

Orleans County Historical Association

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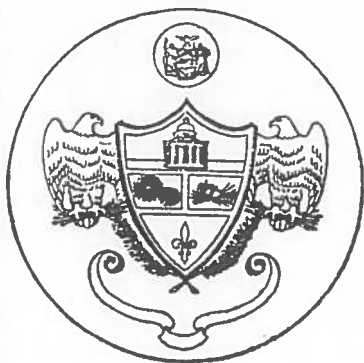
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NAMES

Arthur Waters, father
Ida May Lewis, mother
Harold Waters, brother
Lewis Waters, brother
William Lewis
Helen Dorothy Eckert, wife
Robert Eckert Waters, son
Mary Harmon Hazard Waters, wife
Frank Waters
Dr. LaVern Waters

Harry Tanner
George Bronson
Dr. Arthur Trippensee
President Hoover
President Coolidge
President F. D. Roosevelt
James Farley, Postmaster General
Senator Earl Bridges
Gov. Rockefeller
Bishop Scaife

*Swan Library
4 N. Main St.
Albion*



Orleans County Historical Association

INTERVIEW

Mr. Alonzo Waters

410 West Center Street

Medina, New York

Interviewed by:

Arden McAllister, County Historian

Helen McAllister

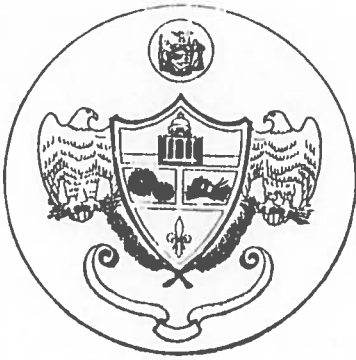
February 14, 1978

June 15, 1978

W Waters (born 1893)

Mc McAllister, A/H





Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

[Signature]
Signed

Feb 14, 1978 ; June 15, 1978
Date

Understood and agreed to:

Cliden R. McAllister / Helen McAllister
INTERVIEWER

Feb 14, 1978 ; June 15, 1978
Date

W I was born at Oak Orchard on the Ridge in 1893. My father was Arthur Waters. The Waters family came into this country from Canada and settled here. Most of them, regretfully, are gone. As a matter of fact the local Waters' name in our segment of the family concludes with Bob and his family. I mean, he has two girls. Lewis has a girl and Harold has two girls. There are no boys to carry on the name after Lewis, Harold, Bob and myself leave the picture. The Lewis family is a family that goes way back to 1756 and it was through this family that I identified, and was one of the organizers in this county of the Sons of the American Revolution. Harry Tanner, George Bronson (who lived across the street from me) and myself organized this group. But this goes back to the William Lewis who was born in Rhode Island, July 10, 1756 and traces the genealogy of the whole family down through my mother and so on. They came into the Gaines area in the middle part of the 19th century and settled near Albion where they have remained since that time. Most of the Lewis family have now scattered or have gone. My mother's name was Ida May Lewis and she died in her 90th year. My father died when he was 76. Then of course, I have my two brothers, Lewis and Harold. My sister died a couple of years ago. So that's as far as my family is concerned. My father was the owner of a small farm and was a cooper, making apple barrels for farmers of the area. He and his brother Frank Waters, father of Doctor LaVern Waters, well known local physician, operated a cooper shop at the time where they, with four or five others, made apple barrels. They started in the middle of the summer and worked through the fall. Then he had a small farm, about 50 acres that he worked.

Mc Where was that located?

W Oak Orchard, just north of the Ridge Road. Do you know where the River Road (once called Creek Road) is? There is a large stone Inn there on the corner. At that time, that was where my Uncle Frank lived. He and my grandfather had a general store there for a good many years. My father's residence was two houses north of there.

Mc Probably the house is gone?

W No the house is still there. The house that I was born in, is not. There was a little house that I was born in that afterwards burned. The Waters' family home is still there. We sold it two or three years ago and the people are fixing it up very nicely. It is right there on the Oak Orchard River Road, just where the road runs down. I attended the public school (a little country school) at Oak Orchard. Then when Professor John Filer came to Knowlesville, I attended the Knowlesville Union School. I was graduated from the elementary school there, went to work that summer for a chap by the name of Woods who had a nursery in the Knowlesville Station vicinity. Really, I had no encouragement and had no particular thought of continuing my education but finally along in, I think October 1908, I did enroll in Medina High School and came here and was graduated in 1912 from the school here. During that time I entered somewhat into both the athletic and cultural activities of the school. I played football, baseball and was on the debating team, and so on and so forth. But during the years that I was at Medina, the principal of the school, Paul Merriman who was a graduate of Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, encouraged four of us to enter there. There was Harry Freeman, who later became quite active in city management work in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was city manager there and finally became city manager in Buffalo before he died. James Campana, who was an attorney, came back and settled in Buffalo and was an attorney there; and a fellow by the name of Robert Coleburn, who afterwards became identified with the Proctor and Gamble Company in Cincinnati, Ohio; and myself. But I only attended one year, and after that I engaged in the life insurance business here in Medina. I was encouraged by a man by the name of Earl Coleburn who was then head of the history department at Miami University while I was there. I engaged in that business until World War I when I entered the Service in 1918 and continued through. I was wounded and returned to Medina in the fall of 1918.

Mc Were you recruited through the Armory here?

- W No I was drafted.
- Mc When you left for the Service, was there a whole contingent that left?
- W Yes. I went from Medina to Fort Dix, and I was only in Fort Dix six weeks before I went overseas. I actually had no training at all. I was a part of the 308th Field Artillery, the 78th Division. The regiment was practically completed. They only needed a few more to fill out the regiment and I was one of them. So I went in the spring (I think it was in April) and I was overseas shortly thereafter. After landing at Liverpool, we went immediately to a camp in France and our first engagement was the Meuse-Argonne. In October I was wounded and I went to a camp in ~~the~~ Dijon. The War was over on November 11th, and afterwards they kept evacuating those medical camps; so I think I was in seven before I finally landed in Camp Mills, Long Island in February 1919, when I returned to Medina. I went then with the Journal-Register.
- Mc May I ask you a little bit more about that? When you left Medina to go into the Service, how did you get to Fort Dix? By railroad? And was there any kind of ceremony or anything with the small group?
- W No. You see each county was required to send a certain amount of draftees, so I went to Albion. From Albion (I think there were 7 or 8 of us)... I don't know whether you know John Cielewicz? He died some months ago... he was one of them; and Oscar Stanton, and a fellow by the name of Francis Hawley out on the Ridge Road. I can't recall the others but there were half a dozen of us from Orleans County who left Albion and went directly to Fort Dix. We were all put into the 78th Division of the 308th Field Artillery.
- Mc Did you have a time there when you were a motorcycle driver?
- W No, I don't recall ever operating a motorcycle. I never had any experience with a motorcycle.
- Mc You were in the Field Artillery?
- W Yes I was in the Field Artillery; a gunner on a French 75 m.m. (a cannon).
- Mc Were you involved in any of the big battles there?
- W The Meuse-Argonne. That was the sector and we were in those

are~~se~~ engagements, which was a major one at the time. Actively we went into training in camp. We didn't get up to the "front" until about July. The following October I was incapacitated. I was hit in the shoulder and received some gas. (On the tape, Mr. Waters stated the month as September. In checking the transcript he made the correction, to the month of October.)

Mc (Examining an official commendation).. That was awarded you?

W Yes. That shows I was wounded. The Purple Heart goes with it. So, I came back to this country and was quartered at a camp near New York and I had a dickens of a time getting out of the Army! I had more trouble getting out than I did getting in! Because of the fact... well, we came back as a "casual company". I don't know the exact number but we'll say 126 men who had not been assigned to the original unit, but were all from New York state. We came back to Camp Mills, New York. We were so near New York that about 50 of them lived there and they just went home! Our company has shrunk, so what they did was to take them alphabetically and I was to the "W's"!! So I was out in nowhere. I wasn't next to anybody. So what I had to do, I got a job in the office and I attached myself to a company and finally got out! (laughter).

Mc Yes that works to a disadvantage a lot of times, to be at the end of the alphabet, doesn't it!

W So then I went with the Journal. Oh, I had some experience with the Journal while I was in school; correspondent to the paper and so on and so forth. I've always had a little flair for that type of work. So, I went with them in 1919.

Mc Who owned it then, Lon?

W There were two owners: W. John Hinchey and William Baker. That was in the spring of 1919. In the fall of 1919 Mr. Hinchey and myself bought the Medina Register, which was owned and operated by Mr. Bowen. We moved the plant from East Center Street. At that time, the Journal was down on East Center Street. It was in one of those buildings that belonged to a fellow by the name of John Kelly, who operated the hotel right there on East Center Street. Yes, that was about where Bramer's store is now.

We were across the street. Do you remember that there were two or three saloons: the Benz Saloon, the Murphy Saloon and the William Batt Laundry and Kenmore Hotel. The Journal was in the small building there. The Journal was organized in 1903 by David Benson and William Baker. Mr. Hinchey, I think in 1907, bought out the Hood and Whedon interest. That fall we bought the Medina weekly Register which was owned and operated by Morton Bowen and we moved up to where we are now, the south part of the building, 413 Main Street. It was just a third of where we are now. So that's where I started my newspaper career. It had been my good fortune as a young man to have had the advise and counsel of several civic and business leaders. One was George A. Bowen, President of S. A. Cook and Co., and another was Robert H. Newell of the Robert H. Newell and Co., and several others. I was much younger than they were, but I guess I had this means of exposing the community to the public through the Journal, that they sort of fathered me and I was identified with a lot of the 1920 and 1930 part of the community that was more or less interesting. It was interesting because of the change in the make-up of the mercantile activity in the town. I can recall when I first started in, there were about 8 or 9 clothiers. Six of them on one side of the street! On the north-west quadrant it started in with George Parkhurst, at that time in the clothing business. Frank Howard was in the clothing business and George Owens, and Adler Crook and Metz, and a fellow by the name of James Sayers and Montgomery and Rook, and Philip I. Brust (tailor). They were all in that one section. There were some others of course, in other parts of the town. Of the grocery stores (which now are confined to your supermarkets) the A and P had three stores at that time in Medina: two on Main Street and one on East Center. There were various others, like the Cooper's, Henry McElwee, Grinnell and Posson had a grocery store at that time, and Arthur Hovey... many more grocery stores than there are now. Then Bill Franchell came along and bought the old Conley store, and the same way with the hardware stores. Hanlon Brothers

which later became owned and operated by Abner Bancroft, and Chase and Breed which now is the Brundage Hardware Store. D.W. Wilson had a hardware store and J.J. Morgan had a hardware store. That is all that I can think of right now, but it shows you the change. Now they are more specialized and particularly limited in what they call the "downtown section". This of course, largely influenced by your supermarkets. My job with the newspaper was largely advertising at that time, so I ran up and down the street each day getting ads. I got to know the community pretty well, various parts of the community. When Medina Memorial Hospital was organized, I was on the committee that organized it, with Mr. Bowen, Mr. Newell and so forth. After the closing of the banks, we organized the Medina Trust Company and I was on that committee.

Mc That was after the Depression?

W Yes. Both banks closed. First the Union Bank, which was Thomas Robbins' bank. That was where Jay's Drug Store is now, on the corner. Soon afterwards the Central Bank, of which Watson Berry was the founder and E. Roland Clark was cashier at that time, and that closed. That was located right where the present Medina Trust Company is now. We were without banks for several months. Matter of fact we had to go to Albion for banking business each day! Then we organized the Medina Trust Company, which became a part of Marine Midland. Of course, during my lifetime I have been quite largely identified with the fraternal life of the community. I was quite active in the Masons. Matter of fact, I was the Master of the Lodge at the time the Temple was built. That was largely through the activities of George Bowen and Bob Newell and myself and a few others. Yes, that is right where it is now located. We built that building. Prior to that, we met in an upstairs room that was owned by the Knights of Columbus. It was practically across from where the Journal is now. In 1925 we dedicated the building, the Masonic Temple, which formerly was the home of the Newell family. Yes, Senator Pitts lived there at one time. It was the same building. The Newell family lived there and the Senator lived there afterwards. It was the same building where the Masonic Temple is now, that is, part of the building; the first part of it. Most of it, of

course, was new structure. We built that and it was dedicated in 1925. I know that because I was busily engaged in some of the activities down there when Bob (my son) was born over in the Medina Hospital. So I went on from there, was District Deputy, and held some other positions state-wide with the Masons. I was active in the Elks. I was one of their youngest Exalted Rulers I guess. I was Exalted Ruler right after I came back from the War. The Elks, at that time, were located right directly across from the Knights of Columbus in their building. They were all grouped there together. Later they went down and occupied the building the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) have now. Afterwards, came up into the Cook building and occupied rooms that were formerly built for the old Alert Club, which was originally a fire company. It eventually became a social club. They sort of fell apart as the interest waned, then the Elks came up there. They were there until their demise, I don't know how many years ago now. But I was Exalted Ruler there and went on to head the state association. So I was quite active in that organization, and the American Legion too. I was one of the founders of the Clark Post, which is now the Clark-Butts Post.

Mc What Clark was this post named after? He was killed in the War?

W Yes. He was the first man from Medina area that lost his life in World War I; James P. Clark. The Post was named after him. Colonel (later became General) John Thompson was its first commander and one of the prime organizers. We organized it in a gathering over at the State Armory. I was the first Adjutant of the Clark Post. We were quite active, then the interest waned until it had its rejuvenation following World War II. Then it became the Clark-Butts Post. The combination, Clark in the first World War and Lieut. John E. Butts who gave his life in the Second World War. He was Jerry Butt's brother. So that organization had its ups and downs. It had a building on East Center Street which it gave up. I've had little or no direct activity with it for a long time because of the fact that I just haven't had the "oomph" to keep up with it! (In conversation, off tape, Mr. Waters stated that he was very active in Medina Rotary Club; with Harry Tanner and Burt Tucker as the founders). The germ of my political career started back when I was young, when I became

interested in community affairs. I would say that probably my first political activity, and yet it is now non-political, was when I became the Postmaster of Medina back in 1926. The Postmaster, whom I won't name now, was unfortunately caught in an embezzlement sort of thing. So the Post Office removed him and told the local Republican organization that they had to name a Postmaster within three days. At that time it was purely a political job. Judge Harcourt (a particularly good friend of mine) called me and asked me if I'd take it, temporarily. So, I went in there and stayed there for 9 years I believe. I was re-appointed by both President Herbert Hoover and President Calvin Coolidge. The appointments were for 4 year terms. In the 1930's Franklin D. Roosevelt was made the President and Jim Farley, who was a very personal friend of mine (thru the Elks) became Postmaster General. So I served about a year under the Roosevelt administration, 'til finally Jim called me one time. I was the last Republican to hold office. He said, "I guess maybe we have gone about as far as we can on this." So I resigned. George Callaghan took my place.

Mc James Farley was quite a personable man, wasn't he? He had an excellent memory and could remember names all over the country.

W Oh yes. He was quite a fellow! Then back in 1946, I think it was, I had the "bug" to go to the State Assembly, so I ran against the incumbent who was Col. John Thompson, in the primary and I was defeated. Two years later I wrote to all the committeemen saying that I was not a candidate. (There was a general rumor that I was going to oppose him again.) But within a few weeks after this letter was written, Col. Thompson died very suddenly and it was the year of the election! The County Committee met and designated me as the candidate. I first started in 1949 and I was there until 1965: that was my last year. I represented Orleans County only. One of the motivations for my not (running again) was the fact that at that time, the re-apportionment placed Orleans County in with several parts of other counties which made it more of a laborious campaigning operation, and also a much wider territory to service. So that was my last year in the State Assembly. While I was in the Assembly, I had

the opportunity of meeting a great many well known people throughout the state. Now it is most frequently that I can pick up a newspaper and read of some prominent person's death and I well knew him in the Assembly. Notice the picture on the wall in back of you? That was my first year there (Albany, New York). There were 150 Assemblymen and I don't presume there are 25 of them still living. Most all that I can look at in that picture, I know have passed away. So going back to Albany as I did a few times, got to be a rather lonesome time for me because the fellow that I knew either were not interested in coming back, or had died. While I was in the Assembly, I was assigned to several committees and I served as Chairman for Education for several years; rather a singular sort of a thing. Earl Bridges, who was a Senator from this area (that was Niagara and Orleans County at the time, the Senatorial District), went to Albany the same time I did, in the Senate. He became, before he became the Majority leader of the Senate, Chairman of Education in the Senate. So he was Chairman of Education in the Senate at the same time that I was (Chairman of Education) in the Assembly. So we had the opportunity of working very closely together. While I was in the Assembly, I became interested in the migrant labor situation here, particularly in Orleans County.... I introduced a resolution asking for a joint legislative committee be appointed to make a study of and see to the farm labor situation... in the state, which passed and I was named Chairman of it. I was Chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Migrant Labor for a number of years. I had the opportunity of seeing a lot of legislation passed, some of which has never been too rigidly enforced but never-the-less, is on the books. But of course, the migrant labor situation in New York State is entirely different now from what it was then. That was before the advent of the harvesting machinery, which has replaced the need for migrant labor. So where there were at one time 40,000 to 50,000 migrants in the state, why that's been reduced to a very few, as you well know, here in Orleans County. We don't have too many any more. So with the reduced number of course the troubles have reduced, but it was quite a job for several years.

Mc During those years were most of the migrants Black or were they Puerto Rican?

W Oh they were nearly all Blacks. We had very few Puerto Ricans at first. They were nearly all southern migrants, southern Negroes. They worked a pattern. They started in Florida and moved up the seaboard as the crops ripened. In other words, the crew-leader would organize the crew of anywhere from 50 to several hundred in Florida and move north. Like in the Colony Camp there would be maybe 500 at one time!

Mc Where did most of the labor come from prior to... this began around the Second World War, I guess when the southern Blacks came?

W Well, we didn't plant the number of field crops and we had much more local labor than we had before they came here. But back in the '30's with the advent of the expansion of the canning companies like H.J.Heinz, General Foods, and so on, which demanded a lot of tomatoes... the tomatoes back when I was a kid on the farm was a relatively small crop. As a matter of fact, commercially I don't think anybody ever planted any. But all of a sudden that area of agriculture exploded and it was largely picking tomatoes that they (the migrants) were imported for. They came along in August and they stayed, and afterwards they went into orchard work. So mostly now they are orchard workers because there is very little field labor for them to do any more. The camps here are reduced to practically nothing to what they were at that time. I don't know that there are any organized camps in the county any more.

Mc Not many I guess.

W I don't know of any, but there probably are. There used to be at the Searles Camp down near Lyndonville, and of course the Colony Camp which is now Carlken Manor. That was a big camp! Oh there were 50 camps around at one time. Seasonal farm labor. Now they import 200 to 300 is all. During the years it has practically dribbled down to nothing. What they do now is supplementing it. They have "day-haul-labor". In other words the farmer goes to Buffalo in the morning and picks up a load of workers and brings them here and then takes them back at night. They are just here during the daylight hours. So there were other activities in the Assembly. As I say because of the tenure in the Legislature largely, you grow into some importance. I had the

privilege of knowing a great, great many men who later went on in political fields: like Gov. Rockefeller. I only served under one Democratic Governor: Averell Harriman. Otherwise they were all Republicans. Tom Dewey was there when I went there and he was succeeded by Averell Harriman, and along came Mr. Rockefeller.

Mc How much contact does an Assemblyman have with a Governor?

W Well it all depends on his position. Education is one of the major committees, so I had quite a few personal contacts. He'd send for me and I'd go down and we'd talk over situations. Otherwise not too much personal contact with them.

Mc That gave you some opportunities to meet some pretty important people.

W Well it did. As I say, a lot of these fellows (in the picture) like Judson Morehouse who was quite a friend of mine and who later became quite prominent throughout the country as Republican State Chairman; unfortunately he fell into some evil ways. There are a number of them that went on into other state positions. But as I look at it now, there are very, very few of them that are still here.

Mc How did you travel back and forth?

W At that time, when we started out, a fellow by the name of Jacob Hollinger from Middleport was also in the Assembly; either one of us would drive to Rochester where we would leave our car and take the New York Central train from there to Albany. As a matter of fact, that Monday morning train... the Assembly convenes on Monday night and then it stays in session during the week as the time might require; so that during the daytime they met in parts of the State Assembly. By the time we got in Rochester, we took a train out of there around noontime and practically the entire train was filled up with either Senators or Assemblymen, or people who worked for them because each one of them had his own little retinue of workers from his own county. They made up practically the entire train! It was quite an experience going down and back. A lot of legislation was thrashed out on the train. After the Thruway was built, why then I drove back and forth mostly. Mrs. Waters went with me mostly.

(End of side one of tape)

W (conversation is in progress...) By virtue of the fact that I had spent so many of the years in Albany; I was quite active in Republican politics for a number of years afterwards. As time went on and I became older and not able to be as active as I was previously, I haven't taken as much a part of it lately. Although they offered me the courtesy of asking my counsel on some occasions With the conclusion of my work in Albany in the Assembly, my active political life practically ended at that time.

Mc You were in education. You had some background there. You served on the local school Board?

W Yes, I was named to the Board of Education. I can't recall whose place I took, but I was named and I served for a number of years. (In a later conversation, not taped, Mr. Waters stated that he had served from 1924 - 1949; 25 years); the later part of which time I was President of the Board. That was under Dr. Trippenensee. I resigned from that when I was elected to the Assembly. My activity on the Board was nowhere as near exacting as it is at the present time because we were still a union-free school district. That was before centralization. I ceased to be active in local education. It was a pleasure to have served with all of these various chaps on the Board of Education. Many of whom I tried to recall the other day, have died. Dr. Ross Arnett, Dr. Shoemaker and myself are the only ones that are left. There are three of us. At the time, there was Ed O'Reilly and J.C. Posson and Jack Vernon, and several others. It was a pleasure to have worked, although as I say, my trials and tribulations if there were any, I would presume to be minor compared with what they are today with the expanded educational system with centralization. I was on the Board and instrumental in buying the site for the Oak Orchard School. It wasn't developed. We bought the area that was then an orchard from William Boyd. It was a very hominal price; a few thousand dollars, which was a very cheap price, and we knew it was ^{the} possible site for a future educational building. So we bought it. That's the only identification I ever had with it. John Kennedy was President of the Board when the centralization took place and a lot of the expansion because when I was on, we just had the High School building, Oak Orchard School and the old building over on the east part of town, on Ensign Avenue. Howard Brown was the Sup-

intendent of Schools when I first went on the School Board.

Mc Yes, Dr. Trippenesee followed him. I came to Medina in 1947 when Trippenesee was Superintendent so I'm not sure prior to that. Well, we have talked about your fraternities and so forth. Would you like to say a few words about your church?

W Yes, my religious background. I grew up in the country where I went to any kind of a church that happened to come along. I never identified with any particular denomination until I came to Medina when I joined the First Presbyterian Church. I was rather active there; was Superintendent of Sunday Schools. Then when I married in 1923, I married in the Episcopal Church. My wife was an Episcopalian and I joined the Episcopal Church, of which I've been a member ever since. I was a long term member of the Vestry and served in a Diocesan capacity, as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Dioceses, also on the General Committee which was a large committee. So until I was unable to go frequently I have always felt a great affinity for the church and all it stood for. I guess you'd call me an active and regular member. It was on very rare occasions that I wouldn't be in church either at the 8 o'clock service or at eleven. Largely at the early morning service. Bishop Scaife, who was the Bishop of the Diocese of western New York at the time, I had the privilege at the time Bishop Scaife was inducted into office here, I had the honor of representing the Dioceses. I was on the committee and gave the welcoming speech, which I felt quite complimented about. Of course, Father John Wilkenson, whom you well knew, was a very good friend of mine. Probably all these various opportunities for services of recognition came about because of our friendship. I was born a Protestant and as these little churches in the country were non-denominational in a way, and when as a young fellow I came to Medina and chose a church, I chose the First Presbyterian Church. William Findley was the pastor at the time. My two brothers still belong there.

When I married the first time, we were married in the Episcopal Church.

Mc One of the things that I like to ask the people that live long enough to have had a little memory of the horse and buggy days, and when the automobile first came is: do you remember your first automobile, or the first one that you saw?

W I remember my first one that the family ever had. It was an old Ford automobile and I remember the first time I ever tried to drive. I put it in reverse and went right across the road and into a ditch! (laughter). I didn't know how to stop it! The first car I ever owned, I think was around 1912. A Chandler, I think. Of course, I remember something about the horse and buggy days because when I went to Knowlesville to school, I used to drive either a horse and buggy or, in the winter-time a horse and cutter. I would stable it during the daytime. I remember one instance there: I came near freezing to death. I got so cold that I just went into the barn and lie down. You get so numb! I guess I would have frozen to death but... somebody came along and found me or I guess I would have frozen to death. But.. we tipped over a few times. I was first acquainted with automobiles.., well, I was born in 1893.. the old Ridge Road (which is now 104) was a popular route and the first automobiles that I envisioned were coming from Medina. Like people who were going from Medina to Lakeside and they had to pass our house and some of the older families in the community, like Charles Swett or his father or some of those would have an automobile. The Ridge Road was quite a popular place although that was before that was improved at all. It was a very sandy sort of thing and driving in sand is difficult, or even more difficult than driving in snow. So, there was a hill there that was kind of a "stopper". On many, many occasions we would have to get out and push the car up the hill to get it going; you know?! But the horse and buggy days actually were a little bit before my time. After I became identified

with Medina, it became motorized to quite an extent. There were several car dealers here at the time I came here. LaVern A. Walker had the Buick agency; Dr. J.J. Walker had the Ford Agency and Irving Rowley had the Chrysler Agency. Harry Robbins was probably the first devotee you might say, of motoring in Medina. At that time, and I was President of the Orleans County Automobile Club for a number of years, we had an Automobile Club here of 700-800 members or more.

Mc What was the purpose of this automobile club? Was it like AAA?

W It was really a part of the AAA and acted as a liason between the motorist and the state and the legislation. The reason I suppose, there was a community of interest among people that had automobiles. They'd get together and cite their experiences and so on. But really, the main goal of it was for the improvement of the conditions like the roads and the passage of regulations of driving, etc. We had several hundred in each county at that time. First Medina had a club, and then Albion had a club, and then they joined together. I think it was just sort of a community of interest that put them together in the first place. They used to organize tours. They'd start out on a Saturday, about 50 or 75, and all go together.

Mc Do you remember where you were and what you thought about on Pearl Harbor Day? (December 7, 1941).

W Yes. It was on a Sunday afternoon. My wife and I were attending a social occasion at the Elks Club in the afternoon of Pearl Harbor Day. I was particularly concerned because Bob was of that age and I knew that sooner or later he would have to become involved in the war. It wasn't too much later that he was! He enlisted. Originally he was sent to a camp out near Missouri. Then he was sent back to school to Olean. At that time they had a program at Saint Bonaventure in Olean. Funny... it was right back in our own back yard! He was there up until the time when he was sent overseas. Afterwards the program was disbanded because there was too much criticism of it. "Fighting the Battle of the Ivy Halls", etc. He went from there directly overseas. He was assigned to an outfit over there, which I can't recall now. But I remember the time very well. Everyone was so indignant and passionate about the situation. At the time I don't think the average person appreciated the military capacity of

the Japanese. So many said that they were "upstarts, coming over here..., etc". The way it turned out not to be so, but I can remember it, and the war days as well!

(The initial interview was ended at this point. Mr. Waters had been interviewed by County Historian Arden McAllister. When it was discovered that approximately 15 minutes remained on the tape, Mr. Waters agreed to a continuation and this was done by Helen McAllister, as follows):

Mc Mr. Waters I would like you to tell us a bit about your first marriage if you will.

W I was married in September 1923 to Helen Dorothy Eckert. She was the daughter of Harry and Julie Eckert. Her father was a cigar maker here in Medina for many years although she was born in Philadelphia and came to Medina as a young girl. She was the mother of my one and only child, Robert Eckert Waters and she was very active in community affairs during her lifetime, especially during World War II. She died very suddenly in 1952. My second marriage was in 1954 and I married Mary Harmon Hazard, a native of Montgomery, Alabama. She was a nurse and at the time was operating a nursing home in Albion. It was called Rose Villa. We have always made our home here in this house.

Mc Would you like to tell us a bit about this house?

W I purchased this house in 1929. At the time I had had plans drafted for a new home on Howell Parkway but this house was on the market at a very low price.

Mc This must have been at about the time of the Depression?

W It was. It was the time of the Depression, and this house went for a very low price. The house was built in 1907 by Samuel and Jesse Landauer, who were at that time proprietors and owners of Landauer's store which was located where the J.C.Penny Co. is now, on the corner of Main and East Center Streets. They lived in the home, raised three children: two boys and a girl (who are all living, as far as I know), until they both passed away. The estate sold the house to Robert Brennan and he was here until 1929 when I bought the house from him. It was one of the better homes of Medina at the time. That was approximately 50 years ago. Most of the village west of here was not developed at that time. As a matter of fact, when I originally purchased my lot on Howell Parkway, the first one after Fred Howell...

Mc Do you still own that lot?

W No, I later sold that lot to Ernest Hart. It is now owned by the Hart estate.

Mc This property goes out back as far as the alley?

W Yes, it is a deep lot. It goes from West Center Street to the alley; Proctor Alley I guess they call it.

Mc I remember when we lived nearby, seeing you work the hedges and the roses and other flowers. Now I wonder if you would like to tell us about your interest in the Child Welfare organization?

W My interest in the Child Welfare was primarily due to the interest which my first wife had in it. As a matter of fact, she was one of the organizers of the Child Welfare Association in the county and at the time of her death was President. I later was president for about five years of the group, although it is largely almost exclusively a woman's organization. It was because of her interest in Child Welfare that the Journal-Register at the time of her death in 1952, established the J-R Camp Fund which has been very well received by the community. It has grown from a few modest dollars to some \$4,500 each year, which is the major contribution towards financing 80 youngsters.

Mc Does the number remain at approximately 80 youngsters every year?

W Yes, about 80 youngsters every year.

Mc How are these youngsters selected?

W They are selected by groups in each of the various schools in Albion, Holley, Kendall, Lyndonville and Medina. The school nurse largely selects youngsters which, in their opinion, are most worthy to comply with the concept of the summer camp, which is largely geared to furnishing camping experiences to those youngsters from families who otherwise could not afford to send them to camp.

Mc What camps do they go to?

W Camp Troutberg, largely. That is north of Brockport; it is in Monroe County. It is a Rochester YMCA Camp.

Mc I wonder, in the few moments remaining on this tape, if you have anything more to say about World War II? I know that you said that Boh was very much involved in it!

W Of course I took part in many of the local campaigns that they had here, which were several, largely through the selling of War Bonds. I was chairman of some of them and participated in others. World War II was rather a difficult experience for Medina

along with the rest of the country, economically, because of the fact that all of our efforts were directed towards winning the war. Much of the favorite merchandise which would be available during peacetime, was not available during wartime (and I'm speaking now from the newspaper point of view), which made it very limited as far as the advertising revenue was concerned. As a matter of fact, if it had not been for a great deal of cooperative effort for the sale of War Bonds, I doubt if the Journal-Register would have continued because of our very limited income! As a matter of fact, we did reduce publication from, at that time six days a week (we published on Saturday, which we no longer do) to three. Yes, three times a week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday. That was during the war years. Of course we were not the only industry that was affected during that time. But it was all done with a cooperative spirit because, as I said before, interest was all geared to the successful conclusion of the war as far as we were concerned. A great many of the families, like our family, were interested because we had members in the armed services. They were very trying times, yet they were times which knit the community together. I mean, it was a catalyst towards joining the community together in one common effort.

- Mc In collecting for War Bonds, did they have dances at the Armory?
- W No, there was no public occasion such as dances. As a matter of fact, our first major contact with the war was the departure of Company F, which at the time was a compliment of over 100 men I should say, under the leadership of Captain John Thompson. The rest of those who entered, either volunteered their service or, as I was in World War I, were inducted into the Service through the Selective Service of the Draft. My son Bob entered
- W into the service in a rather unique way. At the time, the Army took several of the graduates from the higher levels of the schools and placed them into a training program. In other words, they were supposed to be sent right out of school as graduates (in which he was one of them), but they were sent with the idea of becoming officers. But as I said previously, the program met

with such opposition because it was a sort of class situation that it was abandoned finally before any of them ever were graduated. So he went immediately into service abroad.

Mc He was very fortunate in that he returned unhurt. Now, I would like to ask you just one more question: most people think of you as a dynamic person who has contributed a great deal to the whole state and the country. Do most people now call you "Lon", or Mr. Waters?

W They call me "Lon". My contact with people is very limited due to this heart condition that I have, which doesn't permit me to be very active. I'm mostly restricted here at home.

Mc Your mind is keen and very sharp!

W Well, I don't think this has affected my mind although you cannot reach the age of 85 without having your memory somewhat dimmed.

Mc Not very much, I'd say! Thank you, Lon.

* * * * *

Additions and deletions have been made by Mr. Waters.

Typed and edited by Helen McAllister.