do you know anything about the railroad days? When the railroad was really going strong in the area.

**W.A:** Well, there used to be a lot of trains went through Ridgeway here. Freight was terrific at that time. There was no trucks much on the road. All freight was practically delivered by railroad going to Buffalo and back and forth. Oh, there was a lot of trains going through Ridgeway at that time. Now there isn't a one anymore. They're all cancelled out now. They got to run one every hundred years

to keep their franchise, and that's all. So whether they'll ever keep it or not I don't know. But at that time there was a lot of trains going past. Passenger trains were going all the time back and forth to Buffalo, and all the way up to Goderich in Canada. I guess you went all the way to Windsor and Detroit, but you had to change once or twice to get there. But there was a busy time at that time. We had a good station here in Ridgeway. We had two operators, a night and a day operator and they had to work twelve hour shifts.

**S.R:** Do you recall any names?

**W.A:** Well, Albert Yak, he was the senior one and he had the day shift beings he had preference and, oh what was...Kendrick, oh...his last name was Kendrick. He was the fellow that did the night shift.

**S.R:** Do you remember approximately the year of this? A rough estimate on how old you were.

**W.A:** Well, I don't know. I was on the highschool board seven years, and this Albert Yak, the fellow that was day operator, was on the highschool board the same time I was. And the highschool was built in 1927 so Mr. Yak, he was on there then yet, and that was 1927.

**S.R:** So it was before 1927?

**W.A:** Yeah, before 1927. And that's the same station that was later moved to Fort Erie, up near Horton Steel.

**S.R:** Is there one in Ridgeway now?

**W.A:** No, no station. That station's all gone.

**S.R:** There just wasn't enough business for the train to warrant a stop in Ridgeway?

**W.A:** Well, all the freight was cut out, or the biggest part was all cut out. Trucks cut them out. The railroads for a long run...like if you was going to ship something to Winnipeg or way out to the Canadian west, a long run, it was much cheaper to run by railroad than it was by truck, by gas powered vehicles. So they lost the biggest part of it out to trucking lines. I think that's really, probably what put them out here. Not only that, busses put the passenger service out of commission as well. Not only that, trains only stop at certain stations and some of them were quite a long ways apart. There wasn't any between Port Colborne and Dunville for instance. And I'd say Dunville was forty and twelve...twenty-eight miles. There's twenty-eight miles there between stations. Where the bus will let you off at any little side road or anything you wanted to do.

**S.R:** So you would still have to get a bus or a taxi? So even expensewise it would be more expensive using the train.

**W.A:** That's right. The railroads got pinched out of business by trucks and busses. And I don't know whether it will ever come back or not. I thought about that different times myself. If gasoline keeps going up, and up, and up like it is, and soft coal...all the railroads fired with soft coal which is the cheapest kind of coal going. And Alberta's got millions of ton of it out there. A lot of it's...I've been through them and a lot of the mines out there, they're all surface mines. You don't even need to dig down in...tunnel down in the ground for it like they do our copper and gold and the other mines here in, and rock in Ontario. Out there it's all, a lot of it's all surface mines. Very cheap to mine and get, so if gasoline keeps going up for the trucks and things and gets so scarce, it might come back to the railroad some time, and we'll have to go back and come into going by with fire and coal. But I hope I never see it.

**S.R:** With the way things are thought about pollution, that probably won't happen. All the coal smoke in the air and stuff.

**W.A:** Well, I don't know. The...actually I don't think the trains made any more smoke than the busses and trucks do because there's so many more of them.

**S.R:** You were a mason contractor. Is there any big jobs or any jobs having to do with historical things that you'd like to talk about?

**W.A:** Well, in 1940, I had a job building a private home up on the lake front above Point Abino about a mile, for a Buffalo man. He was a contractor likewise. And this was a fireproof building. Building the floor was all made out of what they call flexi-cores, which was about a foot wide and about seven inches deep and there was two three inch holes through them end to end. Those were all reinforced with rods, and they fit tight together on the bottom. They were made in forms that were shaken so that they were as smooth as can be underneath, and they were made like a V-joint on the bottom. Then on the top, the...there was a crack between each one about three quarters of an inch wide and there was a groove in each one, you had to put a beam across the top and bolts and pull them up so they were all one level. Then you poured concrete down there and in two or three days when it got hard, beings they'd go back in the side cracks in each beam, the whole thing couldn't move.

They had to stay perfectly level and it made a nice smooth ceiling and everything. Stairways were all concrete and steel and everything. That was my biggest job. I had eleven brick layers on that, plus five helpers I guess.

**S.R:** Was it something new to build a fireproof house?

**W.A:** Well, it was a fireproof house and it was more or less I think supposed to be an ad for these flexi-cores...fireproof floors, and also soundproof. But anyhow it turned out this fellow was a contractor in Buffalo himself, and he was building the West Seneca Highschool at that time. The brick layers contract run out over there, and they went out on strike. And he'd figured this in at a certain price per hour for the brick layers and when they come back in they got eighty cents and hour more than what he had figured in on the contract. The fellows that run the lifts, engineers, took the freight elevators up and down, wheelbarrows full of bricks and concrete and everything, they got I think a dollar an hour more. And not only that, they got a rider in their contract that they couldn't shift them more than once a day. As for shifting I mean...they could take them off the lift, the elevator took them up and down and put them on a crane that lifted the big stone sills up for under the windows, and swing them around and let them in place. They take them...the original contractor they take and do that. Take them off the lift and put them on the crane, and put them from the crane back on the lift. They couldn't do that in the new contract. If they got through the...putting the sills up at three o'clock in the afternoon, they had to pay them the extra two hours through 'till five o'clock and they didn't do anything. And not only that, they couldn't use the machine. They'd have to get another guy come out and pay him a half a day. So between the two, it put Bill Bornamin through to bankruptcy. He came over there two days in a row and sat there for a couple hours out on the balcony and terrace, just looking at the water. And I said to the men. I said something is the matter with Bill. I says he's not right, he wasn't talking and at the end of the second day he come over and said to me, Bill he said, I've got something to tell ya. He says, it's something that concerns you as well as it does me. He says, I'm going to have to go through bankruptcy on that school job. And he says, I might not be able to pay you Saturday night for to cover your eleven men and your

five helpers and yourself. He says, if you...are you financially situated that you can carry me as long as three weeks at a time? And I gave it a rough thought and I, more or less thinking, well, what am I getting into here? It wasn't that I couldn't financially, I could have done that alright. So finally I said, well Bill, I'll have to let you know about that. I said, I'll let you know tomorrow. So he come over the next day and I told him that I could let him have two weeks anyhow and possible the third week, if I had to. He was as honest as the day was long. He come over at the end of one week and give me so much and the end of two weeks he come over and gave me so much more. Three weeks he gave me more, and when I got all finished I was all paid up and he never owed me a nickle. But he owned property in Canada that, and that's what carried him through over here. Because going through bankruptcy over there, they couldn't attach anything over here. He was having income coming from property and stuff that he owned over here in Canada. He had to go back and start out from a shoestring. He went back into the painting business, which he was a painting contractor originally. Two or three guys and an old beat up van and some ladders, went back painting houses, and anything he could get, working his way back up again. But he...between the loss and, I suppose the humiliation, one thing and another, a year and a half afterwards he dropped dead of a heart attack. He never owed me a nickle, but he could have owed me quite a lot at one time. That was my main big job. But I built the firehall here in Ridgeway and I built the Ridge Dairy in Crystal Beach, and they were good sized buildings too. But there isn't enough big buildings going on down here to keep a fellow busy with many men. Buildings are small and if you have four or five men, that's about all you could get work enough ahead at one time to keep going.

**S.R:** Are there any closing comments, other comments that you would like to make at all?

**W.A:** Well, I don't know. It looks to me as if the future ahead, especially for the younger generation, that...coming on now, that unless they go through college and get a degree of some kind, or get a good trade of some kind, that would be my advice to the growing up young people of today. They need to get a degree in something or a good trade, other than that it looks to me as if they're going to end up



ditch diggers or something for the rest of their life. The competition's too keen.

**S.R:** There's too many people and not enough jobs.

**W.A:** Not only that, but the nickle plant, when they first started up here it was only three companies. They could sell nickle any place they wanted and as much as they could produce. No I understand there is over forty of them. That's in Europe and all over. The competition's keen. It used to be the companies all hated them because they were paying high wages and they were expected to meet their wages. Now the nickle plants hardly keep...are able to keep their own head above the water. In fact, there's talk even of Port Colborne shutting down, and operating only from Sudbury. It might even come to that.

**S.R:** So there's enough nickle that people aren't going to pay the high price now.

**W.A:** Well, the prices have dropped down beings they can't sell it and with wages going up. It's...well everything is changing over. Drastic change is taking place right over night.

**S.R:** Is that all for your closing comments?

**W.A:** Well, I can't think of anything else. I would think though that...like I said to repeat, that I think a young fellow today should either get a good trade or a good education.

**S.R:** If he wants to support himself and a family.

**W.A:** And support himself and a family and keep steadily employed.

**S.R:** Well, thank you very much for the interview Mr. Athoe.

**W.A:** Well, I'm glad you were able to come up and interview me. I'm sorry I couldn't tell you more than I did, but I did tell you a lot, probably half of it's not very interesting.

**S.R:** No, it's all interesting.