Town of Wayne Historical Group

Wayne, N. Y.

# Interview With
# Mr. Walter Swarthout

December 14, 1998

# Introduction

Walter Swarthout was born September 16, 1914, and has been a resident of the Wayne, NY area his whole life. He was present during and in many cases played an active part in many of the important events and times of the town of Wayne. I know him as a friend of my mother, Gertrude Swarthout, and also as a valuable resource for our family's genealogy. He has a strong sense of history, both personal and general, and he has always been willing to help me when I had a question or a problem. Walter was interviewed by some members of the Town of Wayne Historical Group on December 14, 1998 with the idea of recording some of the town history which he remembers. The interviewers mentioned in this transcript are Robert (Bob) Canfield, John Lonergan, Jeff Heath, Susan Black, Dick Finch, and Ed Zemanick. I have transcribed their interview and added an index of names and places to help readers find their way quickly to a particular subject.

Paul Reiser
January 15, 2003

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# Walter Swarthout

John: Bob probably told you what the intent of this little group is, and we are attempting as best we can to learn some things that we don't have knowledge of but say in some of the records or the files and there's many people that are still in the town of Wayne that have knowledge that we would like to avail ourselves of. I don't think we have a particular agenda. One of the things we wanted to do was just generally just talk to you. Ask you some questions and kind of go back and forth, nothing structured, just communications about you and the Town of Wayne and whatever somebody thinks might be appropriate. So that we can capture some of this good knowledge of yours, we've got some machines here that are going record this wonderful material, if that's okay with you. I'll ask the first question. You have been in the Town of Wayne for how long, if you can tell us?

Walter: Well I don't actually live in the Town of Wayne. It's in Wayne, but in Schuyler County.

John: Schuyler County? We'll accept that.

Walter: One time, in history, the whole village of Wayne was in Steuben County, and it ran clear over to Reading and I believe It went across Keuka Lake and the bluff was in it.

John: But you have been in the area for how long?

Walter: I have lived here in the area for 84 years. I lived in the Town of Wayne. My folks lived in the Town of Wayne. My father always lived in the Town of Wayne. So, I was there until I was 21, but I have been in this area mostly right around here.

John: And your father was here also.

Walter: He was born and brought up. The old homestead was down where Edgar Gleason lives.

That was handed down through the family. The land at one time, I guess, in that area was owned by Anthony Swartout Jr. It took in Crystal Beach, down there, at the lake. That's a long time ago. He told about he fished and hunted with the Indians and got along with them very well.

John: What years are we referring to when you mentioned what you just said? What time period would that be in?

Walter: Well, I think it was when he come from across Seneca Lake. It was 1806 or something, I'm not just sure about that, I think it was around there. Him and his father owned land, in fact Anthony Jr. owned land where the hospital used to be over there, I don't know what it is right now. I believe it is operating.

John: Well you knew the village of Wayne when it was sort of the center of the activity and commerce in this area. And at one time it had a hotel and more than one church...

Walter: Yes, there were two churches, three at one time. The old Episcopal church stood right over here, I just remember that. But it wasn't holding any services here that I remember. There was the Baptist Church and the Methodist Church.

John: The Baptist Church is the one that is still there. And the Methodist Church was up on the Old Bath Road. Right?

Walter: Yeah, where Headstart is.

John: And in that time, period of time, your father was in farming of some sort, right?

Walter: Yes

John: What type of crops did he raise?

Walter: He done just general farming. I think he had a few grapes as I remember, about three acres. And the rest of it was general farming. Raised beans and hay, corn and all those things. He was born where Edgar (Gleason) lives, my father, in 1863. I'm glad it has changed hands so many times since my dad sold it. It started to go down, I am glad that Edgar bought the place because he set out grapes there. The house burned after he bought it. Used to have a nice house there.

Bob: Your father's name was?

Walter: Miner Sr.

Bob: Miner Jr. was a brother.

Walter: I had a brother Miner Jr.

Jeff: He worked in the Post office down in Hammondsport for years.

Walter: Yeah

Geraldine: He lived on Grove Springs Road didn't he?

Walter: Yeah. My mother died in 1930, she died of cancer and was in the hospital quite a long time. In fact she was there 7 months and I was in there 6. I had ruptured appendix. A lot of poison went through me. They said I had tubercle peritonitis, I don't know whether that was really true, but I was there 6 months.

John: This was in Bath?

Walter: Yes. Then she finally passed away in March 1930. My dad had had - my mother had got so that she was very demanding of him and he had the farm and he was back and forth, home and Bath. In fact, he had a hired man, but he left him in the middle of the year, so that made problems for him. I know that he had to be here to do chores and take out so cattle. He also was back and forth to the hospital and sometimes didn't leave there until ten o'clock. He always came over and saw me, I was over in the other building, before he left. After she passed away, we never went back, I never did. That was the last time, when I went to the hospital, that I ever lived down there.

John: When you traveled to Bath, you traveled...

Walter: I worked in Bath.

John: You worked in Bath, but the route you took to Bath, you didn't take 54, you would go...

Jeff: Fish hatchery Road was the...

Walter: that's right. You had to go into Hammondsport and around to get to Bath. Which people don't realize now.

John: How long would that trip take you?

Walter: I don't believe more than a half an hour. Less than that now. Track straight through.

## Grocery Stores

Dick: Do you remember any stores or businesses around here at the time?

Walter: I remember when there were three grocery stores in town here.

John: Three grocery stores... are those in buildings that still exist?

Walter: No. Just one on the corner up here. The old run down building (across from the post office)

Bob: Then there was the Lane Grocery which was...

Walter: Charley Lane was on up above where...

Bob: Across from the Legion.

Jeff: In the thirties a MarketBasket came in too I think.

Walter: Yeah, that came in after some of these other stores... there was a small grocery there before you turn to go over on Back street, about on that corner. It was a grocery store for a while - then a barbershop. That was torn done . Charley Lane Store was there good many years, he died. The store there and the Post Office.

John: There has always been a Post Office in Wayne, but it hasn't been where it is now.

Walter: No, It was moved around. When Mr. Lane died, a short time after, it was moved down to where Barney Crosby lived. Right across from the store there. The gentleman had it for a while and then it went back, I think it was up where Lane's store was, there was a fella and his son in law run the store for a while after Mr. Lane died. I'm not just sure about that. Then one time it was in the side of this old store building up here on the corner. The MarketBasket came in later.

John: The MarketBasket was a general store ?

Walter: yeah. Grocery store.

Jeff: It was part of a chain out of Geneva. It must have been about 1938?

Walter: Before World War 2, I remember.

Dick: Where was it?

Walter: Across the street from Crookston's

Bob: Where the mini storage is. It was kind of in front of that . And then there was Harry Green and his awning place was right next door to it, as I recall.

Walter: When you came in from Keuka into Wayne, you came, you didn't have the bend there now, you came straight in to the road that goes up through town. And there was a tree set right there, where they turned either way.

Jeff: Right on the point there.

Walter: Of course that changed, that has been changed twice around there. The MarketBasket set right in there almost backed up to where Don McAfee lives, on the corner there. In fact it was on that property.

John: And then there was a hotel across...

Walter: First it started down in the Boyce store, the MarketBasket did. Then they built that building up there on the corner and that was where it was . Right?

Bob: I don't remember the first...

Walter: MarketBasket?

Bob: Yeah, the only one I remember is the newer one on the curve by McAfee.

Walter: Well, it was there when I... in 1935 I would say. 1936 some where in there, I don't just recall how long it was there, but I know it gave Mr. Crookston's store a run in the other store. But he still continued

to do a good business. I remember one time being in the store there and some local guy came in and he got his groceries and that was when they took them all of the shelves and set them on the counter. He got several things and the asked Mr. Crookston if he would put that on a slip and he would pay when he got his pay. That really touched Mr. Crookston off. He really went after him. He said "Well, no, I won't do that . When you got money you go over to the MarketBasket and buy your stuff. When you want to get trusted you come to me." He started putting the stuff back on the shelf.

John: But that was fairly common during those years to buy your groceries and other needs and not necessarily pay cash. Wasn't it?

Walter: that's true.

John: You just put it on a slip

Walter: It was sort of a farmer's village here you know. Located in the center... I can remember on a Saturday night, that was when Mr. Crookston had the store, there was a lot of people in town – trading, farmers almost all of them.

Jeff: At the general stores.

Walter: Yeah. I remember seeing those steps out front there, pretty well filled up with men talking about their work and everything. But I was a small boy then.

John: Saturday, was it Saturday night that was sort of the big night in town, if you could call it that?

Walter: Farmers brought their eggs and butter in and that was traded off for groceries.

## Life in Wayne

John: If there was such a... if it is appropriate to ask, what type of entertainment might exist for folks that lived right here around the hamlet of Wayne?

Walter: The Grange was here in the village of Wayne.

Bob: Where did they hold their meetings?

Walter: Up over Crookston's store, first. I've gone to Grange there, that was where I joined. But then, after the store was sold one time they moved down in the Boyce post, that was a grocery store there and also he sold drugs and stuff like that for health. He was a licenced pharmacist and he run the grocery store. There was the Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Organization in Wayne and the Maccabees besides the Grange. Both churches were very active back in those days. Much more than they are today. One of them is gone. But a lot of the rural people around here, Geraldine's father and both uncles belonged to the Grange up there. There was people from down her way that came up here, bought groceries too along with the Sackett store in Keuka.

John: But Saturday night was, that was the night of activity in Wayne, right?

Walter : Yeah.

John: I mentioned entertainment, what would happen at the Grange, let's say. Would the Grange have some sort of a program on Saturday evening?

Walter: Well, they meet twice, I think it was twice a month on Saturdays. In wintertime it was daytime, when the weather was good, they held it at night. But people back so of that time traveled with horses, especially wintertime.

Jeff: Do you remember any of the old baseball teams? Where they played, Walter?

Walter: Yes, I remember when they used to have a team here in Wayne. I remember that when I was about eighteen, I guess. But they played ball they tell me long before that. They had a kind of scrub ball team, I guess. Some of them were farmers and some were young folks and older folks. They had a ball diamond up in back of... Agnes Carpenter finally lived there on the same street I live on.

John: Was there just one team, primarily in Wayne, or was there more than one?

Walter: I think they... I don't think at that time, they just had a ball game amongst themselves. There was a time later on when they used to play younger generation. They had teams there that they went to Dundee and played and I guess Tyrone and...

Jeff: Altay had a team in those days. Glen Carpenter's brother Wesley liked to pitch in those days didn't he?

Walter: Yeah

John: Now, you were born right in this area, right? Originally or not?

Walter: I was born in Penn Yan actually.

John: And what year was that?

Walter: 1914

John: 1914, you were born in Penn Yan. Now, when you were old enough to go on some errands for your parents to buy something or to the store, that would have been probably when you were ten or twelve years old, they might have sent you out to do some things on your own. How would you get from you lived to where you needed to go?

Walter: Well, I walked to Wayne from down where Edgar (Gleason) lives quite a number of times. Come up across lots, came out down here by the cemetery on the canal.

John: How long a walk would that be from your house to the store here?

Walter: Depended on how much time I fooled away, I guess.

John: Is that fairly typical, that those that lived within some reasonably distance of the town, would walk to get what needed or no?

Walter: Well, some of them did... in fact I walked to town up across with my father several times. But he usually drove a horse or team. Came around, came over the, came down here in the hollow to Wayne. In the Wintertime, I can remember it when the roads were pretty well filled with snow. Traveling with horse was... you traveled more in the field somewhere than you did in the road, because they were full coming to Wayne.

John: Now, would you occasionally take a horse or a horse and buggy on your own or not?

Walter: Yeah, when I was about fourteen, I guess, I managed to drive a horse and buggy, some.

John: But going into Wayne to get provisions, was a fairly normal activity?

Walter: Yeah. My folks done most all their trading there, I guess, as did the rest of them around here.

John: Now, if you couldn't get what you wanted in Wayne, where would you go next? Would it be Penn Yan or Hammondsport or Bath or... ?

Walter: Well, it could be... Penn Yan and Bath was a long trip, I would say, back in those days. Wayne was much closer and these general stores had more than groceries, some of them carried... Mr. Lane used to carry dry goods, I can remember that, and shoes and rubbers, arctics and nails. Bought sugar there by the

barrel, flour some of them did. You could buy quite a number of things in his store. You didn't get to Penn Yan and Bath very often.

John: And if you did go to either Penn Yan or Bath, the route you would travel would be...

Walter: The old Lake road. Used to go down to the end of our road from our place, went up... That road went up to Grove Springs Road, past Andrew Wheeler's right? And that was right where you branch off now up there to go up Grove Springs Road. You went on up there to what they call the Hines Road, turned there to your right and went down to, right down to the Lake Road

John: But the Lake Road at that time was not where (Route) 54 is?

Walter: No. Later on that was all new highway...

John: So the Lake Road that you're describing, that you took, would be which road as it exists today?

Walter: That road down in there still exists down in there by the cottages.

John: It's that lower, as you said,.lower Lake Road.

Walter: It's about like as it was then, up and down, I was down over it this summer here.

John: And that's the road you would take all the way into Hammondsport?

Jeff: When did (Route) 54 come into existence?

Walter: I think they started it somewheres along in the... Well it was first built, it seems to me it was in the late thirties maybe. I think so . Then it was rebuilt again later on. The road out of Wayne was the first concrete road that come into Wayne from Dundee. That was around 1928 or 1929.

John: And it was put in in concrete at that time?

Walter: Yeah, It came from Dundee part way this way with macadam road. And they built from there into Wayne on concrete road.

John: Back to the route you would take to go into Hammondsport... you said Grove Springs to Hines and the lower Lake road into Hammondsport.

Walter: Past the old Grove Springs Hotel.

John: What was North of Hines Road?

Walter: You went on up through and it came out up here on (Route) 87.

Bob: Same as it does now. You could've gone from Wayne right into Hammondsport if you wanted to. Back up the hill and in.

John: By the way, we were mentioning going to different communities for your needs, but you didn't mention Dundee. Was Dundee as much of a center for commerce as Wayne?

Walter: I'd say more so. Much more than Wayne. There was, of course, the railroad went through and a lot of their farmers off in this direction up in here, took their grain to Dundee to sell it. Buyers there. And it went out by railroad back in those days.

John: That's a series of questions I was going to get to and I'm glad you mentioned it, so that when you had your product from your farming activity, your market for your product may be, the closest market might be Dundee?

Walter: Hammondsport was probably our closest. When you got to Wayne and started on that way and off up on Bailey Hill around in there, all the farmers drawed their stuff into Dundee. But some of them

down around Keuka and Grove Springs went into Hammondsport. Of course back when the boats were running...

John: Was that because Hammondsport was really a port for... A place where goods could be transported by barge ?

Walter: Penn Yan and the boats...

Jeff: Hammondsport had the railroad

Walter: Hammondsport, yeah, had the railroad into Bath. There used to be a man that lived here in Wayne that told me all about... He worked on that railroad and also he worked on the boats... very interesting.

Bob: Who was that?

Walter: Harry Houk

Bob: Old Harry, the one that had the threshing machine?

Walter: Yeah.

Bob: Over on Back Street.

John: What about taking some of your products directly to one of the locations on the lake. Was there any place you could go right on Keuka and load your goods there.

Walter: I don't remember too much, but a lot of things and stuff were taken down to Keuka and the boats picked them up. Grapes were shipped by boat. I've heard my dad talk about drawing grapes to Keuka, unloading them on the dock down there. Boats run from Hammondsport back and forth across the lake landing at different piers all the way to Penn Yan.

John: What about the village of Keuka itself? Was that about the same size as Wayne in those days?

Walter: They only had the one grocery store in my time. Back before that there was another one wasn't there?

Bob: I'm only aware of the one.

Walter: Somewhere near the school house?

Bob: I'm only aware of one.

Walter: You remember the building that set down there by Aunt Mary's and Uncle Clayton lived, they had for wash rooms. That was set up in there towards the school house, one time and that was a store.

Bob: I wasn't aware of that.

John: Was Keuka a place to go to get some of the things you needed or not?

Walter: Oh yeah. Sackett's had a very good line of goods there and a post office . They did a big business Keuka did in the summertime. Back when the boats were running, I guess. A lot of people came in there, I've been told, for their vacations. People from, maybe say New York City came here and the Hotel there in Keuka was running back then.

John: That was a busy place during the summer months, then.

Walter: Very busy.

John: Would you go over there for any reason?

Walter: Keuka?

John: To Keuka?

Walter: Yeah, I went to Keuka school, grade school.

## School

John: OK, I was going to mention schools, too. That's a good subject. So, you went to grade school...

Walter: The old school house is down there yet, part of it. It's about as nice a school house as I can remember as these rural schools had. When I went there, they had put in new seats, single seats, used to be double seats in some schools.

John: And you went to grade school there.

Walter: Yeah, I went there seven years.

John: Seven years. How... And a yellow school bus took you over there, right?

Walter: No, buses.

John: How did you get to school?

Walter: Walked. About a mile and a half from where we lived on the farm over here.

John: So that was about a mile and a half from you lived?

Walter: I would say so.

John: And you went to grade school there. Then where? What happened after that?

Walter: Well, after my mother died, my father sold the farm, he and I lived here in Wayne for... He went back and forth a summer down to the farm to work. He sold the place that fall. So He and I lived here in the village of Wayne that winter. I finished the eighth grade, because I was in the eighth grade when I was taken sick and I lost that year, so I had to make it up right here in Wayne in a two room school house. Used to have quite a lot of kids came to school from this area right around here into Wayne.

John: So you really had to get busy and make a life for yourself at that time, didn't you?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Were you able to go on to school after that?

Walter: I went to Hammondsport High School.

John: OK. Now how did you get to... You didn't walk down to Hammondsport?

Walter: No, They started a bus out of Wayne here. It went over (Route) 87 into Hammondsport. The first man that started the bus was, his name was Thomas Hoover. As I remember right, it was 1929 was the first bus we had and started drawing kids into Hammondsport.

John: So you actually rode a bus to Hammondsport.

Walter: Oh yes. I did.

John: And the bus picked up other students...

Walter: All along the line.

Jeff: Was this a school bus or a public bus?

Walter: Well, it was just owned by Mr. Hoover and he... there was a lot them that went to Dundee school and to Hammondsport school, as I think, that they were in basket I think they called it. They took their food down in the baskets and somebody in Hammondsport would take in those kids in those days. They would stay there and have a room and go to high school.

John: So you wouldn't go in in the morning and come home at night then?

Walter: Oh yes. When I was... To Hammondsport you mean?

John: Right.

Walter: I was home every night.

John: You were home every night? OK. I thought busing was new. This is interesting. Were there other people that were transported, let's say, from this area or nearby areas to other schools?

Walter: No, The first bus out of Wayne was the one that went to Hammondsport.

Bob: Later on I rode the buses from Keuka to Hammondsport.

Walter: That was after they centralized wasn't it?

Bob: Yes. 'Cause I went to the Keuka school for my first six years and then they closed it. I was in the last class when they closed it. Then we had private cars we rode in, with five of us in a vehicle. There was, I think, two vehicles that transported us...

Walter: June Sackett was one of them.

Bob: June was one and my father had one for a year or two. Then Tom (Hoover) came in again because he was running a different route and they changed it around, that way all of us rode on a yellow bus then.

John: And you would... the bus would... again, you couldn't go down (Route) 54, so you went down Ridge Road or...

Walter: One route, we went out of Wayne here, back when I went down there you took old street (Route 87) into Hammondsport. Some of them walked to this road, the main road, maybe half to three quarters mile, maybe a little bit more to get on the bus. They didn't go around and pick them all up. There was a lot of dirt roads back in those days. I suppose that made a difference. Hoover ran the bus for a long time there and he had three buses that of his own. Finally when they centralized, he went to driving for Hammondsport School, until quite a number of years. They lived here in Wayne, the Hoovers did.

Bob: You know where Don Campbell of Campbell's Septic System. That's where Tom (Hoover) lived. And he also had a farm down there where Pratt lives. He owned all of that, which is where you turn off (Route)230 and go along the east side of the lake (Waneta) . That big farm up there on the...

Walter: His folks lived a good many years in Keuka.

Jeff: Glen Carpenter's older brothers, Wes and Warren, went to school down in Bradford, high school in Bradford. But I think Glen and Byron (?) went to Hammondsport. That would have back about 1930.

Bob: Could you choose a school you went to?

Walter: Yeah, before the bus time, that's the reason some of them went to Dundee. Kids that went to Dundee, stayed during the week over there somewhere. People took in boarders, school kids.

John: Boy, that was great for those parents, wasn't it?

Walter: Yeah, it was. Except they had to go by horse to get them there. My brother went to Hammondsport to school. He boarded down there. I heard my dad tell, he got homesick the first week when he was down

there and he wanted to quit and come home. My mother went down there and stayed with him for a week or so and got him settled in.

## Cars and Roads

John: Now, back... you were born in 1914, so in the Twenties, when you were a teenager, how were the roads in this area? Were they mostly dirt except for the...

Walter: Mostly dirt roads except for the one that went over the hill here and back before my time

that was a dirt road too. I remember when they built this county from Hammondsport (Route 87) into Wayne. A lot that road was field stone base into it.

John: So it wasn't dirt, it was sort of dirt and gravel and stone mixed together, right?

Walter: No, it was good size stone, flat stone and stuff like that, was put in the base. They throwed open the dirt and filled it with stone, field stones. Then brought the dirt back over it. Eventually put a hard top onto it.

John: And what would the hard top be made out of?

Walter: Well, that was to start with I think it was stone... The Town of Wayne had a stone crusher at one time. They crushed all their big stones into small stones and that was more or less something like gravel, I would say, they used on the top. Then they put some kind of oil on the top.

John: How smooth a surface would it result in for driving on?

Walter: Well, it was pretty good. A lot of people come up from Keuka and around this way to get on the road to Hammondsport .

John: When was the first time you rode in an automobile?

Walter: Probably around... my dad had a car, in the summertime he drove it a little bit . Wintertime he blocked it up and got the wagon out. You had to go with the horse then down to the Spring.

John: Was it a Ford?

Walter: No, it was an Overland.

John: An Overland, Willy's Overland.

Walter: I guess they were built by Willy's.

John: Now, that was your father's car.

Walter: Yeah.

John: Did you drive it at times?

Walter: No, I never drove until he bought one in 1928, a Chevrolet. I was about fourteen then. That's where I kind of learned to drive. It was kept in town to the lower farm on the other side of the road. I used to go down there and bring it up to the house when we went somewheres .

John: That was pretty exciting, wasn't it?

Walter: Boy, I didn't want to miss that.

John: But you drove it?

Walter: Yeah. My father thought I knew more an automobile than he did. And I'm not sure but I did.

John: When did you have a car of your own?

Walter: 1937 I bought the first car of my own. I drove my father's car up to then.

John: 1937, Was that a Ford?

Walter: No, that was a Chevrolet.

John: And that was your own car in 1937?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Now, were the roads a little better in this area at that time ?

Walter: Oh yes.

Susan: Walter, I've heard that the car dealers would come out to the farm with the new cars. Do you remember that?

Walter: Yes, I remember them doing that, yes. In fact there was, more of it before I remember, but I still remember them doing it. They come out and wanted to sell you the car.

John: How much did you pay for your Chevrolet in 1937, do you remember?

Walter: $700, I think for a coupe.

John: $700, it was a coupe?

Walter: 6 cylinder, it was.

John: Was it brand new?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Brand new! That was really exciting.

Walter: Yes, it was. My father had a new car. He bought it in 1928, after he had the Overland. That's what he learned to drive on. He had an awful time learning to drive, after driving a horse all his life.

John: The pedals were in a different place.

Walter: This is off where we are but, I would like to tell it as long as we are talking cars. When we used to come to Wayne with horses, all the farmers would put them in the sheds up to the Baptist church and the rectory.

John: Would put the horses in the...

Walter: Shed.

John: There were sheds just for the horses?

Walter: Yeah. Open sheds. Just drive your team in.

John: Tie it up?

Walter: Yeah.

John: And you would leave the wagon or buggy attached?

Walter: Yeah. They done that... Well my father started learning in the Overland, to drive. He had quite a time. You had to catch the shift just right in order to... or it would stall and I remember he had a hard time

with that. Used to carry a block of wood along and when I was with him, If he stalled somewhere on a hill, I would have to get out with the block of wood and block it until he got it started again.

John: So you would get out and you block the wheel, so that it wouldn't roll back. Then he would get started.

Walter: He would miss the shift. It wasn't an easy shift back when they first started.

John: What year was the Overland ?

Walter: Oh, it must have been about a 1919 or 1918, somewhere along there.

John: Well then you had to crank it to start it?

Walter: No.

John: Electric start?

Walter: Yeah. They had... the Overland had what they called a cut out.

John: On the exhaust?

Walter: You used to open that down underneath, you could open it and they thought they got more power.

John: It was on the exhaust.

Walter: Yeah. I went to Hammondsport with my dad with it one time, we parked there across from the bank. I used to like to hear that cut out opened up. He went to the bank and while he was in there, I crawled under there and opened that up. He was always to have the, the spark and throttle was right on the steering wheel. He always throwed that gas one right up there pretty good so when it started she really took off. He started it, and he shut it off too. What a noise it made, I presume it jarred the windows around the park there. I got an awful scolding and I got out and closed it. I was informed never to do that again. But I liked to hear it, the more noise it made the better I liked it.

Susan: What kind of tractors did you use on the farm?

Walter: We didn't have any tractors. They were four

legged ones.

Susan: Did you ever buy a tractor?

Walter: No. The one I got now is a little Cub. My dad farmed it all with horses, everybody did around here then.

John: In that era of the, and I'll just say the Twenties, but when you were a young boy, how did you or how did your parents or how did the people view the lakes like Waneta Lake or Keuka Lake? Did they view it as something that was used for recreation or something that was used for commerce or was it a source of good fishing and food?

Walter: They were more or less for summer, there were more cottages built then more just for summer. They weren't for living in year around. People came from Corning and Elmira and had a cottage down here on Keuka Lake and Waneta too.

John: And that's kind of the way it is now too?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Or has that changed?

Walter: They are much better. There are some awful nice homes down on Keuka Lake. I never realized it until one time a fella took me out in a boat. We went around the lake and over toward Branchport. When you're looking in from the lake, some mighty nice places down there.

John: But the lakes were sort of viewed the same then as their are now, as places for people to enjoy the warmer summer months.

Walter: I think there was a lot of local people that fished in the lake, both lakes. Natives, you know.

## Ice

Jeff: Do you remember cutting ice in the winter and watching them.

Walter: Yeah.

John: Would they use a manual ice saw to cut the ice?

Walter: Yeah, for quite a long time they did. I can see them now, it was a long saw with handles on it moved it up and down like that.

John: Big teeth, right? I've got one.

Walter: Sure it isn't a crosscut. Maybe you got a crosscut saw.

(Changed tape. Maybe some interview missing)

Walter: The were cutting ice here on the Wayne leg first I remember was doing it with power when your grandfather (Bob's) built the first power saw with an automobile motor. Star Motor, I think it was.

John: For cutting ice?

Walter: Yeah.

John: On the lake?

Bob: They had a big buzzsaw blade on the it.

Walter: Had a big buzzsaw on to it.

Bob: They could raise it up and down.

Walter: They'd shove it along. It had runners on to it, they'd drop that saw down and go right along and saw the ice right out.

Jeff: Was that down at Ed Wixson's?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Was there more ice cutting on Waneta Lake than on Keuka Lake?

Walter: That all depended, Keuka Lake when I went to school, I don't remember it ever being open in the winter.

John: It was always frozen?

Walter: Always frozen.

John: All the way across and all the way down to Hammondsport.

Walter: Yes. We had winters back in those days, you didn't have the warm weather come and thaw things

out.

Susan: Do you remember it being frozen to Hammondsport too?

Walter: Oh, yeah.

Bob: Because the Hotel and the Sackett's were dependent on getting the ice out of the lake for their ice houses and selling it in the summertime.

John: Now that's a really good point, did you at your home get lake ice for use at home?

Walter: No, the first time I ever bought ice was when my and I were married. We had a refrigerator . They had them, I remember my Aunt Mary, who lived below Keuka there, They had a icebox. Sackett's used to peddle ice along the lake in the summertime. With these big blocks of ice, they would come with a pair of tongs, they would bring your block of ice in and put it in your icebox. My folks never did (have a icebox).

John: In the summer, some of that was stored away in...

Walter: Sawdust.

Bob: My other grandfather had an ice house on the farm, and they would take the ice out of Waneta Lake and bring it up by horse and wagon and put it in the ice house, I can remember that.

Walter: I think they used to get kind of worried about sometimes toward, I don't know, I don't think ice cutting started along about February, somewhere along there. I can remember when one time Keuka Lake, They didn't think was going to get thick enough. They started cutting ice up here on Waneta Lake and drawed it to Keuka. Joneses down there on the point, Carenaught, your grandfather I remember his drawing ice with a team, different farmers would get going down our road to fill that ice (house). They would make two trips a day . They were down on the lake before daylight some mornings to get their first load.

Bob: Carenaught is where Bob Turissini lives.

John: But this was, they went there for ice or they needed the ice for...

Walter: They used it for their own purposes.

John: At Carenaught?

Walter: Yeah. But down to Keuka they peddled it along the lake both ways.

John: Did you ever go down to Carenaught when it was operating as a private home or when it was operating relative... wait a minute, the hotel at that time was gone.

Walter: Yeah, that was before my time, I hope that was. You mean the Grove Springs

John: Right. That was gone when...

Walter: It was down before... my brother was going to Hammondsport school . He was twenty years older than I am... was. I've heard my dad tell about that... every Friday night He used to go with a horse down to Hammondsport and bring my brother home for the weekend.

John: He would take a horse in or a horse and...

Walter: He drove a horse and buggy .

John And buggy into Hammondsport .

Walter: Into Hammondsport and picked him up, came back to the farm. I heard him tell about they came by the Grove Springs Hotel down there and evidently my dad knew a man by the name of Joe Peth (?) He

was around the hotel for a caretaker down there. My dad said to my brother 'I wonder if old Joe is still there?' I guess that was all there was said. Then they came on home and while my dad was putting the horse out, My mother hollered out that the Grove Springs Hotel was afire. She had got it over the telephone, back in those days everybody listened and talked and everything else.

John: The hotel burned in... what was that year?

Walter: It must have been the eighteen hundreds, I'm sure it was.

John: But you never saw the hotel?

Walter: No.

John: Was there anything left there when you were a young boy when you used to go down...

Walter: No. When I was young, the most I remember along the lake was all there cottages going up.

John: A lot of building going on during that time?

Walter: Yeah. There was two men that lived in Keuka that built a lot of the cottages down here on...

Bob: L.B. Sackett and Dick Chrisfield?

Walter: In fact they built a barn across the lake for Garrett, who owned all that property over there. They worked on that in the wintertime and the went back and forth afoot across the lake on the ice and worked on that barn all winter.

John: That wasn't unusual was it to walk across the lake on the ice ?

Walter: I don't know how far it is across.

Bob: A good mile.

John: I've actually been told that there's a cottage near me that was brought across the lake on the ice. It was on the other side of the lake and they skidded it over on the ice . And apparently that was doable in those years.

Walter: Yes, I've heard of their moving one down towards PennYan, that was across on the ice. My dad used to go Hammondsport with a team to get coal. In fact he got caught in a snow storm and... he went down the lake, drove on the lake sometimes with the team. He started for home, the lake was froze over then, and he got lost, could see too good it was storming so. Finally saw a light, so he drove to the light. It was over on the west side of the lake, so he had to turn and come across the lake

John: And he was driving a...

Walter: Team in the dark.

John: In the dark on the lake?

Walter: Yeah. I've also heard my dad tell about buying a horse over in Pulteney somewheres . They went and got that horse in the spring of the year. They walked across the ice, the ice was getting in bad shape. The weather was commencing to get a little warm on the days. They decided when they came back, that they put a rope on each side of the horse and they walked out there (at rope length from the horse) and not beside the horse because they were afraid the ice, they might go through the ice. When they got to shore, they waded in the water to Keuka to get on the shore.

John: There must be some stories of some people that were on some thin ice and didn't make it to shore with whatever, a wagon or a horse... .

Walter: Yeah, Sackett and Chrisfield, when they were building that barn over there, Chrisfield evidently, there was air pockets, and he went through the ice one morning. Sackett had quite a time getting him out. He had on a long overcoat and boots, but he saved him.

## Farming

John: Did you have, you did some farming yourself, right?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Did you have cattle?

Walter: I worked with my dad on the farm. I never run a farm, never owned a farm of my own. Only the 20 acres I got now.

John: What would a typical farmer do during the winter because he couldn't raise your crops unless you had some cattle of some kind.

Walter: Drawed ice and cut wood. Got logs out for lumber. It was always busy all winter. Farming was like it has always been, almost 24 hours a day.

Susan: I'm still surprised that you didn't use tractors. Thinking that there were tractors that came in by rail in the late thirties and early forties and they were selling quite a lot of them. Do you remember tractors being on the farms around here?

Bob: No. The old Fordsen was the first one I remember. My grandfather Hayes had one.

Walter: The old Fordsen and there was some others. I remember Hoover tell about buying a tractor that was bigger than the Fordsen, I guess. When they come out with just one wheel in the front . He got rid of it in a short time. He used it for dragging and stuff like that. When you tried to turn in the soft dirt, the wheel would turn but keep shoving the dirt right along, it didn't come over. That's how the come out, on each wheel. You could press that brake down and it helped you turn. They made a lot improvements on the tractor as the years went by. The old Fordsen, you were telling about, there was quite a few of them around here.

Jeff: Some of those earlier tractors with the lug wheels...

Walter: Yeah, they was on steel. Yeah, they were on steel for a good many years.

Jeff: Raised hob with the roads.

Walter: Yeah, used to travel on the dirt roads with them.

Jeff: Walter, when they threshed, they were using... do you remember whether they were using gasoline threshers or steam engine?

Walter: The first I remember was steam. There was a man lived here in Wayne, Harry Houk was his name, I think George Bliss, he owned the place where Oborne bought over here going out towards Keuka, George Bliss sawed the lumber for that house (Oborne) as I understand it, he built that house. My dad and I lived there in part of it . They had a saw mill here in Wayne. Bliss used to put his steam engine on that saw and the farmers would come there different times and my dad drawed the logs in and dumped them off in a pile, all the farmers did that. Then when they got ready to saw, they would bring their teams to get the logs on the skidway . I can remember coming there with my dad with a team. He had that was very nervous and he quite a time the first time to get that logs up there where they belonged, cause the horse was scared to death.

Dick: Where was that saw mill located?

Walter: About where that general store is right now, out back and just a little towards Keuka. In fact, that shed there, I think, was where the steam engine was set and then the saw was out back with just a cover over it.

John: Was most of the lumber and the boards that was cut in those mills, was it left to dry for a period of time before it was used?

Walter: Yes, both ways. I remember my dad used to cut lumber out for gates around the fields where the fences were. I don't think they ever planed lumber over here. I know they didn't.

John: It was pretty much rough cut then.

Walter: Yeah.

Bob: The saw will that Harry Swarthout owned, was that the same mill that they just moved it?

Remember, he had one over by his house ?

Walter: He had one over here by Ed Wixons.

Bob: The one I'm thinking of was down here along the canal, before, well when Harry and Etheline lived there. Because I remember my father had a bunch of grape post sawed up by Harry when he had the mill.

Walter: Those Swarthouts were a little relation to us, they knew a steam engine from one end to the other. I think you could have pulled one apart and throwed it in a pile and they could put it together.

Jeff: Do you remember a drying kiln down at Tyrone?

Walter: No, I don't remember much about Tyrone, never got that far until the automobile come out.

John: If you were to leave home, you would go more towards Keuka than you would towards...

Walter: Wayne and Keuka.

John: Wayne and Keuka...

Walter: Traveled most.

John: I'm not surprised at that. It is interesting. I think it might surprise some people. Tyrone was...

Walter: They had a flour mill down there. They ground grain, I believe, for flour I think I've heard that. By water power.

Bob: Do you remember the harness shop that Fred Smith had?

Walter: Yeah. I remember the first one right above Conklin there. Smith started business over on Back Street. He did harnesses for horses for farmers. He made harnesses, oiled them, bring your harness in and get it oiled. He run a place right between where Marge Barrett lived and where this guy is bought that place (corner of Back Street).

## The Canal

John: Did the canal that exists now, pretty much the same now as it was back when you were a boy?

Walter: The canal?

John: Yeah.

Walter: I remember when they dug it in 1928, I think.

John: Do you remember when they... tell us about that.

Walter: Well, it was kind of a crude way, when you think of it. They had a man by the name of Dutcher, his boy went to Keuka school. He had a steam shovel. They had two tractors, one of them was the old Fordsen and the other was, I think, a McCormack Deering. The seat was out over the left front wheel and you rode backwards. They changed the steering wheel and put it on the side. And where the seat was before that, they had a dump box. They would fill that... they would dig a roadway up out every little ways. Run down in there and the shovel would load them with dirt and then they would grind up out of there. They were just barely moving and bring it up and dump it along the bank. They dug that all the way . That was 19... they were down here at the lake when it sunk in 1929.

Bob: What sunk?

Walter: That old steam shovel Dutcher dug it with.

Bob: In this lake, Waneta?

Walter: Yeah. They were digging out in to the lake, and they were channeling out into the lake. All of a sudden it went down and water run into the firebox and put the fire out so they couldn't do anything more. Set there for quite a while. I guess they were wondering how they were going to get it out. I think the guy's name was Prosser from Dundee, he used to move buildings and he winched that out of there someway to shore. I never saw him do it. I remember seeing that thing setting out there for quite a little while.

John: Actually out in Waneta Lake.

Walter: Yeah.

John: Because this was an attempt to dredge, if you will, a channel into the lake. Now before the canal was put in, that was just a field. There was no depression...

Jeff: The old railroad bed.

John: There was a railroad bed there.

Walter: The old railroad bed. You can find that yet down there used to be down below Keuka.

John: But, between Waneta and as the canal goes past us here, was that part of the railroad bed?

Walter: Yes, it went right along on the west shore over here of the lake, where it was... they never got the railroad there but they made a bed.

John: Did the entire canal need to be excavated in order to have it serve as a canal or was part of it already down to grade because of the railroad?

Walter: No, I don't think they... might of somewheres coming from Keuka, got into the old railroad bed, I don't remember.

John: But they put the channel in over to... they excavated the channel over to Waneta and put a gate in over there.

Walter: They put a gate down here above Keuka.

Bob: There's more than one gate.

John: There's a gate up by Waneta, right?

Jeff: A penstock.

Bob: They call that the headgate where the canal changed into the penstock, but they have got a gate right down here on (route) 87, they can open and close.

Walter: I can remember your dad running a clam (shovel or crane) different times and cleaning that canal out.

John: How would they clean it out?

Walter: They had a dragline.

John: With a dragline?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Do you remember the canal operating as a watercourse for the...

Walter: I remember when they built the penstock down through from the headgate down to Keuka.

John: How did the people around here feel about that. Was that a good program?

Walter: They thought it was. Quite a few people bought stock in it. It blew up after a while and they lost their money, I guess.

John: I didn't know, there was a stock issue for this power plant?

Walter: Yeah.

Bob: I've got a certificate home, 100 shares.

John: You do?

Bob: Yeah. It would be nice to frame it.

John: I want to make a copy of that .

Bob: I'll have to find it. In fact, I sent a copy of it to NYSEG in Binghamton, and asked them if it had any value. Several months later I got a response back, that it had no value.

Walter: Aunt Mary and Uncle Clayton lost their money on that.

John: Did you ever have any shares of stock in that?

Walter: No.

Jeff: The old flume was a wooden flume, down the hill.

John: It was wooden?

Jeff: Yeah.

Ed: What was the purpose of the canal?

Jeff: The power plant had that down to Keuka. Water from Waneta down to power...

Ed: So it was flowing down with gravity.

Walter: It was quite a project, that canal was.

Jeff: Do you remember in the winter, the old would get a leak and you would have spray and then it would freeze.

Walter: Yeah, I went up there and saw all that. Well they got to drawing the water down in the lake (Waneta) here so that the cottagers got to complaining about it. I think that was about the time they were

drilling for gas around here. That was when they put in that other penstock down through there. They put up a big building down there. They had two Ingersoll Rand motors, no, one Ingersoll Rand and two Worthingtons.

Bob: Three Worthingtons.

John: What those for?

Walter: They were to pump the water out of Keuka Lake up the hill and let it drain down through the penstock to run the turbines in the power house.

John: But, the water that was pumped up, was it just pumped into the canal?

Walter: Yeah. I think the flumes run out, That was the reason the headgates were dug.

John: So, in a way we had perpetual motion going here right?

John: Do you remember that operating...

Walter: We were drilling for gas at that time, they struck gas, and those motors were run by natural gas. His (Bob) father worked there quite a while, I think.

Bob: We lived next door to it, so we had first hand experience .

John: Was the feeling that they had free energy to run the engines to pump the water?

Walter: I don't think it was free.

Bob: I don' think so either.

John: But it was fairly expensive...

Walter: They probably paid pretty good for it.

Jeff: This was right at the time the Depression started.

Walter: In fact, Dutcher, who dug it, lost his shirt digging that canal. He ended up at PennYan where he bought a farm, and went to farming it.

## Keuka Hydro Power Station

John: When that power station... did you have electric power at home at that time?

Walter: I think we did. We hadn't had it long. I think Wayne here was the first that I remember getting electric in here.

Jeff: There was no electricity on the west side of Waneta when I was a boy back in the Twenties.

Walter: There was or not?

Jeff: No, nothing. The was no electricity until about World War II.

Walter: The first electricity I remember here in Wayne was about 1931

1932.

John: When there was electric power here in Wayne, but not necessarily at your home. Did it get out that far?

Walter: This house they wired it, part of it... the house where we lived over here. Dad and I had electric

there, I remember that. I thought it was great.

John: Did the advent of the power station help bring power to this area or not?

Walter: I don't know about that, where did they put that power?

Bob: They were tied into a grid as it was known at that time and all they did was add to the power. It came in from the PennYan area and it was there before the power plant was constructed.

Walter: Those engines, made a lot of vibration.

John: Did they have a cutout on them?

Bob: If they backfired you knew it was a cutout.

Walter: My aunt lived down below Keuka there, and I remember she had a hard time keeping their dished on the shelves.

John: Is that right? They weren't quite in balance were they?

Walter: sure wasn't. There was a tremble there.

John: How close did she live?

Walter: Not more that a half mile.

Bob: Between a quarter and a half, somewheres in there

John: You could feel it that far away?

Walter: You could hear it alright, I presume you could feel it, I don't remember about that, but I remember you could hear it quite a ways.

John: How often would they run?

Bob: Twenty four hours a day.

Walter: Around twenty four hours a day, they had a night shift and a day shift.

Bob: Well they were built right on solid shale, so that would transmit any vibrations for quite some distance.

John: You know, the whole concept, just boggles my mind. Why don't just connect the generator... the engine to the generator?

Bob: Well, let me clarify that. The natural gas engines... there were dual engines with a generator in the center. So that was how the electricity was generated. Then the Keuka Hydro, which took the water out of the canal, also had a separate generator which was operated by water. They had another one set by it, that they were going to hook up and that's when they went bankrupt, with the second one. But they also had, I think, four bays down here that were going to be operated by electric pumps, to pump the water back up the hill through that larger pipeline that Jeff was referring to.

Walter: That was what those motors were for, wasn't it?

Bob: Yes. There were two separate... One was gas operation and then there was the hydro part, so the two of then were generating electric.

John: But, one of the gas portions was pumping...

Bob: No, the gas generated electricity.

John: The natural gas operated engines were actually generating electricity.

Bob: That's all they did.

John: That's all they did.

Bob: So that was in the big building and the other structure that was on the lake shore was strictly the hydro portion of it.

John: But there was still a pump that was sending water back up the...

Jeff: It still boggles the mind, that you would take generated electricity to pump water up to generate some more electricity.

Bob: But they did that in the off hours and they generated the power for peak needs and then at night they would pump the water back up the hill. They lasted a very short time because the flood of 1935 took the big pipeline out. So that ended that.

John: Was the pipeline at that time wooden?

Bob: Yes. California redwood.

Jeff: Steel bands around it all the way up.

Dick: Where was it located?

Bob: Right next to the other one.

John: None of the wooden piping is around anywhere, right?

Bob: Not as part of that structure. It was sold off and various people got bits and pieces of it.

Walter: We furnished the pipe for down there from the headgates one time. Did that go over into the penstock? It was in the place of that wooden one.

Bob: I thought that was concrete they put in there.

Walter: They had concrete in there one time, but we furnished pipe for them down there. Forty eight inch (diameter).

Bob: How many hundreds of feet did you furnish?

Walter: I don't know.

Bob: This was Lane Pipe in Bath, that he's referring to, where he used to work.

Walter: I think it started up to the headgates there, or else on the other side of the road. I suppose it went over and connected to that penstock, I don't know.

Bob: I'm not sure of that detail as to what... I wasn't living here then so I missed it.

Walter: I remember the penstock being there.

John: Where did you work most of your life?

Walter: Lane Pipe in Bath. Worked there quite a number of years.

Bob: They corrugated culverts.

John: So you were there for many years at Lane in Bath.

Walter: Yeah.

Bob: That steel building ( at Lane Pipe) is the building that those gas engines were in (at Keuka Hydro).

Walter: He bought that building for $1500 .

John: He bought it for $1500? But then he had to move it, right?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Did he take it down in pieces?

Walter: Yeah.

## The Natural Gas Boom

John: Let me shift gears a little bit. When was gas first discovered in this area?

Walter: Around 1929 and 1930.

John: Was that a pretty exciting time, when they...

Walter: Sure was.

John: Tell us about that.

Walter: I remember one summer there was a garage setting out where Mercury building is now. Atlantic owned it. I worked that summer there, just a young lad, pumping gas and doing different things. They brought a well over here on... down from the cemetery.

Bob: Down there in the flats?

Walter: Up toward the cemetery there. I remember the buildings there. They brought in a well down there that was a very good one and they worked it out so that Decoration Day they brought it in. I never saw so many people in Wayne. I know we had filled all up for gasoline for cars and in the middle of the day, they had to have them come in from Bath and fill them again.

John: And these were people just coming in because of the well, the well had come in...

Walter: To bring that well in.

John: The local people didn't pay to put these wells... somebody must have come in said I think there is gas here... they were particularly looking for gas, right?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Somebody paid to put a well in, they struck gold and said there's got to be more, we'll poke some more holes, right?

Walter: Yeah.

John: Who really made out on this program? Did any of the local people get the benefit of these wells ?

Walter: Yeah. They bought up what they called some of their rights, wasn't it?

Bob: Leased rights.

Walter: Give them so much for peoples property to drill on.

John: So, The you would make... as a homeowner or property owner, you would have somebody buy the mineral rights, the gas rights on your land and that's where you would make some money.

Walter: Some people got something out of it, maybe not enough, maybe not what they should've got.

John: Did some people also get money for whatever was taken out based on volume that was removed, or not?

Walter: No, It went out of here... they pumped the gas... they brought the gas right down so nobody had it to use that had it in their houses. They drawed the gas right out of here.

Bob: In fact, a lot of the natives just tapped into the line and for x

number of dollars a year, you could burn all you wanted. There was no meters or anything.

John: If it was on your property, right?

Bob: well, even beyond your property. I remember old Crandall... they put a lot of the pipeline in...

Walter: That was after they had sucked it all out and it started coming back in.

Bob: They had lines down to Keuka and my folks hooked up to it and the first one was like a hundred dollars a year, which was quite a bit of money, but it was still cheaper than coal. Everybody thought that was great. They had that for quite a few years.

Dick: Some people that they found gas or transported gas across their property, they had a certain volume of gas they were allowed each year for free. Any more than that they used, they had to pay for it. There was a man right up by the... Pete Gardener, that lived up by the Methodist Church and the pipeline went through his property. He made full use of the gas, because he would turn the thermostat up to about 85 all year round. If it got too warm, he opened the door or the window.

Walter: It (gas) started coming back and this man Crandall, he started running pipe around... he bought up the rights off those wells off from different people. A lot of them were bought up on taxes. He started running lines all around here, not more than eighteen inches underground and for $50 a year for all you wanted to burn.

John: $50 a year and you could use whatever you wanted.

Walter: Yeah.

John: And he put together his own distribution system in the area, right? What was his name?

Walter: Crandall.

Bob: Harley Crandall.

John: When NYSEG put the high pressure gas line down (Route)54, back in 1995, I think, They told me that they had acquired from Columbia some of that old distribution system up here and they were still using it.

Bob: What was particularly distressing was that when Crandall would go across a gully or something, he would go right straight across it and you had this bare pipe hanging out there.

Walter: I've only burned gas ever since I've lived here. I've got a well on my place.

John: You have a well on your place? So you have...

Walter: I have two hundred thousand cubic feet. It doesn't cover me for the year, but after that amount is used up, I pay for it.

John: But you are allotted that number of cubic feet that you could... you have a meter that measures what you consume and after a certain point then you're supposed to pay. But you have the right to that as long

as that well exists on your property.

Walter: Yeah, I think so. I suppose they could close it down anytime they wanted to.

John: Is that well on your property producing or is it storage?

Walter: Well, they drilled a well there in the beginning and then they plugged all these wells around here when the gas lapsed. Then they come back and they started drilling them out some time later, not too many years ago and getting this gas that was coming in under it. I always thought it was the gas they were pumping right over here at this station. They called it storage under here. I think that's what soaked the gas business. Then they started drilling out these wells. This one was on my property. They were in here drilling and opening up some of those wells and they gave some of them pretty good deals for unplugging them.

John: Well you are happy with yours aren't you?

Walter: Yeah. If I hadn't a little fighting for it, I wouldn't got it. They had that well over there and they opened it up and then they came in here and started laying a main line all through here. When they opened mine up, I talked to the guy from the gas company about getting some gas. I had heard that they had done some deals, I think Rod Pierce was one up that got some. But different ones, one man that had a well up in the upper side of the village, lived over on the beach and he got so much gas a year and they paid him so much a month. I don't know how that ever come out.

John: So, he not only gets gas, but he gets so much a month in addition to it.

Walter: Yeah, he did back then.

John: At least you got some gas.

Walter: Yeah, when they started opening these up, I commenced to look at it because of these things I heard were going on. My wife and I got papers that were turned over to us when we bought the place. We got to reading them over about the gas and I talked with this guy that was in the field here, gasman, I got a well on my place and I would like to get a little fuel. He said 'Oh no, you can't get all fuel, no, impossible.' Well, we got to reading that thing over and it told where they could ingress and egress and do anything with the wells they wanted to. But they were supposed to fix the land back where was before they... pay a little damages if any. So, it said in there that... I can't remember just how it was, but I took the papers up to the lawyer and let him read them. I said that it seems as if I ought to be able to get a little gas there. He made me pace off all my property, measure it and do this and do that. I talked to him about it, this Wagstaff was working for the Gas company, I'd see him every once and a while and kind of get after him about it. He was always telling me you can't get any gas, no way. They started... It was in there about using it for storage. So I talked to the lawyer about and he said, well, you might be able to, I don't know. We could try, he said. So, I said to him, what's going to cost me? He said 'Oh, a hundred dollars, if I don't get anything, I won't charge you anything, but if I do, I won't charge you over a hundred dollars.' So, he corresponded with them for quite a long time, it was over a year. Then he asked me how much gas I thought I wanted. One of my neighbors was allotted 40,000 cubic feet, I think it was. Finally the lawyer called me down there where I was working one day, and said, got two gasmen here and they want to make a deal. I said 'What's their deal?' Well, they will give you 200,000 cubic feet, after that you will have to pay for it. I said 'I asked for more than that.'He said 'Yeah, I know you did, but my advice is take what they have offered.' So I did. That Wagstaff was awful mad at me, chewed me out more than once even after that, because I pulled it out from under him I guess.

John: How long have you had gas... when did you make that connection?

Walter: Well, he worked on it for over a year, the lawyer did.

John: But, have you had it for ten years of fifteen years?

Walter: Oh, longer than that.

John: Longer than that.

Walter: I've burned gas for... when I first started living here, I burned wood and coal. All they did was take a plow and open up the ground and put the pipe in and cover it up.

John: If you look back over the years that you've been here in Wayne, what were the most exciting times that you could recall? Was it when gas came in, or when...

Walter: A pretty exciting time in my time was the gas. A lot of men that were working here had to board somewhere... people took boarders . Some of them had two or three men staying with them.

John: Working on the gas...

Walter: They were all working on the gas.

John: Were there a lot of drill rigs around at that time?

Walter: Yeah.

Jeff: That's why they sold a lot of these lots over here on the Beach (Sylvan).

Walter: Turner sold that piece of ground in there. Richie was his name and put it all into lots over there. Had one over toward Geneva he done too.

Jeff: That was around 1928.

Walter: Sunday was a big day. He had a building down there by one end of the lake. They sold hot dogs and hamburgers and coffee and lots.

John: So the gas era was really... and we talking just before the depression, right about 1929? Depression era, that's when gas came in right?

Walter: Yeah, 1928 or 1929.

Dick: What did they use for power source on the drilling rigs ?

Walter: What?

Bob: What kind of power source did have for operating the drilling rigs? Gasoline engines or...

Walter: Gasoline and when they got gas in, they used natural gas a lot of them did. Pipe it from somewhere else to where they were drilling right on top of the ground.

John: What other era would you recall as being one of special memories for you other than the gas era, where there were things happening within the community here that was really notable. Was there anything else like, it wouldn't be the canal necessarily. Was there any other particular happening in the area that was made living in that time really special?

Walter: Well, there was the gas business and... there were a lot of things happening along then. This road come into Wayne .

(lost some interview, changed tape)

Walter:... .I remember when my dad was on the Board of Trustees. They came there and leased it, wanted to lease it and they offered some very good money for it. Some of the Board wouldn't sign up because they claimed that my dad was getting something out of it. And I think another one was Hoover, he was on the board, he was supposed to be getting something. The rest of them wouldn't consent to letting them drill there. They offered them free gas, if they could come in there and drill. Some of the Board wouldn't

go along with it, so, I remember my dad telling that the guy told us when he got done talking about it, he said that you will never get this offer again and they never did. But they did drill there, but didn't get what the guy offered to begin with.

## The Aisle of Pines

John: The Aisle of Pines is history now, what do you remember about that?

Walter: Well, I don't remember too much. It was sort of before my time or when I was really young. I've heard a lot about it. There has been a lot of talk of different ones lived around here. There were quite a few men who worked there for quite a long time.

John: In the original construction, you mean?

Walter: Yeah. Before and after, I guess. They moved that building back, it set over there by the road. They moved it back where it was when it burned. They moved it with a team of horses. I once talked with a man who lived in Bath who said that he had worked for his dad when they moved that building.

John: Maybe he got his training from taking the steam shovel out of Waneta Lake.

Walter: Well, They really had nice things going up there. They had a swimming pool and roads around through there and flower beds. It was a swell looking place, according to what they tell me.

John: Did you ever go up there as a boy and look around ?

Walter: I went that building, probably two or three times when it was empty.

John: When it was empty?

Walter: Yeah.

Jeff: It went through quite a few owners there for a while.

Susan: Do you know how many rooms there were in the Aisle of Pines?

Jeff: I wouldn't even guess right now.

Susan: Do you think it was around fifty?

Jeff: No, because of the porches around it and columns and the roof area, the building itself wasn't really that large. It was big, but not as big as when you look at a photograph.

Susan: The reason I said fifty is...

Walter: Who owns that now, I guess what's name to PennYan sells off the lots or something.

Jeff: Wayne bought a lot of the land.

Bob: Bob Cole has where the house used to be.

Walter: The caretaker's house...

Bob: No. That's David Farmer and his wife Susan own where the gate house is. The structure that burned down is owned by Bob Cole. He used to be the president of Bath National Bank. And I think he has ten acres in there.

Walter: He owned it when it burned?

Bob: No, Pease owned it then...

Jeff: Priest owned it before that and...

Walter: It was too bad that burned, somebody could have got ahold of it and made something out of it. I remember when that burned. They had a fire department then, but there were four fires in that house burning at the same time.

## The Wayne Fire Department

Bob: Well, that's another thing, Walt has been in the fire department here almost since day one and was treasurer for many years.

Walter: 51 years I was on the Board of Fire Commissioners.

John: For 51 years...

Walter: Volunteer. I was a fireman at the same time, probably sixty years or more.

John: This may sound like an unusual question, but I asked this of somebody some time ago and I got a very interesting answer, but I would like to know what your thoughts are. Several people like the Aisle of Pines, whoever was behind that, but there are people that have really looked on this area as being unique. And that's why the Aisle of Pines was built where it was and maybe why some other people have come here or lived here for large portions of their life. In your mind, what is it that makes this area unique and why have you been here for all of these years? Is there something special about this area and if so what do you think it is?

Walter: I love it around here. I think it is beautiful country. I like to come up Hammondsport hill over here and just set there and look down through the lake and across the lake. It's... some certain times of the year it's just gorgeous. That's the way I look at it. That's the reason I've lived here and drove back and forth. I've seen that view for a good many times. You can't get as close as you used to, to see it because it's building up along the road, but it's there just the same.

John: Generally you've found good people here also, I think right?

Walter: A lot of good people, I knew a lot of people here, they are all gone now. Most of them gone except me. We had to have 26 men to sign up in order to start this fire department. We got them. I was one of them. Out of all the ones who signed up, I'm the only one left.

John: Is that right and that was the beginning of the fire department, which would've been what year?

Walter: 1938.

John: 1938. So Wayne has had its own fire department since 1938.

Walter: Oh yeah.

Bob: It started out in Keuka Hotel garage didn't it?

Dick: The various fire houses, where have they been?

Walter: The first one was right up here where this... right at the end of... this side of that guy that is running the garage there. To begin with, they had some fires here before we ever had a fire department. I was one of them that burned out, that was when we were first married. That was 1936. In 1937, December 5, I think it was, I woke up one night, somebody was hollering to me to get out of there. Well, the guy's barn right next to us was all afire. The barn burned up, with the woodshed and the house, a double house we were in. We lost most of our stuff and got back on our feet after a while. About two months after that happened, Crookston's house, set where that fire house is now (the old fire house), that burned. Then some of the men around here decided that we ought to do something about something to fight fire with. Somebody said

shoot water if you can get somewhere it might do some good. That's how we got to talking about it and everybody got quite interested in it. So, that's the way it got started. There was a man lived here in Wayne where Oborne does. His father lived there in that big house and his son was named Harry Earnest and he lived down around New York somewhere. He came back here to take care of his father after his mother died and he started a machine shop. He was one of them who was interested in a fire department too. There was a lot of them that was a little older than I was... there was a lot of them like I was, we were young. I burned out and I was poor too. You don't realize what burned out is until you experience it. To stand there and watch everything go up in smoke. It's just hard to take. I was a fireman a good many years, but something about a fire, it just makes me feel bad to think that everything is gone that somebody had. They went to work on to it, he had a suggestion and it was a good one. He said that down around New York, he know of a fire department, a rural fire department, and they set it up just like a municipality to get tax money. He said 'I think you ought go that route.' Well I'll tell you, there was a lot of discussion amongst all these men. They got to looking into it and Earnest kind of took over and they got hooked up with the state and finally got it set up as the same as a municipality. There was a lot of work to it. He did a lot of work for us, writing letters and calling. If it hadn't been for, we wouldn't have what we got.

John: So, the first location where you kept equipment was...

Walter: Jones, down there at Carenaught had an old 1926 Pierce Arrow car. It wasn't licensed and he gave us that car of his if we could do anything with it. He brought it to Harry Earnest's machine shop and we cut the back of it off and put two small water tanks with soda and acid on to it. We had to have so much rope and we had to have so many pails to carry the water to fill those tanks. This was all requested by the state. So that was the way we got started, with that Pierce Arrow truck with those tanks. When we got to a fire, the tanks had water in them, then you dumped the soda in and set a canister down in there and flip it over and it charged. That's where you got the pressure. We done quite a lot saving fires around here. We saved one place out in Weston here, struck by lightning one night. We saved that house. We did it with that little fire truck we had.

John: But the Pierce Arrow was the first. What year was the Pierce Arrow?

Walter: 1926.

Dick: Where did you keep it? Did you have a building they kept it in?

Walter: Well, they got everything set up and then we had meetings after meetings about this thing. I've got that all in history, written up that I could let you read it sometime. It tells more than I can tell you. It tells the whole thing.

Bob: I think that's in the file. Walt had given a lot of that to Don Rowland. There was newspaper write

ups and other articles there. It should be in one of those three binders. Where was that Pierce Arrow kept?

Walter: They had a meeting up here at the school house and there were three insurance men there. One from Dundee, two from Hammondsport, I think. The state requested all these things we had to do and they had that meeting and those men attended that meeting. The next thing was, we had the truck and they brought up there that night to that meeting and the school house was full of people. Everybody was interested in the fire department. It was a crude looking thing, but that was the way we started. Then we thought where were we going to keep it? The state said that you had to have it housed in a building where it was warm in wintertime and there were several other things too. Crookston, who had burned out, had this garage out there 20 ft. By 20 ft., he had built. He said 'I will sell the land to you for two hundred dollars and that building.' So we had to think about getting money. Some of the men right around this area put money into it, with they were to get it back. To keep the thing going until we got somewhere. So they took it. So

we put that truck into the garage for the first winter. It wasn't a very big area, but we had formed our fire department. That was 1938. We kept going and finally bought a another truck, I think it came from down in Keuka. They talked about having a fire department along the lake there. We did have that truck here. It had a side pump, we had a front end pump on the truck we finally bought. We kept getting something better all the while as we were growing . They had to form this Board of Fire Commissioners and their officers and when they done that, the Board had... they could say what we done, that was their say so. When any equipment in the building, it belonged to the Board of Fire Commissioners. So, we kept changing trucks and we finally got a tanker, got an old Dodge chassis in Elmira and got a gasoline tank that was used for peddling gas on to it and we filled it with water. We had about 800 gallons on it. That helped a lot. We bought a portable pump, it got so along the lake down here a lot of places you couldn't get down to the lake with the truck. So, they used to portable pump to pump the water up over the bank to the truck. We wouldn't have what we have today if it hadn't been for a lot of these good men that lived in Wayne . I'm not talking about myself. That man Earnest was really... he knew what he was doing when he told us what we ought to do.

There was a lot to it, he did all the correspondence. We even had to appoint a chief before we ever got going, because these things were required by the State.

John: Was Wayne one of the first communities in this area to have its own Fire Department?

Walter: I think we were the first one in this that had a real Fire Department in this area.

John: Who was close in...

Walter: That takes care of into Watkins, up the other side of the lake, they didn't have any.

John: They didn't ? Even then.

Walter: No rural. These were... this was the beginning of the rural fire department here.

John: Do you have any pictures of that Pierce Arrow after you converted it?

Walter: I have a picture of it, but it's not a very good one. It's white and black. It shows enough of it so you can see what we had. We didn't only have fires, we had to get cats out of trees and wouldn't come down. We got two calls on Keuka Lake at the beginning about after we got this thing... got it going. Down along Keuka Lake and we saved a couple of cottages down there.

John: You have a lot of pride in what's happened with the Fire Department.

Walter: We put in an alarm system up here in the village. We had three alarm boxes stationed around the area in the village.

John: Is that right?

Walter: Where ever you saw a fire, where ever you could get to one of those boxes the quickest, and turn in the alarm.

John: There's no such thing currently, is there?

Walter: No. Not now. It's all taken care of by the county.

John: But the alarm boxes were taken out some time ago, right?

Walter: Yeah. When the power came we had to... we finally got a siren. I think PennYan let us have one, an old one. Then we didn't know what we were going to put it on. A man by the name of Turner, used to work for the big house up here, and he owned some land up here and there was that tower sets up there now. It was up on his land and we took it down and brought it down here and set it up. Put that siren up

on top of it.

John: What was that tower for originally, was that a...

Walter: Windmill. Pumped water.

John: It had a wooden... was it a well?

Walter: They had a pond back there. There was the last I knew. You could see where they had sort of a pit up there. I don't know, they pumped it out over to these buildings from that tower. Over across the road there.

John: Was there a windmill on the... on that tower?

Walter: That was across the road and I don't, I guess they owned some of the property across the road there too.

John: But you moved the tower.

Walter: We moved the tower down here. He owned the land then, Turner did. He owned the land where the lots are over here. So he gave us the tower. We moved it down there.

John: Where's the Pierce Arrow today?

Walter: I don't know. We let it go and I wished we had kept it, just for show. It was really something .

John: Any idea what ever happened to it?

Walter: No. We let somebody have it, I don't know who it was but... As I said, there was no rural fire departments. I think they all started from this one right here. Of course, we were controlled from Watkins eventually.

John: Was Jones, at Carenaught, was he a good supporter of things that needed to be done in the community?

Walter: I think he was, yes.

John: And when did he... how long was he there?

Walter: He owned lake property quite a long time, he was in the lumber business up near Buffalo somewhere.

John: So he didn't live here all the time?

Walter: No. He was just summer here most of the time. I don't remember him being here year around, but he had a nice place down there. He could afford to anything like that, I guess. It sure helped us out, that's where we got started.

John: I had heard that there was a boardwalk from Carenaught that went down to... along the lake with gas lights on it. It went all the way down to the Grove Springs Hotel.

Walter: I didn't know that.

John: By the way it's getting kind of late and we've kept you for a long time. You must be tired. Walter. No, I love to talk about it.

John: I found this very interesting and helpful and...

Walter: I got challenged once, about when it started. I worked on that for quite a while. I wrote up the history from the beginning up through 1988, I guess. I've got that.

John: Do we...

Walter: When they formed this district, they formed it by two miles by road from the Firehouse. We went towards Keuka we went two miles. We went towards Dundee, we went two miles, two miles down the lake. We went two miles up in Barrington. There was three counties and three townships involved. It started in 1938. I got my first card, being a fireman, I got it yet. We issued the cards in 1939.

Susan: Do you have your history in a notebook?

Walter: Yeah, I have it... I think I've got one right over there . I brought it over, I didn't know what questions might be asked on it. It tells all about the founding of the district. I got challenged by one of our local people about when it started. He claimed it started in 1937. Of course I knew it didn't. This is what we had to start with to get the thing going. Forming of the district.

John: This is really specific.

Walter: I knew all about that so I could write it up.

John: Some of this, if we don't already have copies we can use.

Walter: I think your Town has already got that, I think they made a copy of it. Here is some pictures of some of the different trucks we had.

John: Is the Pierce Arrow in there?

Walter: No.

John: That's such an interesting beginning as far as equipment is concerned.

Walter: I'm proud of it. I'm proud of our Fire Department.

John: I can tell and you have every right to be.

Walter: I know there was a lot of opposition to it when they done this one up here...

John: What's the opposition?

Walter: Well, a lot of people thought we didn't need the Fire Department.

John: That it just wasn't necessary.

Walter: Wasn't necessary, yeah. Thought Hammondsport could do it. I know they had a lot of arguments there, I attended some of the meetings and kept quiet. I've got quite a lot of things on file up home.

John: Are there several copies of this around?

Walter: There used to be. Nobody knows where they all went to. I was lucky I had one for information.

John: Have you only kept one of each of these?

Walter: I've got maybe a couple three books. That told there how the district was set up.

John: Is there anything stored at the Firehouse today that speaks to the history of the Fire Department and maybe contains any memorabilia or...

Walter: They should have this history .

John: So this... there will be a copy over to the Firehouse.

Walter: I don't know if they got anymore copies. Our Supervisor in the town of Tyrone came up to me one day and he wanted to know, he said 'You were in the fire department, I understand, when it was formed'.

I said ‘well’. He said ‘Can you give me anything about the history of it? ‘I said ‘Well, I wrote it up in nineteen eighty something. He said ‘Could I have a copy of it?’ So he made a copy of it for the Town of Tyrone. I’ve talked on this before, so... That guy started in as a fireman then he quit, he got peeved over something. He challenged me, He said that it started in 1937. That’s what Rowland (Don) tried to tell me. There was still some of them alive that were there when it started. I contacted all of them to make sure . Our budget when we started was $812.

Ed: Walt, I have an interest in the Regan Antique Barn, on Route 54. I’m curious how far back it goes. Do you have any memory of that? I’m told it was a Red & White Store at one time.

Walter: Was. Thurbert, people who lived there were Thurbert.

Ed: Did that start out as a Red & White?

Walter: It seems as if to me it was after they quit doing store business that they had something in there, I don’t know what it was... antiques or what it was.

Ed: Yes

Walter: It was?

Ed: When do you think that started?

Walter: It was after the road was built. I wouldn’t say. Well, it was interesting and I learned about a lot of things.

Dick: We thank you very much. We picked up a lot of information, I sure.

Walter: I’m the only one left around here. Well, there are four of us I think. My wife started the auxillary. She was first president. They had quite a group of them, women’s auxillary. My dad lived in Wayne for all his life. He was always interested in the politics of the towns. He held quite a few offices, was Supervisor one time way back many years ago. One thing I didn’t know, when they voted up here in Maccabee Hall, they had a fence across the inside. I often wondered why that fence was across there. There was a gate in the fence and they had to go through the gate to vote at the booth inside the fence. I asked my dad about it one day. He said that the Town of Wayne line goes right through that building and in order to vote you have to go on the other side of that fence.

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