



# Orleans County Historical Association

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# 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.

*Charles E. Bessie*

Signed

NOVEMBER 16, 1978

Date

Understood and agreed to:

*Tom Horton*

INTERVIEWER

11-16-1978

Date



# Orleans County Historical Association

## ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Mr. Charles Palmer  
Ridge Road (Town of Gaines)  
Albion, New York

Mr. Cary Lattin conducted the following interview with  
Mr. Charles Palmer. Mr. Palmer was 98 at the time.

Mrs. Helen McAllister of Medina also participated in the  
interview. (This has been edited out of the transcript).

P Palmer  
L Lattin



P I was born the 28th day of September, 1880.

L Where were you born? Right here in Gaines?

P I was born down here in this, well, you know where Jen Wright used to live; you know where Janice Barnum (Thaine) lives now? ... The first house east.

L Yeah, I remember. I know. You've lived in Gaines all your life, haven't you?

P Off and on all my life.

L Can you remember when they sold whiskey over here at the hotel?

P The first hotel people that I remember running the hotel over here, was the Thurbers.

L Yeah. Did they sell whiskey over there then?

P Yeah.

L How much did it cost, got any idea?

P Ten cents, for a drink of whiskey.

L Did they sell it in bottles drawn out of a barrel?

P By a bottle, glass or whatever you wanted!

L If you bought a bottle of it, would they draw it right out of the barrel?

P Right out of the barrel! For a quart it would cost you around a dollar.

L A quart of whiskey?

P Yeah.

L It was probably good whiskey too.

P I guess so. They used to drink it!

L What relation was Al Palmer to you; an uncle?

P Uncle.

L He had a distillery up here, didn't he, in the west end of the village?

P He run that cider mill up there; cider mill, distillery and dried apples. All in the same building.

L He shipped the stuff all over the world. ... There's some of his ledgers in the (County) Historian's office; shows where he shipped it to Massachusetts and as far west as Colorado Springs. ... You remember when they made dried soup there?

P Yeah, I remember when they made, I can remember; Of course I can't remember when they started, but I can remember that I used to be around over there quite a lot. They used to have a big elevator west of the dry-house. There was a great big bin. It went down - they'd back right up and open up the end board of their car. Of

course everyone had wagons in those days. ... And open up their end boards of their wagon and run right down there where it would go right off a chute right into the building there and there was a grinder and grind apples there ... And I used to feed that, when I was a kid. (Yeah). I used to be around there quite a lot. That's about the only thing I ever done in the working part..

They made cider brandy and cider. I know Len Wells used to do all the trucking. At that time they used to do a lot of trucking.

L With a team of horses. (Yeah, yeah). How much did you get an hour, working there, or a day?

P I don't remember just what it was. It wasn't very much.

L A dollar a day, maybe?

P Something like that, yeah.

L How many women did he have working there in the fall, when he was working?

P Women?

L Yeah. Didn't he have a lot of women there peeling apples?

P Yeah. Well, there must have been - let's see, there was four, there must have been a dozen or - the way I can remember it, I think it must have been a dozen or 15 machines there; women running them.

L Run those paring machines?

P Yeah, paring machines.

L Those girls would be all right around Gaines, wouldn't they?

P Yeah, all local, yeah.

L I remember when "Hat" House used to tell about working there in the dry-house in the fall. You remember "Hat" House? Horace House' wife. (Yeah). I remember she used to work there in the fall. She was an old lady.

P I was just trying to think; I got a picture of it.

L Get it later, Charlie, before we go. We'll take a look at it before we go.... Was that the same dry-house that Jake Shandles run later?

P Yeah.

L I remember taking apples down there when I was a kid about 12 years old, with Elmer Sanford. Taking down 7,8, or ten bushel of apples in a democrat wagon, with an old bob-tailed mare. (Yeah). (My) Pa let me pick up (apples) in the old orchard, to get some money.

P Yeah. I used to pick up apples over there when we - of course, we were working that farm up there, of Mr. Kemp. (Yeah). He was pretty tight. But everything that went out of there, he had to have half

of it; see? I used to go over there and pick apples to get enough to go to the fair, when the fair was on. Then I had to walk up to your place up there when your father and your grandfather lived up there where you live now, and ride with them as they'd always have something to take to the fair: horses, cattle or something like that. Brave Holland lived there at that time.

L My Grandfather brought Brave (Holland) up. (Yeah). Can you remember when my Grandfather used to have oxen at the fair? (Yeah). When you lived up there, on the Kemp farm and there was an old Academy up there on the hill, that was used for a dwelling, wasn't it? ... You remember anything about the old Academy?

P The first I ever heard about that, Rance Royce owned it.. Of course he kept it and he rented it out to different people that would live up there. Myron House's father lived up there at one time.

L Yeah, I remember.

P I can't remember who else lived there... The last one I remember living up there was Fay Maxon.... They took him away...

L Well, he was a little bit "touched"

P Yeah, he was out of his head most of the time.

L When you were a boy, that Academy had been closed up, hadn't it? (yeah). It wasn't an Academy anymore.

P Private families lived up there.

L Can you remember when they was any stagecoach left on the Ridge?

P No, I don't remember that; that's before my time.

L Well, when Thurber ran the Hotel over here, did they serve regular meals there all the while?

P Yeah. You could go get your meal in there anytime you wanted it.

L Did anybody live at the Hotel, stay at the Hotel: boarders, roomers.

P Yeah, different ones that worked out around different places that used to be - take in the fall, they used to - quite a lot of fellows used to board down here and pick apples up to Cortland Chester's and up that way to Orren Mather's, up here. And they lived right there in the hotel and boarded up there. People that come through; tramps, you might say.

L Do you remember when Rich Andrews had the Harness Shop ?(Yeah) He made harnesses. .. He made a harness for Dad when he went to farming I guess. And I guess it still was around when Dad died, this hand-made harness that Rich Andrews made.

P He committed suicide.

L I never knew about that.

P He lived over there to that place where Clark just moved out of. It's the second house west of Gates Knickerbocker used to have his watch shop. ... I think he was the Road Commissioner, or something like that, and he'd been using some of the funds and something. They was getting after him and he took the wrong way out.. And they found him under there. He lived in that house there and then the Chester's lived in the next house, Chester girls, and the next house was Rance Royce. He lived there and then owned the place up the lane. Alvie Fuller married his daughter. You remember Alvie Fuller that used to..

L Well, I've heard my Aunt speak about Alvie Fuller, but I never knew him. He got away from here before I got around too much.

P ... He come from down around Kuckville; he lived there. Then he come up here and run that grocery store over here. That brick store that was over here. Then I think he sold out to Charlie Hutchinson...

L That would be Katherine's grandfather.

P Yeah; then Fuller went down to Brockport and bought out Hank Miller; run a livery stable down there. ... My sister Josephine went down there and seems so somebody else, a girl went with her. They went to Brockport Normal and boarded to Alvie Fuller's.

L Your sister Josephine taught school over here.

P Yeah, she taught school three or four different places.

L Did Gates Knickerbocker ever do anything besides tinker with watches... ?

P He took care of watches, fiddles and stuff like that.

L Did he have an orchestra at one time? Play in an orchestra?

P He used to play up there when they used to have the big public dances over here. There's lots of times they used to have parties that would come from the lake up here and then some of the bunch would go back down there sometimes, to the lake and they would have these little small dances. At that time they would have to pick up all the orchestra, the people that played any kind of an instrument, to give you an orchestra. Gates (Knickerbocker) would play in that. Sometimes he didn't know whether he was playin a violin or a piccilo. He was about half "lit up".

L He kind of took a little drink now and then? (Yeah). What kind of dances would they have; square or round dances?



P All kinds of dances.

L I remember when I was a kid, he had all kinds of stuff hanging in the store there, his shop: fiddles or piccillos or something like that. I never heard him play.

P He used to play; he never played to make a record but he could play them and then they could get into orchestra up there. Lots of times there's be somebody like, well, Bob Taylor from the Bridges down there. He was about like Gates Knickerbocker only he worked for somebody else all the while. And he'd be into an orchestra... and that's the kind of an orchestra they had in those days. That is, for those kind of dances. Then when they had the regular dances, why they had regular orchestras. (Yeah). I been to dances over here. Maybe 200 couples over here.

L God!! (Yeah) Well, 60 years ago they'd fill that hall pretty well. Along in the twenties and thirties they was having, when the Grange ran that place, they was having awful crowds over there. (Yeah). And I've heard say that this was one of the best dance floors around the county, to dance on.... That is right here on the Ridge Road, right across the road, the old Hotel. The third floor is a dance hall over the whole building.

P ... Tain't safe to put a crowd up in there any more.

L That's what I've heard. The last time I was up there was when they had the Centennial here, and they had a dance up here that night. But, they say that's an awful good floor.

P Well, crowds would go up to that great big hall. It would be crowded and you could hardly get a place to dance.

L And that made the building shake!

P They come from all over: Medina, Lyndonville, Kuckville.

L What kind of dresses would the girls have on? Fancy ones or..

P Well, most of them wore long dresses as I remember. Regular dresses.

L Can you remember of anybody working around here using oxen to plow and work in their fields?

P I don't remember anybody ever using oxen only your Grandfather up there. I can remember years ago they used to have that place down in Paradise Road, and they used to turn their cattle out. They used to keep cattle down in there. They had it fenced in. But in through the winter, if they left any cattle down there, they used to have to go down through there once in awhile. Somebody lived in that house most of the time.

L John Hay lived down there.



P Hay's lived there for a long time. On the east side there was a person named Cargo lived there. And the fellow that lived in with Cargo's, he'd feed the stuff. If you run out of hay or anything, you had to get it from the farms up here. I can remember him going down one day and coming back; you know where your cattle would go in cold weather when they'd breathe the air and stuff came out kind of smokey, like steam? Well, May Wolfe's folks lived up there where Jimmie Moore lives now, in that house. Min Cole had come down there to visit them. She and Rocky went down to get their horse, getting ready to go home. They drove up in front of the place and somebody with these oxen came down the road, blowing that steam out! And Jesus! The horse whirled around and he went up the road!! He run clear to George Anderson's barn and they had to run him into the yard where they could stop him. I know they used to laugh about it 'cause Rocky was a septuagenarian, and he said, "gee, wait a minute and I'll get out". And she says, "You get one of these lines and help hang onto this horse 'cause he's got scared of these oxen." But I don't remember any other anybody that had any oxen, outside of your grandfather up there.

L The Ridge Road was dirt until 1924. Dad always used to have calves around when he was a kid; and break calves and drive them on a sled, to play with. Aunt Alice told me that he would hitch up two calves when he was going to school in the wintertime, on a sled, and they'd go to school, driving these little oxen to school. When Dad and his three sisters got to school they'd turn the calves around and they'd go home and Grandfather would put them back in the barn. That was one of the first school busses they rode on. (5)

P When Harry and I was kids and lived up here, we used to have a heifer and we'd drive her anywhere. ... We'd drive down here to the village and there'd be a bunch of kids run out and want a ride. We'd get two or three on a sled then we'd pull her halter off and, by gees, away she'd go up there. And these kids, some of them would be dragging when we got up there, and some of them in a snowbank. Yeah.

L Where did you first go to school? Over here to the cobblestone schoolhouse? (Yeah). Who was the teacher?

P Mrs. McKinney, I think.

L Can you remember when Doc Lattin taught over there?

P No. No. Mrs. McKinney taught there, then there was a lady from

Albion taught there. The Frank Thurber taught. My sister, Josephine Palmer, taught there for a season or two.

L ... Charlie, do you remember when they had church services up in the old west church? (Yeah). Was that Free Methodist then?....

P Yeah. They used to have Christian Endeavor over here, see, Sunday nights. Then they had regular meetings up there to the Methodist Church at times. Sometimes they had those revival meetings up there. A bunch of us kids would go over here to the Christian Endeavor; we'd hustle and get out of church and used to go up there and see if they'd have those - with Glen Maxon. Glen was one of them. And I don't know, there was Mrs. Green and there was quite a few of them in there, and gees! How they would hollar!! ... We used to get up there and I don't know how it was, but anyway we knew that some of them was going to be around there, would holler or do something. Eunice Ward, Letty Knickerbocker, myself, Georgia Baechtcl, Arthur Hutchinson. I know there were quite a few of us went up there and we'd sit in anyplace. We'd be expecting it, but when one of them hollered, by gees! we'd all jump that high! (laughs) Gees, the church would be quiet and all of a sudden someone would holler "Amen" or something like that and gees, you could hear them for a mile!

L ... How long ago did they quit having church service up there?

P Well, I can't tell you how long ago it was. It wasn't long after they quit having churchrs there when they done away with this town - they had to - used to vote down here to the Hotel and then they turned that into the town meeting up there.

L Town Hall. ... That's the only place I've ever voted. ... Who was the first President you voted for?

P He got shot, in Buffalo

L ... You voted for McKinley?... How did you feel when he got shot? Did that kind of shake up the town around here?

P Oh, in a way, yeah. Not much more than it does when a President dies, around here. But I can remember him. It seems he stopped to shake hands with, what was that fellow's name?

L Czolgocz.

P He stopped to shake hands with this fellow, he pulled the trigger and killed him.

L I've heard say that when they heard the news around, George Anderson was talking with some of his neighbors and he said, "I just

heard that the telegram come to Albion. Somebody come home and said that the President had been shot in Buffalo". And he said, "I'm sorry, but I'm glad it was him instead of me".

P Now I can remember when you lived there where your son lives now, and Fred used to ... Fred would say, "Well, we'll go up there and see Naham Lattin . You was born up there. I can remember when you was first born there!

L That's right. Fred Rowley, he always liked horses pretty good, didn't he? (Yeah). Didn't he have race horses when he was younger?

P He had a race horse. He had Tommy L. You see, we went down there. We lived up here on the Eaman farm and worked for Mr. Kemp, my father did. Then when it come fall, he'd work over there in the dry-house. Anyway Mr. Kemp wanted him to work the farm. He took the farm and we was there two or three years, I guess. And something over the road taxes at that time. And some of the farmers paid their taxes and some of the other farmers let the people that was working the farms was on shares in those days, and they'd have the man that was working the farm, work the road tax out.

L He had to work on the road for so many days. ...

P Yeah, and my father just didn't like that. Rowley wanted him to come down and work that farm down there. George House and his father was ready to take this farm up there, and Mr. Kemp let him have it. So we went down there to Rowley's farm and Fran was there the (Fred's wife). The first year we lived down there, she was there. My father was taken sick. Well anyway, the next spring we had an auction and sold out and moved up here in this house here. We lived in this house here.... Mrs Lattin owned this place at that time. Mrs. J. W. Lattin, Doc Lattin's mother. ... Then my father got better and he went to work for George Anderson up there. George Anderson, at that time, kept two or three men. And Mr. Kemp came out there one day and he said to my father, he always called him "Palmer"; he says, "Palmer, I made one big mistake and as quick as these people's time is out, I want you to come back and work this farm." Which we did and we stayed there until after my father died. Then my mother and Henry, they moved up in 1920 on this road.

L Well, I remember when you lived up here at the Kemp farm. It was late as the 30's that you was living here.

P Henry moved up there and then Whitney. Mrs. Eaman told Henry -

Old Doc Howes didn't want Whitney to work his farm anymore. He was living down to Carlton Station. He said, "Gees, leave him down here". He says, "I'll lose my farm." So, she had to take him up there. ... He went up there and bought this place where they lived And then it run along quite a long time. The Lattins had moved all around different places and they lived over in Busti at that time. Josie called me up, or wrote me a letter. I was working. I had worked muck up there four years.... That's when the Depression come on. Gees, you wasn't getting enough stuff out of your crops, you know, to pay for your expenses.... And I quit. She called up and wanted me to be ready. She was coming down through here and she wanted me to go back with them. Charlie Lattin was working for Prestons and he had to go over in Pennsylvania somewhere. He had to go where Doc was doctoring. I set there in the car waiting for him. ... When he come out I said, "I think Doc Eaman just went down by here". He says, "We'll drive down to the city and find out where Doctor is, or where his office is, and go in and see him." So we did. He wanted me to stay there. But I wasn't dressed to stay all night anyplace. But he insisted on me staying, and he wanted me to take that farm. Then I went back up on that farm in 1928 and I worked that winter 'cause he hadn't trimmed the orchard; he hadn't done nothing. By gees, it was in awful shape. I got another fellow in with me and we "batched it" in that old white house where Herbrige lives there now, I think.... We batched it, and we trimmed that orchard all up in good shape and cleaned the place up pretty good, and he wanted me to work. Mrs. Greer kept house for me that spring, and I went on with the farm. I was on the farm 14 years. Then I went out to Doc's . Things weren't the way they should be, and I told him I was all through farming. I went back up, I bought that place across from Henry's. I was up there about 20 years and then I come down here and bought this place and have lived here ever since.

L Jed Duber's farm. They raised cattle, wheat and oats. It was a little farm, self-sufficient. He had to buy coffee and tea and like that, but they raised their own food.

L There was a lot of fruit around here .

P More than now.

L Years ago in Clarendon there was more fruit trees than in any town in the state, at one time.

- L ... ~~Pussia's~~ <sup>Puchie</sup> always lived in the corner house up here since you can remember?
- P Yeah, I remember old man ~~Pussia~~ <sup>Puchie</sup>, Charlie ~~Pussia's~~ <sup>Puchie's</sup> father, Jake. They lived up there and then Charlie moved up there and then Ida died, and Frank lived there... One day we was up there after Lutie died. We set there watching television, my wife and I, and who walked in but Frankie! In the back door, and he walked in and I says to him that night, "Where are you going now?" And he says, "I'm going down to Bills". Bill was living down to Sepencerport, or some place, at that time. So I said, "Why don't you stay here all night and go in the morning?" "No", he said, "it's such a nice night, I'll go on down and be there in the morning." And I never seen him afterwards.
- L When they lived up there on the corner house, years ago, was there a Masonic Lodge up there in an upper room?
- P They said so, yes.
- L And he showed me a secret place in that fireplace. That was back in 1919. I've been there since and talked with May Wolfe about it. I'll be darned if I can locate the place. There is a secret hiding place in that fire-place.
- P I never was up in there. I heard about it but I was never up in there. ...
- L It's a very beautiful room up there. It's the prettiest fireplace anywhere in New York State. (The hiding place) was a little trap door. It was showed to me. He used to put a nail on a string, he told me, and drop it down and you could hear papers rattling. There was a lot of stuff, they say, when Morgan - the Morgan episode. Morgan went up to the Ridge Road and they don't know whether he stayed there overnight or not. I don't know. But it was a Masonic meeting hall. The Royal Arch Masons met there in 1824. My great, great grandfather was the High Priest of this chapter and he represented his Chapter in the Konclave in Albany in 1824. That's in the record book. But I wish I could find that secret place in the fireplace, and the papers in it. It would be wonderful!... I don't know if there is money. If it's continental currency, it wouldn't be worth too much. Be worth as much as the dollar today maybe. A silver dime today, I see by the paper, is worth 38¢.
- P ... Part of that house was built the same time as this Fairhaven Hotel was built.

- L In 1824, they say. *Puchie*
- P ... You see, Jennie ~~Prussia~~ *Puchie's* (spelling??) her name was, and she married Guy Lattin... and Louise.... And they lived there when I first remember them, in part of that house. Somebody said they built on; some of the ~~Prussia's~~ *Puchie's* built on for them to live there. The next thing I knew about them, they lived in the house that burned up on the Eaman farm. That's where Guy died.
- L You remember Guy? (Yeah). What'd he have, Diptheria?
- P Yeah. I used to have a big billy goat. Gees, he stood up that high, and I couldn't drive him. Guy used to help me harness him up and get me in the cart, and then he'd beat him with a round pole.
- L That's right, they were related to the ~~Prussias~~ *Puchie's*.
- P ... It seems to me, I don't know whether Gettie died there in that house, or whether just Guy was there. Then of course, Louise, she married Stacey and they lived everywhere!
- L They lived up on our road once, one year. They worked a farm up there on that road.
- P The Bullard farm?
- L Yeah, Arthur Bullard's farm.
- P Frank was a good fellow to have around but still he didn't have much more than a - well, he bought a team of horses over there when he was on that farm that was worth more than the farm was. He never got them paid for. Then he went over on the Lattin Road, or over on the Rowley Road and he worked a farm over there for a year or so.
- L Who was that, Stacey or Frank Prussia? *Puchie*
- P Stacey. I know Charlie Prussia *Puchie* give him that old driving horse that he used to have over there. He didn't do very well over there. Then he come back around here working by the day.
- L Louise was the Postmaster here?
- P ... Yeah. I can remember those stores over here. That first store over here before it burned. They was a meat market in there. I don't know whether Clure White owned all those buildings in there or how it was.
- L Well, he owned that block where the store was, didn't he?
- P The whole block. Well anyways, they had that meat market in there. The first people I remember owned it was a fellow named Davis and he lived down in back of the town building in that house that belonged to the farm at that time. He was from Ridgeway. He run

it for awhile and then afterwards, Ernest Hewitt and somebody else run it for awhile. Then they had a fire and that burnt up.

L I remember when the fire burned the place down. It was about 1908 or 1909. ... Bert Appleton was in the store... It burned up in the spring of the year.

P You see, there was a store there, a meat market and a grocery store. Then there was a hallway up over the store that they used to have Good Templars Lodge up there.

L There was a dance hall up there too, wasn't there?

P Yeah, and then they was a post office, and the Knickerbocker store, and the harness shop....

L Can you remember Cyrus Wetheral? Was he doing any stone work when you remember him?

P I can remember him doing mason work. Yeah. He used to go fishing quite often.

L He laid a lot of the cobblestone houses around here. ... Vince Saint John lived down there. May Wolfe told me once that on some of the windows in the back of that house they had signed their names in the kitchen windows, with a diamond. Wouldn't it be great to get ahold of one of those today with Cyrus Wetheral's name on it, for Cobblestone (Society)?... But the house has been overhauled. Franks lived there and they was some relation of Wethe and they probably threw these old windows away. (Witherall, sp??) I'll bet you that this stone wall under your house, this herring-bone, Cyrus Witherall laid it.

P Maybe.

L 'Cause he come up with that pattern around here.... Was he a big man or a little man?

P He wasn't a very big man. He was a small man, and as I remember, he was lame. I don't know whether rheumatism or something like tha

L Well, he laid the west end of the Anderson farm up here. I don't know whether it was Alice Hatch or my cousin, they said that Witherall lad that house in 1850's. It was a wing on the other part of the house, and Witherall laid that..

P Those Anderson boys are both dead, ain't they?

L Oh sure. Rob Anderson went away from here in the 1920's. He come back after Uncle George & his mother died. He came back and worked the farm and lived there for a few years. But he wasn't a good farmer and couldn't seem to make a go of it, so he sold it. He wen back to the west coast where he had been living.



P That's what I've often thought, you know. They never drank anything or done anything and they had the farm left to them, and then to lose it! ... I couldn't figure that out. If they'd been people that gambled or something like that, or lost it, it would have been different.

L I guess Howard never helped Uncle George on the farm there. He was always doing something else. In later years, he went to Florida.

P Since I've been laid up around here, gees, the people come in and talk about the things. I said before that I thought that Bart Lattin at one time lived where Charlie Manzella lives up there.

L Yeah. It was my grandmother's farm. She got it from her father, Niam Anderson, and when Grand-dad started housekeeping, he went down here in Carlton. His brother John lived across the road, at the end of the Waterport Road. Lloyds lived up the road aways, and he lived up on the other road going into Waterport. They, all three of the brothers, lived down there, and Aunt Ella was born down there about 1863. Then he come up here and lived on the Gaines Basin Road where Bill Lattin lives today... He lived there, maybe four or five years, then he went across the road into this bigger house, bigger farm, and the rest of the kids was born there. My Dad was born in the house there where Bill lives. Then he bought the farm from Brigadier Bullard, when Brig died.

Was Charlie Cliff married once, before he married Anna Lattin?

P Someone said he was but I never knew. I never see his wife. When I knew him he never was married....

L Was her name Root?

P I couldn't tell you for certain. I don't know. There was one thing you know that I could never figure. That George Stone, you know, on Charlie Cliff's place, used to be all one, so they say. I' couldn't figure that out one day and when Anna was in the hospital, in the nursing home over there, I was there to see somebody and I run in to see her. We got to talking about different things and she said that that farm where George Stone lived; George Stone wanted me to take that place one time when I went up there on the Eaman farm. I'd heard about him and I didn't want much to do with it. So, she said at that time, that some of the Cliffs owned both of the places.

L They did, all the way up to the canal. It was all Cliff Farms. Where the schoolhouse is, they owned that.... They gave the land

to the school district.

P I was wondering; they said they owned the farm south of that place. I always thought that farm that Charlie lived on was a bigger farm than it was.

L No, it's only about 56 acres, or something like that.

P ... I was wondering then, he never worked any farm outside of that. I guess.

L No. He most always had a race horse to be jogging around.

P In that farm where you live now, is there about a hundred acres in that farm?

L About 75.

P That farm that Ralph Strickland lived on, how big a farm was that?

L About 80.

P Henry come pretty near buying that once; bought that farm instead of this one up here. But he couldn't get a clear deed of it. There was somebody down south, or something; didn't want to sign off.

L Yes; his brother-in-law. My Dad used to say that was good land; all that creek land. It was the bottom land of the neighborhood. It was low ground in there. It was good ground. Now when Gray come up and wanted me to take the farm soon after we was married, he says, "I'll get cattle and do anything you want if you'll operate this farm. Tied (?) between your farm, we can raise cattle there." I had all the land I wanted to monkey with. But when Swierczinski bought that farm, they only gave \$4,000. for it; that 80 acres! (Yeah) God, he paid for it the next year on a piece of tomatoes there that probably hadn't been plowed in 50 years. He had tomatoes growing everywhere. They had a good deal when they bought that farm. I could a had it but I didn't. I couldn't see it.

P Well, who did Ted sell it to? (Ted Swierczinski)

L Well, he sold the house and some of the land around there. Ted got the front and the back part of the farm. I guess he sold the woods and the lane back to it and his name is Jack Keeney. He works for the state; a state engineer.

P He didn't sell it to one person?

L No. Ted's got the front. He's probably got two or three lots, road lots, if he wants to sell building lots. Ted kept the front of it and just sold Keeney the house and lot and garage and shop. ... Keeney works for the state; road business or bridges and the...

like that. He works for the State. I met the fellow just once. Nice guy, but I am not acquainted with him.

P I was wondering, is there, I suppose, of course I don't know any more about it than the man in the moon, but after I got through the working day up at Lipton's, John Palmer was working for Swierczinski's over there and they had a fellow taking in tomatoes and shipping out tomatoes over there. (Yeah). They wanted me to come over there and help them. I went over there and helped them and one day we had to go out into the lot and get some tomatoes to bring up. I don't know who was with me, but Ted's father was driving the truck. And I don't know this fellow that was with us, I've forgotten his name now, said something about he was driving crooked, or something like that and that he was running over some of the tomatoes. Well, just fooling like that he said, "Well, this farm belongs to myself and my wife. I can drive where I want to." Just like that. And then he got to talking and he says, "What are you going to do with all that land"? And he says, "Ted will have this, but his daughter, we expect her to have this farm". That's the way he spoke. That was the Strickland place. Ted was to have that place up there where he lives. Well, I don't think he owned that up there anyway, but he had some land somewhere. Frankie was to have the place down east. (Yeah). And that's the way I always thought it was. Then JoAnne's husband was over here one day and we got talking. He says, "There's a sign up there on the Strickland place FOR SALE, Ted Swierczinski". I said, "Yeah, how did he get ahold of it?" And he said, "I don't know". It must have belonged to his mother and ..

L She signed it over to him, I guess.

P She signed it over?

L I think so. I don't know.

P I know that it wasn't too long after that when Bielicki and his wife moved out.... He used to come down here quite often, but I haven't seen Bernard (Bielicki) since he moved. I don't know....

L Charlie, who was your wife?

P Edna Gibbs. She lived in South Barre. She married Tom Cushing. Tom died and then I married her.

L Yeah, I remember. I'd forgotten about that. ...

P It was quite a shock to me here. You see, she was taken sick and she went to the hospital. She got out of the hospital in just

about a week and was alright. She felt alright. She come home. She was home a week, and that morning, that Sunday morning, I slept in there, and she used to sleep in that room there. (points) When I got up, she was up and had her bathrobe on and she says, "I beat you up this morning", she says. "Well", I says, "should you get up?" I didn't know much about this doctoring business. She says, "Well", she says, "I thought I'd get up and get your breakfast; save Shirley coming over". And we sat here and talked; and Shirley come in then, and she got up. I went out. We talked to her, and I went out to the barn - garage. I said, "I guess I'll open up the door", which in the summer time I always did. And I went out there. I don't think I was gone- well, I don't know; I wasn't gone over 15 minutes anyway. And I come back and she come to the door and said something. I didn't understand it. I got up and she says, "I'm awful sick." "Well", I said, "I'll have to call Shirley." She just went to church. But it seems when she came in, Shirley told Edna about her sister-in-law's dying. Her brother's wife. (That's Jimmie Gibb's wife, or mother). They lived in South Barre, and about her dying that morning over there in the hospital. Whether that had any effect or not I don't know. But when I come back in she says, "I'm awful sick". But in the meantime, she called Joanne and I said, "I'll have to get Shirley", and she says, "Joanne is coming right down." Just then Joanne and her husband came in and took her (the wife) to the hospital. I thought she'd be sick three or four days and then she'd come out the same as she did before. She says, "Don't have Charlie come over here because it's hard work for him to walk down through there where they have to go. Wait 'til I get out of here and then I'll get into bed and he can come and stay. 'Cause he couldn't stay in that little room only about five minutes and then they'd want you right out of there." She got out on a Thursday and on a Friday someone told me, "You hadn't ought to go over on such a day as this because she'd be resting and it would be better for her not to have too much company." So I didn't go Friday or Saturday morning. I couldn't go, something happened. So Sunday morning, gees, I got up and hustled around and got shaved and I got cleaned up. Then they come down and told me she had gone! (died) That knocked me right out!!

L Can you remember when the fellow, name of Blake, had the tin shop here in Gaines?

P He had that grocery store too. He lived up there where Mike Sandle used to live. Thompson lives there now.

L Would he make things like pans and pails?

P Yeah. If you had a milk pail needed fixing, he'd fix it. He'd do a lot of that kind of work. But he had the shingles or something like that. He shook all the while, and he scuffed along when he walked.

L Do you remember when they used candles? Did your folks use candles?

P No. Kerosene.

L What would you have to pay for a gallon of kerosene back in those days?

P Gad! I don't remember. Not too much, not too much.

L What was the first car you had?

P 1900 and, oh; 1923. A Model T Ford. ... Gas wasn't too much then but Max was telling me today when he was down here, he's going to Chicago-he's going to Florida for the winter- that gas is now, I think he said he had to pay 69¢.

L Yeah, I got "filled up" day before yesterday at Crosby-Whipples and the farm tank was there and was, I think, 62¢. I notice gas the other day when we was down to the east end of the state was 70¢ on some pumps. Maybe it was high-test (gasoline). I don't know.... Fuel oil has gone up too. That's 52 or 53 cents.... Do you heat with fuel oil here?

P No. Gas.

L ... You live all alone here now, don't you Charlie?

P Yeah.

L Does Shirley come in every day?

P She comes in - the nurse comes in, in the morning and she gets me up and gets me dressed, and gets my breakfast and cleans up the house. She's gone by 11 o'clock. Then Shirley comes in, in the afternoon and at night gets the breakfast. The boys come over. They all come over to supper over here. Then they're here 'til eight or nine o'clock. Then I'm alone again from that time to the next morning.

- L ... How old are you Charlie?
- P Me? 92... 92 last September; 28th day of September. Gees, I forget sometimes, the day I was born. Henry was three years younger. (Charles Palmer was born Sept. 28, 1880. He is 98 years old).
- L Is Josie younger or older?
- P Five years older, yeah.
- L She was a darn good woman!
- P She was too good for that guy that she married.
- L Yeah. He was a "slippery duck". ... Charlie, Shirley was not your real daughter, was she?
- P No.
- L We call her a foster child . You and your wife brought her up.
- P We took her and we took this girl from Albion. We took two girls. This girl, and this girl over here, her mother died when she was, well, she wasn't over a year old. And her half-sister tried to take care of her and work. They had her out to a nursing home or something like that. And when they'd go to pay for taking care of her, she was always fixed up in nice shape. My wife's sister run a rooming house in Rochester. She thought it was funny that every time they went over to see this girl that Shirley, she always was slicked up, and one thing and another. So, one day she went in there unexpected, and the dirtiest thing you ever see, Shirley was. Face scratched. There were other children there you know. She was a little small thing. Eva got home, and Eva went over and took her away and took her to her rooming house. Then they couldn't keep her in the rooming house very well. There was only my sister-in-law there to take care of her. She took care of her the best she could. So they brought her up to Barre there, before we was married. Of course, Edna took her (Edna became his wife) and had her ever since.
- L Yeah. You've done a darn good job bringing her up.
- P Brought her up and then we brought the other girl up. The other girl, she'd been knocked around everywhere, and she wound up - I don't know how she happened to get in with the Miller's up there. When Miller lived where Clure White lived, Mrs. Miller's daughter-in-law, Torme. Anyway, she didn't want her. Nobody wanted her, and knocked her around from one place to another. Edna says to me one day, "I'm going to take that girl. She ain't got no home. I'm going to see what I can do." And we took her home.

We brought her up there and she was up to our house quite a little while.... Where she had lived down in Rochester, they started coming up there and bringing her up little things. And one thing and another. I said to Edna, "There's something wrong here. They didn't want her and now they're bringing up things like that." "Well", she says, "I don't think so".....

(end of tape; conversation continued but not taped).

\* \* \* \* \*

This interview was conducted by Cary Lattin of Albion, N. Y.

Helen McAllister, Medina, N.Y. accompanied Mr. Lattin and from time to time suggested questions for Mr. Palmer.

Mr. Luther Burroughs of Albion, N. Y. transcribed the interview. After Cary Lattin had checked the first transcript for names and dates, the final typing was done by Helen McAllister, Medina.

At the time of this interview, Charles Palmer is the oldest living resident in Orleans County.

\* \* \* \* \*

(The name spelled as Puchie, should have been spelled as Prussia. This error was caused in final editing by H. McAllister).

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