

# Orleans County Historical Association

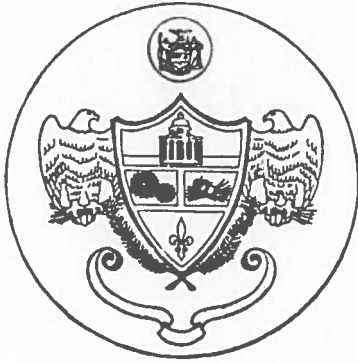
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carpenter  
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 line-shaft tools  
 houses constructed in:  
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 Lyndonville / Elba  
 Albion / Middleport  
 Oakfield / Greece, N.Y.  
 Maple Ridge Road  
 Rochester, N.Y.  
 etc., etc.  
 Medina Toy Factory  
 Taylor Furniture Factory  
 Mahar Furniture Factory  
 Lake Shore Lumber Co.  
 O'Donnell Bros. Lumber  
 grocery peddler  
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 Medina High School  
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 first electric typewriter in Medina

## NAMES

William Fred Amos, father  
 Myra Estella Gregory, mother  
 Ivah Amos, sister  
 Alta Amos, sister  
 Grace Louise Potter, wife  
 Bernard (Pete) Wm. Amos, son  
 Betty Jane A. Warren, daughter  
 Shirley Pask Amos, dau.-in-law  
 George Gregory  
 Benjamin Amos  
 Charlie Howard  
 Dr. Warren Stocking  
 Edgar Gould / Charlie Dye  
 Howard Petis / Robert Neal  
 Deidrick K. Millis  
 John B. Miller / Fred Howell  
 Harry Sharmin / J.C.Posson  
 Dr. Corliss / John Wilson  
 Minnie Potter  
 Rev. Allen  
 Rev. "Barny" Howe  
 Rev. Fredericks  
 Dr. James Sterling / Dr. William  
 Porter Sticking  
 Lloyd Pask  
 Lyman Potter  
 Flory Ross  
 Alvin Eskelson / Mr. Ward  
 Zibba Roberts / Walter Crisp  
 Elizabeth Burchel  
 George Benz  
 Ray McGinn, barber  
 Irving Smith  
 Harry Potter  
 Leona Canfield  
 Dr. Waters



# Orleans County Historical Association

## INTERVIEW

Mr. Warren Amos  
120 Highland Avenue  
Medina, New York

SUBJECT: carpenter

Interviewed by:

Arden R. McAllister, County Historian

Helen McAllister

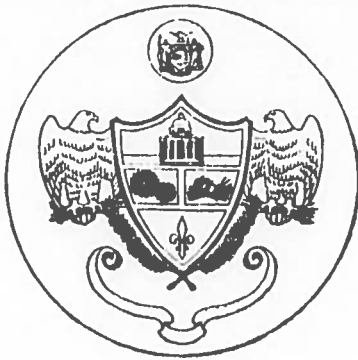
November 29, 1977

May 1, 1978

A Amos (born 1900)

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.

Warren Amos

Signed

Nov. 29, 1977, May 1, 1978

Date

Understood and agreed to:

Arden R. McAllister

Helen McAllister

INTERVIEWER

Nov. 29, 1977, May 1, 1978

Date

WARREN AMOS, Medina, N.Y.

Nov. 29, 1977

with: Arden R. McAllister, Or. Co. Historian  
and Helen M. McAllister

A : Amos      M : McAllister

M Warren, I believe you were born over in Millville. Could you tell us where and a little bit about your own family?

A Could I start with my grandparents? I'd like to do that. Well, my grandparents on my father's side came directly from England on a sailing boat; they were at least 7 weeks coming across because they were becalmed out in the ocean with no wind, and couldn't move. They landed in Virginia instead of N.Y. City, which they planned to do. My grandfather on my mother's side told me that he came from Vermont into N.Y. with an ox team. Now how he got into Vermont, I haven't the faintest idea but he must have been connected to the Pilgrims in some way to be in that location. His name was George Gregory. When I knew him, he lived south and east of Millville; had a farm there. Grandfather on my father's side never did own property or anything. He just worked for someone else at that time. Grandfather Amos died when I was ten years old. Grandfather Gregory died when I was nine years old and I was born and brought up on a farm.

M What kind of farm?

A An Orleans County farm! (laughs). Every farmer has two or three cows, with chickens and so forth. They traded butter and eggs and so forth for groceries. Also, the grocery peddler came around in later years, with a wagon, a horse and wagon. In that way, you gave him the butter and eggs and traded for groceries. In later years they gave that up and then they went out and took orders and then delivered, instead of taking the wagon out on the road, and the eggs and so forth. I guess they didn't collect at that time. So, I lived on a farm in my younger life. From 14 years of age, I worked on a farm until 1918.

M What kind of work did you do?

A Just general farm work. In other words, when my Grandfather Gregory died when I was 9 years old, we had 4 horses, 3 cows, sheep. I did the chores that night because they (parents, etc.) were over to their place. I did the milking and took care of all those things.

M Did you take the grain down to the mill?

A Yes. At Shelby Center was a mill, also one in Medina. But usually we went to Shelby Center. I don't know why. It was a little nearer I guess than it was coming to Medina. Maybe you got waited on sooner. I don't know. But anyway, that was an ordeal. The day before, you put up what we called a grist. That was, the wheat, oats and so forth. You would take that over

for feed for animals. Then you would trade wheat, generally wheat, for flour. In other words they wouldn't grind your own flour but they would give you flour in place of the wheat that you took over there. Let's see, after the fall of 1918 I went to Niagara Falls and worked that winter; 1918-1919. Then I came back to Medina.

M Were you going to school during this time?

A No. I quit at 14; 2 years of high school.

M Where was your school?

A I came to Medina High School, here, first and second year high, 13 and 14.

M An elementary school right there in Millville? It wasn't in that old academy

A Yes, it sure was! But they didn't use the upstairs at that time. I never was in the upstairs of that place. I don't know why. But they didn't use it as a school and the doors were locked, going up there. I guess we weren't quite so mischievous. We didn't unlock it and go up as they do today, probably. (laughs). Yeah, that's where I finished my elementary school. Then I came to Medina, two years. First and second year high school.

M How did you come?

A Well, various ways. I could stay with my Grandmother but she didn't let me go outside or anything. She was afraid I was going to do something wrong. (laughs). I wasn't quite used to that. I was used to doing things. So, I drove a horse or I rode a bicycle and at one time, <sup>they</sup> used to have a well, we called it a carry-all: a three-seated wagon with a team of horses would come out to Millville and pick up, maybe ten people.

M You mean, just for school children? Or anybody?

A Just for school children. It was covered. A sleigh in the winter-time; wheels in the summer-time. Once in awhile I'd ride that but usually I would ride my bicycle or ride the horse.

M If you drove a horse, where would you leave it?

A They had what they called drive-barns. There were about three of them in Medina. They had horses to rent and you could stable your horses there. In other words, I could come in in the morning and leave the horse there all day and they would feed it at noon and so forth. Then I would drive it home at night.

M Well, school must have been the old academy? What was the nearest drive-barn where you could leave your horse?

A Right down on North Main Street, just north of Pearl Street. There blacksmith shops, drive-barns.... along where the dry-cleaner is and so forth; all on that side. Nothing on this side. That's on the canal side.

M What about your own father and mother? A little bit about them?

A Yes. Father started farming and worked for a farmer up until 1905; then he w

Warren Amos

farming for himself. In this one place, we lived only for one year, which was on the Town Line Road, south and east of Millville. Then the next year we went down on Lee Street to the Ferris farm, it was known then, which has a stone, double house. We lived in one side and the Ferris family in the other. We were there from 1906-1909.

M When were you born, Warren... by the way?

A 1900. That's hard to keep track of!! (laughs). Then when the Grandfather died, why we went up on my mother's place, 1909-1913 when when he quit farming and moved to Millville. Then he worked in Medina. He worked at S.A.Cook and Co. for \$8.85 a week !! In other words, 15¢ an hour and you quit at 5 o'clock Saturday! So they deducted 15¢; instead of \$9.00, you got \$8.85 for a week.

M Did he make furniture there?

A Well, he worked in the wood-working shop.

M They didn't have electric tools then, did they?

A Yes. Yes, today every machine has a separate motor. In those days they had what they called line-shafts. It's a shaft with pulleys on and you had a row of machines and a separate belt to each one of them. Now, today they all have separate motors on them. That was called a mill-wrench-job to install those line-shafts and put up the machinery and so forth which was quite a trade. No... mill-right. Then I came back to Medina in the spring of 1919 and worked a couple weeks at S.A.Cook and Co., came down with the flu. When I recovered, they didn't need me any more so that was the extent of S.A.Cook and Co. Then I went to the Canning Factory and worked thru transplanting tomatoes and thru the pea season.

M What Canning Factory was that?

A That factory was in Medina; over where Bernz-o-matic is now; Birds-eye Snyder wound up there, but that was ahead of that; two companies ahead of that.... Onley Canning Company!! That's right. Then I went over to a Toy Factory on East Center Street.

M Toy Factory! Before Fisher-Price?

A Oh yes! Charlie Howard in Albion, with Dr. Warren Stocking and Edgar Gould was the head mechanic there. They had a big setup of toys. But everything was too competitive. Apparently it didn't work out. In other words, the winter that I worked there before Christmas, the fall before, I worked nights making little wooden wheels. They were about 2" in diameter and about 3/8 thick. They also had a hole thru them for an axle ~~as~~ to go in and Ed Gould invented the tools to work on a lathe that would automatically do that. You would take a stick of wood, maple, about 32" long and put it in a lathe and just keep turning and turning and cutting the wheels off and

getting shorter and shorter until you use up the whole stick. I earned \$5. a night there. 'Iake about 5,000 of those so I did pretty well. Well, then I asked for a raise and didn't get it (laughs), so I hired out to the Medina Cold Storage for a year. It was owned by Charlie Dye and Howard Petis. That's the storage that's on the south side of the railroad yet, and I worked thru that winter and the next spring and during that time Rowley Co. bought that storage. They had a storage on the ~~many~~ north side of the RR and of course, there was a different foreman and so forth and ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> were going to build a cider mill. We were digging for the foundation with a shove and so forth which I never did like anyway (laughs), so I worked there; I don't know just how long but anyway, the foreman for the Rowley Co. came out and said if they got a chance for another job about Wednesday, better take it because he'd have to lay me off on a Saturday. And I said, "No, you haven't gotta do that." And he said, "why?" And I said, "Well, I never liked digging dirt and I'm all thru right now!" (laughs).. So I didn't get laid off; I quit!

M Warren, was there... did the train stop there at that time?

A That's where the Senior Citizen's is. That was the passenger station. The passenger station over where the furniture store is... was the freight yard.

M Where was this Rowleys that you were working on?

A Well, that was the Dye and Petis Cold Storage but they owned one on the north side at that time. They bought one on the south side and put the cider mill in there. Then I went to the Niagara Sprayer, it was known in them days and working in the machine shop. I worked there from April some-time until August; belonged to Company F and went to camp in August and when I came back, they were shut down... which they did for a month or two in a year. Chemical machine shop, everything shut down.

M Company F..... was that the Army?

A National Guard. I belonged to that for 3 years from 1919-1922. While I wasn't working up there my uncle was putting on the metal ceilings in the old stone school-house, which was moved to build new school-house there; the old stone school-house burned down a few years ago.

M Was that where you went to school to start with? That became a library? On Ann Street?

A Yes. The old Academy burned down. Metal ceilings in there at that time and then I worked with him from 1920 thru '24; April of 1925 I went down to the town of Greece and worked with my wife's uncle, building houses. I had \$500. to start business with and he may have had more but that's what he put in too. So we started building houses with a capital of \$1,000. And the first



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house didn't sell too readily and the fellow by the name of Davenport owned the Times-Union in Rochester was developing this tract where we were building and he gave us four contracts ~~and~~ on butt-lots, as they were called.... BUTT-LOTS; in other words, they backed up to a corner lot and they called them "butt-lots". They were hard to sell; so we built four, small, two-story houses on these that he gave us for contract. Kind or put us on our feet and we sold the house we started and from there on, we got sold before we started to build. And we were doing all right, but the depression came along. In other words, we used to get a first mortgage from the Prudential Life Insurance Co. and then there was the second mortgage which they did down in Rochester. You don't hear too much of it around here but down there that was the thing to do. And the second mortgage was to be paid off first. But, if for some reason you lost the place, unless if you held the second mortgage, unless you could buy the first mortgage, why you just lost that was all. But it did pay off first and most people at that time figured if they got their second mortgage paid off, that that was pretty good shape. And they didn't pay off their first mortgage too readily. So, then in January 1928, we couldn't work at it any more, I came back to Medina and bought a house with a home-bakery in, hoping that we could make a living out of that because the carpenter work wasn't good; couldn't get material too well; so I don't know just how long we ran it but the S.A. Cook factory on East Ave. closed and I used to open the store at six o'clock in the morning; people would stop for tobacco and so forth and so on; well, when that closed, people weren't going by so that was out.

M Excuse me; you said you ran a bakery. You and Grace?

A Yes. She did the baking.

M She was a marvelous cook!

A Yes; she learned it herself. Her mother worked all the time and she just went in and baked it herself. If it didn't turn out why it was just too bad. But nobody gave her any training, she just done it on her own.

M What kind of things did she bake: cookies, pies, bread?

A Cookies, pies, bread and I rigged up an ordinary hand-mixer with a motor; so I would get up about five o'clock in the morning and mix the bread and then I would go to work at eight o'clock in the morning, come back at night and deliver, and then keep the store open until nine o'clock at night. So I put in quite long hours there. Finally I said to her....

M Did she have a wood-stove to cook on, or what?

A Coal. Started originally but that was in there when we went there. Then I replaced it with a double gas stove. So we had two ovens with 8 burners on the top.



Warren Amos

M You couldn't regulate that like we do the stoves today? No?... Where was this bakery?

A On the corner of East Center and East Avenue in Medina. Charlie Coon owned it ahead of me and he probably ran it for ten years. He ran it as a bakery. Well then, we weren't making any money. I guess we were probably our best customers. We ate out of the store and so forth and so on. (laughs)... So I said to the wife one day well, we are going to starve to death anyway so let's sit down and do it gracefully. So we closed the store up. We didn't starve but it was quite a battle. I think we ran it about three years. It was a lot of work (reply). Then I went back to carpentry again. I worked about a year and a half, I guess it was, with my uncle, John B. Miller. He was Supervisor for the Town of Ridgeway for 2 terms and he got so he didn't have to work so much and he was going to Florida in the winter time. Then this one time he had a sister out in South Dakota, so he went out there for the summer. Harry Sharmin and I both worked for him and we said, well if we've got to dig up our work part of the year, we might as well do it all the time. Yes, (reply) this was carpentry. So, he and I went into partners until during the War 2 , we couldn't get material and I went up to Harrison and worked for a year and 8 months; because you couldn't get material or do anything. Then I came back in May of '45. I went there just in the latter part of December 1943 until May of 1945 and then I came back and started work as a carpenter and worked at it ever since.

M While you're on the War, do you remember seeing any of the Prisoners of War over there at Heinz ?

A Oh yes! They built that barracks for them and there was a lot of them started and so forth.

M How many were there? Were they Japanese, Italians or...?

A I have no idea. Mostly Germans.

M Did any of them stay on or did they ship out?

A I have no idea. I don't hardly think so.

M How did the town feel about them? If we tried to do that today, well...

A Didn't seem to be any question about it. I mean, it was war time and that was the thing to do and that gave us help in Heinz' and so forth.

M Did they ever have any escapes that you know of?

A Ayeah; I think there was a very few... very, very few. I don't know if they ever re-captured them. I kind of forgot. But there wasn't anything like it was today. I mean you weren't scared to go out on the street or anything. So, I don't know how many houses in Medina I've built.

M What was the first one? Can you remember? By yourself or with somebody?

Warren Amos

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## Warren Amos

A M Just any house you built; maybe not even in Medina, just in Orleans County.

A Well.... I'm trying to remember. What's these people's names across the street? Yes! Benz. Well, first house I built on my own, I think, was where Howard Benz lived. That would be the father of this boy, over here that was over on ~~xxxx~~ Ensign Avenue. Then, it probably was in '45 and I built one for Robert Neal. He worked with me and built that one on that street: Meade Ave. Then another one that, I've forgot the name that we built it for; Eugene Albone, I built his house on the same street (Meade Ave.) and on Gwinn Street, I built my son's house, one for Eldred Short where the Methodist parsonage is now; Don Canham's house, I built; one across the road from Don Canham would be Earl Foster's. I built four new houses for him in six years. There was something wrong with all of them that he just didn't like so he kept on building them (laughs), and so I built four of them for him in six years!

M Did you do most of this work yourself?

A Yeah. One time I had two men with me all the time: Robert Neal and his father both worked with me at one time and then Robert went to work for Bramer, when he (Bramer) opened up on East Center Street. And of course, I built my own here.

A M Well, here on Highland Avenue you have seen some changes! Was this St. paved?

A Yeah!! Oh yes, long before that! This was one fo the first cement streets here in Medina! To my knowledge. I built Bill Boyle's house down here, quite a few years ago, about the same time I built here, which was was '57; I that was about '34 that I built that and I wanted this lot at that time, but Mr. Muchow owned it. Said he would sell it but his wife said to keep it; maybe the grandchild would want it. Wouldn't cost them much to keep it so; and then she passed away and he came to me and wanted to know if I still wanted the ~~land~~ lot. I told him I sure did! So then I built here in '57 and Boyle's in '34. Van Hungerford's house I built, on Howell Parkway; I don't know what year that was either. And with my uncle, we opened Howell Parkway. (John Miller was my uncle... reply). We put the first buildings in there. He was the contractor. He built the one... Fred Howell opened Howell Parkway and the one on the corner, he built for himself and then Ernie Reynolds built the next one towards the north. We built those two in 1921.

M Gosh! You were young then too. Just twenty-one! Yes, you are still young! That does seem awfully young now, doesn't it?

A That's right! Yeah! I was still working for him and unmarried and I think in '23 we built the J.C. Posson house. (I was working for my uncle.. reply). And then a couple of years after that we built the one where Corliss lives. Yes, that's on the corner of West Center and Erie... Claude Grinnell's stree

Warren Amos

That probably cost \$40,000. at the time that was built and then the Depression came and so forth and the people that owned it, lost their money and doctor Corliss bought it for \$7,000. Believe it or not! Tommy Robbins father had it originally built. Tommy Robinson; yeah.

M Warren, you spoke about your getting married. Where did you meet Grace?

A The year that I worked at the canning factory, she was working there. That's where I met her.

M What was her name? Was her home in Medina?

A Potter, Grace Potter. She was born in Medina. They were originally from Clarendon but her folks came to Medina and she was born here in 1900. Well, then, her grandfather died and the family went back to Clarendon and worked on the farm until 1913 and then they returned here. The rest of the children were born in Clarendon or Medina, one or the other. She was the first one born, in 1900, here.

M You met in the canning factory! Come on... then what?!! (laughter)

A Well, she was quite bashful; ~~and~~ and I guess I was a little forward; I'm not sure about that! So I used to flirt with her a little bit, going by and so forth. So we got a date, and our first date was in a roller-skating rink over on Ensign Avenue. Yeah (reply), know where the Taylor Furniture Factory was over on Ensign Avenue? Well, that was originally a skating rink, very prominent thing. That was our first date.

M Now, when were you married? Was this a church wedding, or home?

A July 8, 1924. No. We were married at her.... they lived.... folks didn't own the place but they lived across from Muchows in that little red house is now. So, we had a double wedding. The next younger girl, her name was Minnie. Yeah (reply) her sister. And her husband was John Wilson and we had a double wedding there at the house.

M That was quite common at that time wasn't it, to get married at home?

A Yes. My daughter Betty got married at home too! And so, I was working at carpenter work and knew Mr. O'Donnell, of the lumber yard, very well and I got a big canvass from there and we put up a place so we had a cateress; she took care of the food. There was such a large family that just the uncles and aunts, on my wife's side, came because there would have been too many to take care of with cousins and so forth. Yes (reply) we had the wedding inside and then we had this up against the house and so forth.

M What did she wear? Do you remember? Was it a flowing gown with a train?

A (much laughter). Oh ~~no~~! Don't ask me that! I couldn't tell you. I think it had a train on it but we didn't go down an aisle and so forth, just there in the living room. A Baptist minister by the name of Allen married us. She and her sister went to the Baptist church, never belonged to it but

in her younger days went to the Baptist church.

M Now, how many children did you have?

A Two; a son and daughter. (in reply) "Pete" is really named Bernard and (reply) is the eldest. Sixteen months apart. (in reply) My daughter's name is Betty Warren; that's confusing. It's spelt the same as mine. Her married name is Warren (a reply). I don't know just how the boy got the name of "Pete" but it was in his real young school days that it... and he's always been known by that; most people know him by that! Some don't know him any other way. Yeah, he was 18 June 20th and October he was on the way overseas; inducted into the Army and in October he came home. He never even had a furlough; he came home and stayed two nights and one day; and he told me that he was on his way over but couldn't tell his mother that. Went to the state of Washington and from there to Hawaii and the Pacific and all over.

M What branch of the service was he in?

A Anti-aircraft; so he could go with any of them: Army, Navy. He did serve in the Army; he also served in the Navy. And he was on boat one time and his buddy was up on... and he got killed up there. He was supposed to go up on the next turn. But he came home without any scars whatever which was very fortunate.

M What about your automobile? Do you remember, Warren, the first time you saw an automobile?

A Yeah! That's going to be back in 1904 I think. My father worked for this farmer; his name was Porter Stocking down on Lee Street. I was four years old.

M Now, was that the same Mr. Stocking that was with Charlie Howard?

A No, no... that was related but distant relation; 'twasn't even an uncle. They were going to take us for a ride on a Sunday. Of course, it was cranked and I was in the car in the garage and he cranked it and it was in gear! It started and squeezed him up between two by fours. Of course, my father and I was there but we didn't know anything about an automobile, you know. Finally it stalled so it didn't hurt him. He was kind of a thin man and it was a good thing he was. That was my first experience with an automobile! Then the mailman, he had one: a little Brush. Yes (reply) a Brush automobile. Had a little one seat on the backend with no top over it and then there was place for two people in the front of the thing. He delivered mail; his name was Lyman Potter from Knowlesville. No (reply), no relationship to my wife. Then in 1913, my parents got a Model-T and I was 13 years old. It was a 1910 Model-T and, I don't know whether I should tell this or not (laughs). A couple invited us out to dinner and Father said, "well, all she wants is a ride"! (laughs). They had a daughter my age and my older sister was keeping

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company with a boy... the husband she married, Lloyd Pask. Father said, "Well why don't you take the car and go for a ride and we'll have to sit to home!" So I did. And the fan belt came off and it got so hot it wouldn't run. I discovered what that was and I came home on two rims. We had to hitch up the horse the next morning and get more tires. (laughs). My father let me do things. I gotta give him credit for that; horses or automobiles or anything else. That's why I didn't like to stay with my grandmother because I was used to doing things. It was a good education in other words. I had a bicycle and if I didn't repair it, I didn't have a ride. And it was a good education. On a farm is a good place to give you a good idea of what you could do and so forth. He was very good at that!

M When did you get your own car?

A I wanted to buy a motorcycle in 1916; I would have been 16 years old, and my folks were pretty much against it, <sup>and they</sup> said, "Well, if you want to spend some money why don't you go in with us and we'll get a new Model-T. So, we did in 1916. I was in partnership with them until 1922. Then I got a Model-T coupe. Then in 1924, <sup>when</sup> I got married, we were going on a trip and I wanted a sedan so we could sleep in the car. Used to make a bed on the two seats, in the car. So I traded it for a 1921. I went downhill that time and I had that until 1926. I was in the town of Greece and bought a new Nash Light Six automobile. Then I drove that for 40,000 miles and junked it.

M How much was gasoline a gallon then?

A Well, when I first started driving it was about 12¢ a gallon. Two gallons for a quarter. So you could go out and have a pretty good time for a dollar. (Laughs) Which was about all the money we had usually. That's a fact. Yeah. And then let's see, I had a 1930 Model-A. Then I got a 1935 Chevrolet and I had that for 14 years. We couldn't buy one during the war years you know. The son came home; he didn't have a license before because of gas rations and so forth, so he came home and started driving it nights and I drove it daytime. Finally I said, "I don't think its going to stand up. You'd better get one for yourself". So I got a new one in 1949. I've driven Chevrolets ever since 1935 up until today.

M Warren, you've always been active in the ~~Methodist~~ church. Have you always been Methodist?

A Yes. I belonged to Millville. The wife never ... we joined in '49; children here in Medina. Children, Grace and I transferred here from Millville so we've been active ever since.

M Do you have any memories of the mill-race that went along South Main Street?

A Yes. When we first came to Medina, it was an open ditch on South Main St.

M Was it empty, do you mean?

A No, no. Still in operation, water running; then it came in front of the Cold

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Storage there and was covered with plank and in front of the City Hall was covered with plank. There at the City Hall it crossed Main St., and supplied that mill and then it went down to East Center St., and there was another mill down on E. Center St. and there was another mill and that was the water supply they got from there. But I can remember the open ditch when we first came here.

M Do you remember any bridges over them?

A Well, most every house had to have a narrow bridge to get across it, from the street to their own home I mean... Horse days, but very few of them in the village had horses at that time so...no (reply) I don't remember that the bridges were painted red...

M Wasn't it sort of a hazzard for the little kids? Did they fall in ?

A I guess not. They grew up with it and there it was.(laughs) I mean, if you grow up with something, it isn't a hazzard really.

M You probably remember the dam then, on the south side of the Maple Ridge Road

A Oh yes! They had an ice-house there. That was a big business then. They cut ice in the winter-time and put it in there in, probably 300# blocks, and they buried it in sawdust; sawdust below it and a layer of blocks and then sawdust on top of it. And that was a business here. I mean delivering ice in the summertime. When I first started building houses, we used to have a place that the refrigerator would set and you could ice it from the outside. So you had a hole cut in the outside and right into the refrigerator. Yeah, my Dad built in '20 and '21 I'm sure they had them both there on Howell Parkway, those first two houses. I know those refrigerators were iced from the outside.

M That would be like they used to put the milk bottles then?

A Yeah. That's another thing. There was four dairymen there and they each delivered milk every day!

M Now, who were they? Do you remember?

A Eskelson was one; Ward was another one; Medina Dairy is next to the City Hall where the Youth Center is. That was Medina Dairy there. And then there was one down on the Moran Road... had a dairy.

end of side #1 of Tape

A .... visit my Grandmother or <sup>uncle and</sup> my Aunt. They got milk from Flory Ross which is on Oak Orchard Street. Floyd Bacon's wife's daughter.. and they used to come along with about a 3 gallon can of milk and a dipper and dip it out into your bucket. That was before there was... and they delivered with a horse in that same way, back, well, that would be between '12 and '20 probably.

M How did they "keep it" in the summer time?



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A I haven't the slightest idea! Well... it must have been with ice. Yeah, they did it with ice. Well, I mean it wasn't a huge affair anyway. I mean, Maureen Bacon's father was just a farmer and had these cows, peddled from that. Then they got to bottling. Did a lot of work for Alvin Eakelton and his dairy in the alley there off from West Avenue. He had the four Boyle boys working for him: Bill, the oldest one was Alton... no, three boys.. and Ernest. They worked in the dairy, yeah.(reply). The two older ones delivered and Bill worked in the dairy. Of course, they all helped in the dairy before they went out on the route. This Alton Boyle had a farm on Maple Ridge and he had his own cows and he'd get up in the morning, milk those cows, come in here and go to work at five o'clock in the morning. He'd go home at noon and work on the farm 'till dark. He still lives up there on Pample Ridge and he's still got a dairy farm there, but he doesn't work like that anymore! (reply) He'd be about 67 probably. Yes, that's Bill's oldest brother. Milford, his name is.

M Can we go back to Millville for a minute? Was this Zibba Roberts (Zibba) eye still living when you were in Millville?

A Oh yes. I knew him real well. Well, I knew who he was for years.

M What was this story about: he had a barn filled with automobiles?

A That would be a son of his, I think. I should know the name of them, but I don't. They were small automobiles.

M Whatt happened there?

A Well, he was supposed to have the agency for them and never did sell any, that I know of, so he had them there on display I guess and they never did get sold or anything.

M We were talking about Millville and wondering: why did they call it Millville? Were there mills there?

A I don't think there was ever a mill there. There are creeks going thru there but I don't think there was ever a ~~xxx~~ mill there. I don't know how it got the name of Millville.

M At one time there were Quakers there. Were they all gone by the time you were there? Yes (reply). Was the Presbyterian church there? Was it active?

A No Presbyterian to my knowledge. The red, brick one? Well, I guess they called it a Congregational or something like that but it was never in use. A few of them that used to go there kept it up and kept it open and wouldn't let anything in there. We did have IOGT meetings in there but we had to stay in a certain place.

M What's an IOGT meeting?

A International Order of Good Templar. No (reply) that was not Masonic. No (reply) not Odd Fellows. Neither one of them. I mean, that was a temperance organiz-

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ation; Independent Order of Good Templars. This lawyer that used to live over on West Avenue was very high in that. Yes, Gordon Payne, came from Jedd. It was one more place to go and have fun (laughs). You had to make your own fun in those days. That's right.

M Do you remember your first movie?... Speaking of fun...

A I don't know what year it was but it was down on East Center Street and it cost five cents to get into a movie. They had a piano player there. That was about where the Legion building was; maybe it was in the same building. It was right in there. It was called Scienic (spelling???) Theater.

M Do you know who played the piano?

A Yeah. Beth, Elizabeth Burchel and Walter Crisp sang solos there.

M My mother used to play the piano in the silent film days. Do you remember the movie? Maybe with Marie Dressler and Wally Berry?

A Oh no. It was ahead of that, even before Rudolph Valentino even. Keystone comedy. Used to come in Saturday nights from Millville here to Medina. Yes (reply) Saturday night was something!! Banana-splits were fifteen cents and boy we could...; yeah they were good. Well, you came in here and bought a banana-split and that was your evening! Yes (reply) all the stores were open on Sat. night and everybody walked around. Barbershops stayed open until maybe one o'clock in the morning. In other words, Merchants stayed open until eleven o'clock, way back; then they would go. And after they closed up, go over to the barber-shop and get a hair-cut or shave for Sun. So they were open until one o'clock in the morning.

M In the barber-shop that you would go to, did they have your own equipment, aside for you, or what?

A No I never had that but a lot of the merchants did. They had their own shaving cup, mug, and brush set. They were set up on a shelf and then when they'd come down to go to work, why they'd go in there first and get a shave and go on to work.

M How much would that cost about?

A 25¢ for a hair-cut; 15¢ for a shave. Across the road here was a barber.

M Do you mean Jo McGinn's husband?

A Yes. Ray McGinn. Well, I lived in the country and the neighbor used to cut my hair. I was probably ten years old before I ever saw a barber shop and Ray McGinn's father was a barber. And the first quarter I got to go and get a haircut, I went to Ray McGinn's father and got a haircut. That was some. I mean to have to go to a barbershop and get a haircut. And most all barbershops, they all had at least two barbers and generally three and there was one on West Center Street, across from the shirt factory there. In the bar-

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they had a bath tub in there so you could come in there and for ten cents or something and get a bath. Also they had a kid who would shine your shoes while you were getting a haircut. I was always capable of shining my own.

M Warren, who was the first President that you remember?

A Theodore Roosevelt, I think, that was vivid in my memory. That would be 1912, well he was the "Bull-Moose". Two terms ahead of that he came in when McKinley .. so I remember Teddy Roosevelt.

M What about newspapers; do you remember them being sold on the streets, with the newsboys calling out "extra, extra..." and that sort of thing?

A Well yeah. The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle was in existence and still is and that was the rural paper around here at the time. That was delivered with the rural mail-carrier. You'd probably get it a day late, coming out of Rochester and then had to be delivered by rural carrier.

M Do you remember on election day, how you got the returns (of the vote)?

A Well, generally, about two or three days afterwards (laughs). That's right! Yeah, when they got radio and could get the returns the same night, why, you'd sit up most of the night until you'd get the returns, the presidential returns and so forth. Then along came the t.v.; you watched it and so forth.

M Did you go downtown to the telegraph office, or something?

A In my younger days? No. I think we always waited for our paper. But I can remember Theodore Roosevelt distinctly.

M Do you remember any of the Presidents that came around to this area? Or their wives?

A Bryan; he came. I've heard my folks tell about it, and had a rally down north of Knowlesville... William Cullen Bryan. I never went to one but I've heard them tell about his coming there.

M That was at Slaughter's Groves.

A Yeah. I've heard them tell about it, so it was before my day.

M Do you have any memory of any big fires in Medina?

A Yeah. Mahar's Furniture Factory. It started in the daytime. I was working at the west end of town somewhere and I had to go to my home, on East Center and had to go home for something. To get home to East Ave., I had to go through the O'Donnell Lumber Yard, on account of the hoses and so forth; I got over there and looked back and, it was a long building, ~~xxx~~ three stories high. When I got over there, that thing was one mass of flames! I mean, that I ever saw, all in one piece! That was just a complete flame, all three floors. The full length of it. So, I remember that very distinctly Yes (reply) the old schoolhouse. Yeah, where the <sup>Grace</sup> Baptists are: Maynard's house. There was a hallow place in the center there and they built around it and so there was a vacant place in there and the fire got in there and they just couldn't get

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to it. They were the two most disasterous fires that I remember. The minister name was Fredericks:... he was short, with dark hair, vivacious. Yeah, that was... two fires...

M And the fire trucks were different a long time ago.

A Yeah. (There was something of a mystery about the Mahar fire. ....) I never was a fireman tho, never auxillary or anything.

M Do you remember any of the BucketXbrigades? I can vaguely remember seeing a fire, in my hometown....

A I do remember the horsees the wagons with horsees; I remember that! Usually three horsees on there.

M Well..... (there is a pause here; then tape resumes).

A Well, want to get my father first? William Amos; my mother was Myra Gregory; my older sister was Iva, she was about three yrs. older than I. Then I and Alta was eight years younger. Alta Copp. She married Charlie Copp. Yes (reply three of us. That's all.

M That Gregory name, your mother's family goes way back. There were a lot of Gregorys that were original settlers.

A I've got a Gregory Bible here. Maybe you'd like to look at it?

M That family: I've never found any connection with Millville Gregorys and Arnold Gregory. Is there a connection?

A Not with my grandfather. My grandfather Gregory came up from Florida, up south of here; East Shelby.. Podunk. Yeah. That's where they originated. I mean, when he came from Vermont, apparently his parents settled up there. Why, I don't know. It was mostly swamp-land up there. I don't know why they did but they did. That's where he came from. Well, Grandmother too.

M Harry was your wife's brother, right? And he lived with you for how long?

A Thirty years. In other words both his parents died while he was in service in WW II and we took him in when he came home. Then, 2-3 years afterwards Grace had to have a tumor removed and he was with us, the children were with us, and Irving Smith that worked in Brundage Hardware was with us and, on the way home from the doctor (he told her that she a tumor of the uterus which would have to be removed), so I said, "Well, let's fire the boarders then. If you're going to have that operation you've got to be rested up for it". So I said that I'd tell Smithy in the morning and you tell Harry. So, the next morning, well, there's a history to that. My grandfather and grandmother <sup>took him</sup> ~~came in~~ when he was 7 years old. No (reply) M Irving Smith. His parents separated and his mother didn't want his father to have him; so grandfather and grandmother Gregory took him at 7 years of age. He wanted to live with them when I was born, to see me in pants. Of course, boys wore dresses back

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in those days. (laughs) So, he really was one of the family to me. I mean, he was always there. Well, he worked for Chase and Breed Hardware where Brundage is now. 1913 I think he started working there as delivery boy. Then Grandmother died in '27. He lived with her until '27 and then he went out on his own. Chase's wanted him to come over and live with them so he'd take care of the furnace and shovel walks and so forth. Whether he heard them say something or whether he saw too much of them, working and living with them and so forth, anyway he was on the verge of insanity. He got up one morning was going to leave, packing up. <sup>They</sup> called my uncle John Miller. Then when I got up they called me so I went down. Doctor Waters was the doctor. I went in and got one look at him. His eyes were starey. So I said to Doc Waters, "What are you going to do with him?" And he said "Well, I'll send him to a sanitarium"... He'll die within two weeks", I said. "What do you mean?" "They will take care of him. But I said, "You don't know that man!" Grandmother got all his jobs for him and did everything for him. He had no responsibility until the time she died. So I asked him if he'd like to come over and stay with us for awhile. I had him 18 years! So... maybe we shouldn't have done a lot of these things.

M Then they stayed right on, even tho Grace had her operation?

A No, her sister quit Harrison's and she took the both of them. Well then, they started going to Texas every winter and then we took Harry back; never did take Irving back. Irving died in 1956.

M Well Warren, can we see your Gregory Bible?

A Yeah!

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end of taped interview  
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Mc Warren, I'd like to ask you again, if you would tell us when you started building houses and where?... as we continue.

A Okay. 1925 - 1928 I was building new houses in the town of Greece with my wife's uncle, Deidrick K. Millis. 1925, four houses in a new development called Brookridge; 1926, four houses in different locations in the town of Greece. I've forgotten the names of the people.

Mc What kind of material did you use? Was it mostly wood?

A All wood. They were less expensive houses. I mean, they weren't elaborate houses. They were single floor houses with basements.

Mc Did you do the electrical work, or the plumbing?

A No; we hired that done. Carpentry work; we built the walls and so forth; and concrete floors. In 1927 two new houses in another development; a street called Shadyway. From 1930 thru 1967 I built the following houses on different streets in MEDINA. I do not remember the order, or the years: Gwinn St., Eldred Short, Donald Canham, "Pete" (Bernard) Amos, Earl Foster, Jay Cortwright, Russell Houserma and Norman Bacon . On Meade Avenue: Robert Neal, Eugene Albone, Frank Weizorek, Lake Shore Lumber Company, Chester Musto. On Ellwood Avenue: Howard Benz and Roy Koch. On Worthy Avenue, Stanley Yaskivich. On Howell Parkway, Van Hungerford. On Davis Avenue, Earl Foster and Wayne Ward. On Williams Street, Earl Foster. On West Center Street, Earl Foster. On Highland Avenue: Milford Boyle and my own home. On Locust St., Claude Grinnell, Mrs. Ross and Mrs. Bickel. On North St., two houses and I've forgotten the names. Florence Ave., Eldred Short and Daniel Petters. Erie St., George Calaghan. In EAGLE HARBOR, LaVerne Hill. In ELBA; I've forgotten the name. ALBION: Clinton St., Mario Dematio; East Ave., Simmons. On Main St., LYNDONVILLE: Dave Crosby; North St., Woodworth; Second St. I have forgotten the name. On the MAPKE RIDGE ROAD: Claude Pask, Francis Lane, V.J. Fuller, O'Donnell Brothers. On Elizabeth St., Herbert Kendall. MIDDLEPORT, James Ross. OAKFIELD, Clarence Green, and daughter Betty and Lloyd Warren.

Mc Did you draw up the floor plans, or did the people?

A No. I didn't usually draw up plans. Perhaps they would have a plan and I might revise it to suit what they wanted, and so forth. My own home here is the third one built from this plan. The first one was Jay Cortwright's, over on Gwinn Street. Then the second one of the same house was on North St., and I enlarged it. The origi

nal was 24 X 40; that one over there was 26 X 42; my own home here is 28 X 44. So they had been re-arranged. The original plan was where my den or bedroom is, was a playroom for a child; and there had a porch where you could go out onto the porch from this playroom. Mine, I've used for a den but it has been used for a bedroom and still could be. There are closets in there.

Mc Where did you get your materials from? Were they usually wood?

A Most all of them are frame, or wood construction, some brick veneer. Van Hungerford's was brick veneer. My own home was brick veneer. The one in Albion on East Ave. was brick veneer. Those are the only ones I think of.

Mc Where did you get your materials from? Any special place?

A Lake Shore Lumber Company in the later years. But in the 20's and until mid-30's, we bought of O'Donell Lumber Company.

Mc We were talking earlier about this. Would you want to tell again, about how the O'Donell Brothers got started?

A Francis and his brother Burt, with their father William, started a sawmill near West Barre. From there they came to Medina and the father, William, started the lumber yard here, which they continued for, I don't know how many years. Forgot when they went out.

Mc Where is the Lake Shore Lumber Co.? In the same place?

A That was the one that burned down several years ago, on Commercial Street.

Mc You did other carpentry work thru the years?

A Yeah! Lots of repair jobs; building onto and remodeling kitchens. I didn't work strictly at building new houses because I had all these other things we used to do.

Mc You took out the window seat in our house and made a nice china-cabinet, and I heard that you did quite a bit in Dr. Sterling's house.

A Remodeled his kitchen! Dr. Cotter's: remodeled his kitchen. I couldn't remember how many of those. But in the town of Greece it was strictly new houses. Here in Medina we did everything! I mean, remodeled and so forth.

Mc You have been active in the United Methodist Church for years. It seems like every time somebody picks up a hammer, it's Warren! What do you remember about your work in the UMC in Medina?



A In 1934, replaced the steeple with flat deck and parapet wall; Harry Sharmin working with me at that time. In 1941 installed new ceilings and side walls in the sanctuary, stairways and upper entrance hall, installed wainscoting and new floors on stairs and lower hall. Mr. Sharmin was still working with me then.... Now I'm on my own. In 1956, installation of new electronic organ and complete remodel of the chancel; altar rail cut to make a center entrance. In 1973 installation of the new pipe organ. Once more, remodel of the chancel and the new console moved to the main floor of the sanctuary. In 1976 a new kitchen in one of the class-rooms on the lower floor; new cabinets with formica counter tops, 2 pass-thru openings, single sink with disposer and 3 compartment stainless-steel sinks, new stoves and refrigerators. Harlan Swan worked with me for the plumbing on that. And that's about it.

Mc "That's about it", except that I remember the date of Jan.6, 1965 and you went down to the church and that was a day that you do remember! Would you want to tell us about that?

A I was not working at the church, but the toll part of the bell (the casting) was broken on it. It didn't operate and I was going up into the attic to get into the belfry. Nobody was in the church at that time. I went up this ladder (which I had been up lots and lots of times) and when I pushed the trap door back, I felt the ladder slip. I had it back far enough so I could grab ahold and hang on. I wasn't too frightened because a lot of times I've pulled the ladder up with my foot. But this time it didn't come up and I couldn't put any pressure on it or it would slide out from under me

Mc Did you yell, or call out for help?

A No, but you can do a lot of thinking in a few seconds I'll tell you So, I had to make a decision. There was no one around at all and I decided that I couldn't ride the ladder down because it was about four foot from the wall. A wooden ladder, and it might possibly splinter and injure me that way. So I threw the ladder out of the way so I wouldn't land on that and simply dropped to the floor... about 18 feet.

Mc Did it hurt immediately?

A No, not very badly. I sat there for a minute and then I looked at my ankles and it looked so they were starting to swell. I thought I'd better do something, so I slid down 2 flights of stairs and walked 30 feet.

Mc You walked???!!

A Yes, to my car, in the back of the church, and then drove it home. I got here and called to my wife. I couldn't bear any pressure on my feet, they hurt that badly. So I said "You'd better get the daughter-in-law". (Shirley). She lives only two blocks away. So, I already had my feet out of the doorway. So, while she was doing that, I said, "Well, I used to creep before I walked"; so I got down on my knees and crept into the house. I came in here.

Mc Was there any snow at that time?

A No... well, yes! There was snow. Let's see. That was the 6th of January. Not any huge amounts tho. And we immediately called Dr. Sterling. He came over and got a look at the feet. "Get the ambulance!" So, they didn't tell me, but they... well, I was with three months of Social Security, or 65 years of age. So the children started getting Social Security. I could do a lot of thinking, you know. I later found out that Dr. Sterling said that I would never walk again! Dr. Williams was in the hospital with Dr. Sterling (Williams was a surgeon), and he said he wouldn't have anything to do with my feet... that he wouldn't know what to do. So, they took x-rays, sent them to Buffalo to a bone specialist. He wrote back and said that there was nothing to pin to and nothing to screw to. He said that all you could do was to re-shape them into heels and put them in pressure casts. Yes (reply) they were totally crushed! They had to be re-formed into heels. They were flat. So then, Dr. Williams did the operation; but they didn't think they would heal on account of my age, the lack of blood circulation everything was against it. Dr. Sterling was a couple days late in getting the casts off and my son asked him why. He said, "I'm scared. I don't know what I'm going to find!" But, there was just one hair-line crack that they could find on one side! They had completely healed! So I started walking with a walker; then finally outside a little bit and wound up going around the block twice a day, without the walker.

Mc I can remember seeing you walk up and down our sidewalk!!

A Yeah! Then I decided I could do away with the walker and just use a cane. So, I carried the walker all the way around, just in case I wanted to set it down. I used the cane for a few days, and then I was back walking again!

Mc Now you are out roller-skating every morning!! (laughter)

- A No! The last time I did that was up in Olcott where I learned to rollerskate. I went around three times, fell down every trip and took them off. I've never had them on since! (laughter).
- Mc You had whirlpool baths for your feet, here at home?
- A Yes, that's right. Dr. Sterling told me that I'd have to go to the hospital at least twice a week and have whirlpool treatments. I said, "I think you can rent them and put them in your bath tub." He said, "I never heard of it." So I went to Jay's Drug Store and
- z they did have them to rent. So I rigged it up in my own bath tub and with a wheel-chair, so I could go in there and take the treatments twice a day, which I think helped them a lot to heal. Because if twice a week would do some good, why, twice a day would do a lot more. So I had it for several weeks here.
- Mc Do your feet bother you at all now?
- A Yeah! Ankles more than heels. I was "shucked" together. All my pants had to be shortened. I was a good inch shorter than I had been.
- Mc It didn't affect your back?
- A No. I was lucky and I did have a lot of help from "upstairs".
- Mc What about the working conditions in this area? Any unions?
- A Medina never had unions!! In other words, the city fathers here, most of them owned the factorys and foundry, which was the chair factory, furniture factory and foundrys, and they allowed no outsiders to come in here! There were no unions! Mahar Brothers, they tried to "unionize" and they "struck" and they brought in "scab" upholsters. They werex not capable of doing the work that their regular med did and they lost their business. They were even known in Europe... shipped furniture over to them, and thru this strike and bringing in the cheap help, they lost their business and finally folded up.
- Mc What happened to the "scab" workers? Did they leave or stay?
- A No, they left. I don't know where they were from; probably out of Buffalo. I'm not sure.
- Mc How has the construction work changed today? Has it changed much?
- A Oh yeah! Very, very much. In other words, all sawing was done by hand saws. Today we have the power saws and so forth. The time that I worked on the Masonic Temple, in Medina in '23 when that was built onto, all was with hand saws. And you took care of your saws! If you hit a nail, it wasn't so good because you felt very unhappy! ~~kfxyxkxkxkxkxkxk~~ But when you remodel, that's a different

thing again because you are bound to do that. George Benz sharpened my hand saws for years and did a beautiful job. Yes, in Medina. Then when I was working in the town of Greece, Mr. Millis' father used to sharpen my saws and he was a good man with them too. Now today, you get them filed with machines. Men don't do that anymore.

Mc Well, it's been a good life Warren and you've certainly made a good contribution of many homes. I know you've added onto "Pete" and Shirley's home. They keep adding! (laughter)

A Yeah! As the family increased! I'm remodeling the bathroom right now. Yes, that is a lovely house.

Mc You are going to be working on the Methodist parsonage some more; right?

A Well, I did a little. We put a vent in the toilet off the kitchen. A few years ago we vented the kitchen stove and then put new cupboards in. We went into the same thing to vent this toilet room. We put new chimes on. They haven't had a back-door chime in years! "Barney" (Rev. Barnard Howe) says, "You'll get your new minister; why sure, you'll fix it all up for them!" (laughter)

Going back to the O'Donell Brothers, and speaking of electric typewriters, I think they had the first electric typewriter that I ever heard about, or anything. It was a huge affair. Leona Canfield (Mrs. Lawrence Canfield) was the office girl and she was working that thing. It was fairly bobbing up and down right on the floor! It was a huge thing, but she certainly could operate it. And with no mistakes. And, you'd call an order in and she'd answer the telephone you know. You'd just start reading it off and she'd write it down. One day I called in and she apparently wasn't there. Francis O'Donell's wife was there. Well, I started reading off what I wanted and so forth and she said, "Just a minute! This isn't Leona. This is Mrs. O'Donell." (laughter) So, she couldn't take it down like that. Leona Canfield was a whiz. Yes, she worked there for a long time. When she got thru, it took two, and then they didn't keep up! That's right!

\* \* \* \* \*

(Conclusion of taped, edited interview).

(Typed and edited by Helen M. McAllister)