

This is Shelley Richer interviewing Mr. Harvey Holzworth in his home on Point Abino Road, September 25th, 1985.

S.R: Hello Mr. Holzworth, and how are you today?

H.H: Alright Shelley, it's a beautiful day today.

S.R: What is your date of birth?

H.H: October 31st, Halloween.

S.R: What year?

H.H: 1924.

S.R: Where were you born?

H.H: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but I've always lived in Buffalo.

S.R: When did you come to Fort Erie?

H.H: I came to Crystal Beach in 1924. My father... as I said, I was just born in Pittsburgh, but the family moved immediately to Buffalo, and dad right away decided to buy a summer home. That was, I think it was cottage #71 on the waterfront on top of the hill at Crystal Beach. I can remember back then, when I was still a baby in a wicker baby buggy, and I know which room in the house it was, in the front, and I know which way I was facing in the buggy, and I could listen to the bands coming off the Crystal Beach boat, and the people, and I loved the noises of the people down on the beach. Of course, this is before there was any fence down at the beach. There used to be a... I can remember a cement walk, you know, a sidewalk like, going down in front of the homes, down on the beach. In fact, it's still there. If the stone washes the sand away... it's still there, parts of it, you know.

S.R: And that's at Crystal Beach?

H.H: That's right in Crystal Beach, going along the lakefront there. At that time the Canadiana and the Americana were the two boats that came in, and I remember the old ballroom when the Dance Hall... the band stand was in the middle of the Dance Hall. I remember the Royal Ballroom, which is, I believe, the old Royal Hotel, and I used to... I remember the Royal Ballroom, that was at the Bay Beach end of Crystal Beach, right on the beach. That building is still there. Mr. Rebstock owns it and he uses it for apartments, you know, summer apartments. That used to be the old Royal Ballroom.

I can remember Honey Teal delivering ice to us.

S.R: This is still in the first house?

H.H: This is still in the first house. I can remember a ride that used to be located in the shallow water, right near the dock, and it would twirl around and the swimmers would grab a hold of it and swing out in the air and let go and splash in the water. I can remember that ride.

S.R: That was at Crystal Beach right?

H.H: That was all at Crystal Beach. Then in 1928 my father was sold on building... buying some property at Point Abino and building our present summer home that I live in now, in 1928, at Point Abino. Now, this house is just two doors north of the Buffalo Yacht Club, Point Abino Station.

S.R: Did your father build this house himself or were there...?

H.H: Oh no, he had... I think Mr. Poor built it, I believe it was Mr. Poor. I know that Logden Page built the stone wall in front of the house, and I know that Logden Page built the big stone fireplace here, and it's all a fieldstone fireplace that we have in here. Logden Page built that, and he built the house... he built the fireplace first...

S.R: And then built the house around it?

H.H: And then he built the house around it. Then, the fireplace is designed so in case of bad times or something, why-you could... if somebody was living here, they could heat. If you keep a steady fire in there and heat all the stones up, and you could heat the house with radiant heat with just the heat of the stones.

S.R: So it never needed a furnace then?

H.H: No, but I have a furnace in it, but I mean, if things really were bad.

S.R: What was the area like when you moved here, your neighbours? Do you remember who your neighbours were?

H.H: Yeah, Mrs. Watson was just north of us, and she was also our neighbour in Buffalo, and she was the one that talked my father into buying this property here and building next door to her here at Point Abino. That was Mrs. Watson. Just to the south of us was the Matham House, Matham owned that house. That house was here. Then right behind that, which is a house that we've added to and everything

else... my sister lives in there now and Adams used to live in that house way back, and that house is one of the oldest houses on the Point, and that house was also used where the crew for the Marion L used to stay. Ike Adams was the skipper of the Marion L, and this was before there was any sand roads, any roads coming out on the Point. They used to go back and forth to Crystal Beach by boat. One of those boats was the Marion L. The life preservers of the Marion L are still in the attic of that house. They're all hanging on a mast from an old sailboat, perfectly preserved, so we'll leave them there. Now, before the Marion L there was the Mertle, and Mitch... let's see... I don't know if it was Bragg or Mitchener... Mitchener used to skipper that boat I think, the Mertle, and that was built right up at, well, Mitchener, Jimmy Braggs location. It was built, I think, by Mitchener and old Jack Sinclair. Jack Sinclair was the last of the clipper-ship sailors. There's a whole history on him. That's something else to talk about. I have a lot of information on Jack Sinclair.

S.R: Jack Sinclair was a resident here?

H.H: Oh yeah, he was a resident. When he retired from his sailing days he used to work around as a gardener, and in the wintertime he would carve ships that he used to sail on, you know, carve them and rig them. He'd carve them with the sea around them and then he'd give them to whoever he worked for. Now, he's given me some stuff but I never got one of his ships. And then, actually, we bought his property when he died and my father ended up giving it to Tony, who was our gardener at the time, he gave him the property.

S.R: Do you know what Tony's last name was?

H.H: I don't know, it's hard to... Mitch... it's hard to pronounce. Just Tony, big Tony. But, that's the way Jack Sinclair lived, the same house. I have some other things that he... the other thing he used to do was carve different things out of twigs, you know, furniture and things like that out of the twigs and branches in the woods, and the vines and stuff like that. I have some of that stuff. Now, getting back to our location here, the back part of our property is where the Indian burial ground is. The archaeologist from the University of Toronto... and I have a whole write-up. They've been

back here for the last three years and I let them dig on my property. They... right at the end on my property they ran into some pottery, three pieces of pottery which has the designs, the rim, and two different designs, and fairly large but it's broken, the big vase... and perfectly clear the designs, and they estimate that it's around 2,000 years old. They found some cutting knives. They estimated their age around 800 B.C., and they've also found some spearheads and arrowheads and other things, but all this will be written up and there will be booklets on this stuff too. Right now a lot of these are going through carbon tests to verify their age and everything at the University of Toronto, I believe.

S.R: This used to be an Indian settlement then?

H.H: Oh yeah, this was originally settled in... there used to be all black walnut trees here. The Point was loaded with black walnut trees, and there was a peaceful tribe of Indians that settled here. They were known as the Fishing Tribe, but there was an escarpment here of shale, or what they use for tools, arrowheads, spearheads. They always stayed peaceful because they were traders. They made these arrowheads and spearheads and cutting tools and that stuff, and traded it all throughout the Continent. Some has been found down in southwestern parts of the United States. Eventually all this tribe was wiped out by the Iriquois. There's a lot more history I can go into on that.

S.R: Like what? From around here?

H.H: Well, there is also an Indian garden here. That's up at the Point. That would be on Brown Road, I think, down at the end of Brown Road where Carroll used to live. It's close, it's in that area. It would be south of... I know where it is. It's back in the woods. That has been written up in some article in the Museum of Science in Buffalo. There's an article on that. It's an Indian garden, is what it is, the burial ground.

S.R: How could they tell that it was an Indian garden?

H.H: Just by the weeds, the growth... by the growth.

S.R: That's how they can tell this was a burial ground too?

H.H: Well, there are certain ways that... if I'm walking through the woods and I run across certain weeds, you only find them in Indian burial

grounds or Indian gardens, or something like that. The terrain is just your low evergreens, certain type of evergreens, and then they have these weeds, I forget what you call them. They're very thin and you can pull them apart and put them back together again. There again I could elaborate on all that. I'm just having a fast interview and all these names and everything, I haven't got at the tip of my tongue. Then they had the little yellow flowers. It's just the vegetation and stuff. Then of course there's certain other histories that have been referred to, like, Pierre Abino, who was a priest, used to... that's where Point Abino got it's name, from a priest, Pierre Abino. There's other people that have more history on him than what I have.

S.R: What history do you have on him? What would Pierre Abino have to do with around here?

H.H: Well, he came down to work with the Indians here.

S.R: Would you know the approximate year, or anything like that?

H.H: Right off hand at this interview I don't have any of those years. I have all the information available, but you'd have to fill it in.

S.R: Do you know who one of the first white settlers were to build one of their cottages, well, summer homes, they're not exactly cottages, along here were? One of the oldest homes here.

H.H: Well, you have the Holloway and Page, which are both Canadian, and Holloway had the Point Abino Sand Company. Then you had the Pages, there's several brothers. The Pages, one of them was John, Logden, and... I forget all of them, you know. The Holloways owned the southern half of the tip of Point Abino, and the Pages owned the northern half of Point Abino, so to speak. Holloway had a sand company, I guess they called it the Point Abino Sand Company. They had a sand dock that went out just... which is the present pier of the Buffalo Yacht Club. Holloway had that sand dock there. They also had another sand dock over on the west shore of Point Abino, right where the... the cribs are still there in the water. You'll see where it is. I know where they are. The... it's right where the shale rock on the Point meets the sand beach. Now, from there, there used to be a log road going across the Point over to the eastern shore of the Point, and there's a log road going

through the sandhills there, and then that road continues through what we used to call Patterson's Cut. Now, of course you've got... right in that area you have Bragg, Jimmy Bragg, and that's, I don't know, they used to have an ice house and fishing boats, and... they still have a boat livery there. They've been... one of the oldest on the Point, but it goes before that. Bragg was Mitchener... was it Mitchener? That's... that location is where the Mertie was built, one of the first boats, and it went back and forth. Now also there, there's two big white houses, they were owned by the Pattersons. Both those homes now owned by Bob Rich Senior and Bob Rich Junior. They used to be owned by the Pattersons. A little further up on the Point is the... on the corner, the first road going back in, it's a ground road, is the old Pan-American House, and I believe it was the Wisconsin House in the Pan-Am Exposition in 1901, in Buffalo, and that was brought over here over the ice.

S.R: The house was?

H.H: Yes. There's even a postcard of that house. I forget... I don't know who lived in it at that time. I can remember some of the older names out on the Point. I can remember Carrolls used to live up there, way back. Of course the Fairburns, you've got the Sharps. They've been there a long time. Leapoles, he used to be up there. There's a whole list of the names that I could probably give you.

S.R: You said that the Holloways and the Pages basically owned all the property on the Point at one time.

H.H: Right.

S.R: Would you know approximately when they settled, or the reasons for having it all divided up into... for them starting to sell off their property to have a settlement...?

H.H: You'd have to go talk to Earl Page about all that. You'd get a better history than what I can give you. He lives right down the road here on Point Abino Road here, not too far away.

S.R: All along the lakefront here, there is the Bertie Boat Club, I think it's the Buffalo Canoe Club, and the Buffalo... no, the something Canoe Club and the Buffalo Yacht Club.

H.H: On the Point itself you've got the... the first boat that was out on the Point is Braggs. That's the oldest. It's a boat livery. He

still has a... he still keeps one fishing boat there and he still has his commercial fishing license because he keeps the boat there, but it's basically a boat livery. Now, that used to be an ice house and everything. Now, just north of that, coming in from the lighthouse, is the Bertie Boat Club, then right next to it is the Buffalo Yacht Club station. Now, I have pictures of some of the old Yacht Club buildings back in 1902. Now, I believe that was a King's Grant at the time, that property, to the Buffalo Yacht Club. They got some kind of a King's Grant and I think they acquired some of it through Holloway at the time. And there again, I'd have to go back to the Yacht Club history on that which I have a write-up on. They used to have a sand dock that went out into the lake along there, and... oh, back in the '50s... wait a minute... '50... no, it was the early '60s... '59, '60, '61. But, then I dredged a new channel in for the big channel, the present channel in for the Yacht Club. At that time Bob Tripp came up to me and asked if himself and maybe four or five, half a dozen other fellows could tie up on the north side of the berm that we built to drive the cars out on. I said, "Sure, go ahead". And that was the beginning of the Bertie Boat Club. Of course, they acquired the land there and everything else, and it's turned into quite a boat club.

S.R: Why did people ask you? What did you have to do with all this that people would ask you if they could tie up their boats?

H.H: Well, I belonged to the Yacht Club, and I had helped... I was one of the active promoters of getting this Point Abino station reactivated. I promoted it and dredged the new channel, the big one they're using now.

S.R: How did you do that and who helped?

H.H: How did I dredge it?

S.R: Yes.

H.H: That's a long story, and I have a whole write-up on that. It's available if you want it. Basically we had a strong north east... I mean, after promoting and trying to get the money. We had a Vice Commodore that was interested in getting this channel dug, and then a certain group got together and they said, "Well, we'll put the money in", because we had a strong three day north east wind blowing. At

that time the lake level was very low, very low.

S.R: Because of the north east wind or just at that time?

H.H: No, just, just... there was a cycle, you know, certain years it's higher and certain years it's lower. You always get your cycles. I don't care what anybody says, you always have your cycles, and they'll vary by 10 years apart, you know. But, this strong north east wind that was blowing, and it held off for three days, we had dry land way out to the end of where the weir is now. That was all dry land, all dry. Now, there used to be other channels dredged in there for other docks and stuff, and old man, old Al Storm used to dredge all those channels in. His son Mike knew them and Mike redredged them. So he knew all the channel beds and where all the hard and soft spots were. So, with the water so low I had Mike on standby with his drag line, and I said, "I've got the go ahead", and I says, "Mike, come on up and start digging". So, he just walked up his drag line all the way up there to the beginning of the channel. He had the floor boards of his, the cabin of the drag line with about an inch of water over them. And he says, "This is how far I can take it out", and then he didn't even use his mast to walk it out there. He says, "I can throw the bucket out another 30 feet, and I says, "Start digging". Well, what he did is, he had to dig real fast before the wind let up, and built an island behind him, shorewise, and he got this island, and he dredged right into the dock that whole day. He just kept building this island behind him and kept digging. He just kept throwing the dirt back and building an island. Then it was draining off, he had to build it high enough to drain off. Then he took his mast and he just moved his crane up on top of this island so that when the wind let up and the water came back down the lake, you know, it rose a little bit, that he'd be out of the water. Now, he was sitting on an island, so the only way he was going to get that drag line ashore was to keep digging, and keep throwing the dirt back. Now, the end results were that, before we were through, I had two drag lines going and three euclids from Campbells Quarry moving dirt. In front of the homes here... of course when we first built here, for many years this was all a sand road going up here, and...

S.R: You said before, that there wasn't a road.

H.H: Well, there was no road. I don't know when they first... it was just a sand road going up when we moved here.

S.R: Oh, so you could always come here without taking the ferry across and take the Marion L.

H.H: Oh, no, no, that's all before my time. Oh yeah, that's all before my time. No, we could drive up then. Well, it was just a sand road along the shore.

S.R: Was it a private road?

H.H: It was private then. In fact, we used to have old Gordie Haun, and he used to be an old... he was a gate keeper, and there's an old stone column down as you come, as you hit the lake, you know, right where you hit the lake there, there's a stone column there, and that's where they used to, we used to have a guard there. Then there's another gate up there further on up the Point, up by the Pan-Am House. Then of course they had another road here, that's a private road. It was all private at one time.

S.R: Why can it be private?

H.H: Well, a lot of these homes along here had Reparian Rights at the time... water rights. The original road between Holloway and Page, Page finally gave in the right of way, the road right of way across his part of the property. He gave Holloway the right of way and that's probably how they got the... decided where they were going to put the road.

S.R: You said you knew a lot about the history of the Yacht Club. Would you know when it started, who started it, any of the backing, or... what's the history of the Club?

H.H: To get into that I'll have to... we can get into that later in the interview on the history of the Yacht Club because I have to go pull out some more information here. When you start asking me names and you're going way back, I don't remember all these names.

S.R: Well, what do you remember about it? Do you remember the approximate year that it opened?

H.H: What, the Point Abino station?

S.R: So, that question there on the Yacht Club was a little bit too big to answer on this type of interview.

H.H: What are you asking?

S.R: Oh, I asked if you could explain the history... Before I shut the tape off I asked if you could explain the history of the Yacht Club, and that question was a little bit too big.

H.H: The history of the Yacht Club would take hours to tell you. I mean, I could go on for four or five hours and talk about the history of the Yacht Club. How long could you read through all those books, and those are all the history of the Yacht Club step by step. You wouldn't read it all in one night.

S.R: No.

H.H: So how can I answer the history of the Yacht Club in...?

S.R: Yes, but that was just the question I asked before I shut off the tape.

H.H: At Point Abino they built one club house... I mean... I can go on and on in 1860 and then it was around 1902, or before that, that they got a... it's the only Yacht Club that has a station in two different countries, one in the United States and one in Canada. There's no other yacht club that has it. Now, the only other Yacht Club that's any older in the Great Lakes is The Royal Canadian Yacht Club in Toronto. Then the Buffalo Yacht Club is the fourth oldest in the continent.

S.R: What are some other memories that you have of the areas around here?

H.H: Yeah, I mentioned the dairy trucks.

S.R: You had said something about, there was an ice cream man around and... what you had just said before the tape was on... and Silverwood and Bordens were on Point Abino Road.

H.H: Actually, the old sand road... well right now, the sand hill used to... it's just south of the Yacht Club... the sand hill used to come right down out to the road. All that sand has been taken away. They used it... most of that sand they used to pave the Queen E. from Niagara Falls to Fort Erie. A lot of that sand was invaded.

S.R: Was that part of the Point Abino Sand Company owned by...?

H.H: No, that was owned by the Yacht Club when that was taken, the Yacht Club sold it.

S.R: Where was the Point Abino Sand Company located?

H.H: All through there, the whole Point. I mean, their actual buildings. I don't know where their actual buildings are. I think one of them is down in Patterson's Cut there. Some of the old buildings where the men used to... boarding houses or whatever you want to call them, by the Patterson's Cut there. I know where they are, or where they were.

S.R: Would you know why it's called Patterson's Cut?

H.H: Well, that's what we used to call it, because Pattersons used to own the homes along there. They owned the homes there and that was a cut by their homes that went over to the west shore. But it was also Sand Company Road, is what it was.

S.R: Yes, to get all the sand out to wherever they had to take it to.

H.H: They'd go take the sand... go out here and go up and then they'd take that cut to go over to the west shore. That was the cut. We used to call it, in my days when I was a kid, we called it Patterson's Cut. Then, just on the sand hill that's next to the Yacht Club, just on the other side of that toward the lighthouse, there is another path, it was a path just then. I know all the... a lot of these were just paths. There is also a path on top of the sand hill and there is another path right behind the Yacht Club that went over to the other shore, the west shore. Later on, the path on the lighthouse side became... when the Township, Bertie Township wanted the water intake, they built the water intake over on the west shore there, so that became Pumphouse Road. But that's all part of Bill Bairds property now.

S.R: What about the lighthouse? What can you tell me about the lighthouse?

H.H: Oh, I used to love the old fog horn a lot better than the new one. That old fog horn used... you loved to listen to it. The new screech owl that you listen to...

S.R: Why did they change it then?

H.H: Well,,I wish they never would have because I don't like the sound of this one and we loved the sound of the old one and it was powerful. You ask the people in charge why they changed it, I don't know. They're changing them all I guess. What that has to do with... that doesn't have anything to do with the history of the Point here though. We used to love the sound of that old fog horn. It would just echo through all these hills. It was beautiful.

S.R: Do you know how long the lighthouse has been there?

H.H: Well, now you've started to ask me dates off the cuff here.

S.R: No I mean 100 years, 200 years?

H.H: I don't have all these figures, dates, at the tip of my tongue. It's right on the lighthouse, I can find it quick enough but I can't answer it over an oral interview. I could write it up better for you.

S.R: Then, going back down the lake to...

H.H: They got the date right on the lighthouse. It's right there, you can see it. I forget all these dates.

S.R: Going back then to Crystal Beach, Crystal Beach used to have boats going back and forth... you have a lot of pictures of boats... were you ever on the Canadiana and the Americana?

H.H: Oh yeah, the Canadiana and the Americana, many a time.

S.R: Were there any other boats other than the two of those, to go to Crystal Beach?

H.H: Oh, there was a lot of boats before them. You had your State of New York used to pull in there. There again, I have a whole list of boats, but I... then I... I can't... without pulling out my files...

S.R: That's why it's oral history, it's what you remember.

H.H: Yeah, but I don't remember those. I mean, you asked me a question and I can answer it, but I can't answer it in two seconds here, I have to go pull out... I know the State of New York, the State of Ohio, that used to pull into the docks but there was a lot more than that that pulled into those docks. That dock that's out there now is not the original dock. They had two docks before that that were out there.

S.R: What were they like? Were they just wooden?

H.H: They're wooden docks on wooden columns.

S.R: Isn't it a cement one now?

H.H: Yeah.

S.R: So that's why? The wooden ones just gradually rotted away and then they had to replace them.

H.H: Well, they kept rebuilding docks. The ice storms, the ice would do their damage and storms would do their damage. Well, you look at the shape of this dock now, the cement dock.

S.R: Do you know...?

- H.H:** Look at your Erie Beach dock, it's still there, only the ice does it's damage unless you're using them and maintaining them all the time.
- S.R:** Could you tell me what the Americana and the Canadiana were like?
- H.H:** Hmm, they were very gracious boats, beautiful.
- S.R:** How many people would they hold?
- H.H:** Oh, 3,000 people. But there again you're asking me for figures and I don't want to give a lot of misleading information, because I don't have the exact figures. I'm saying approximately. These kind of questions, you know, I like to answer them correctly. Just off the cuff I don't know what the figures are. I don't remember all the figures. I never paid attention to them. I know that, around... there was approximately 3,000 people, maybe more.
- S.R:** Could you explain why you said they were gracious, describe them?
- H.H:** You've got to be a yachtsman or somebody that appreciates boats to understand what I'm talking about. They were just beautiful and that's what everybody still says about the boats, and to see them glide through the water and to see them coming in, to see them passing, just the way they were built, the shape and the lines they had. Then you'd hear the bands playing on them and everything else. That was part of Crystal Beach, just the same as the old Cyclone was part of Crystal Beach, just the same as the Dance Hall, the big Ballroom was... that was Crystal Beach. It was a family park then, no gates around it.
- S.R:** Who started Crystal Beach? Would you know how it started? Was it Rebstock?
- H.H:** Well, originally Erie Beach and Crystal Beach, they were more campgrounds. A lot of these parks were religious campgrounds, you know, they started out as groves. Crystal Beach was the same way. Now, Rebstock was... Rebstocks were very active in the beginning there. Then George Hall got in there... and there again I'd have to double check when you're asking for names, but I know that Rebstock and Hall...
- S.R:** So when Rebstock owned it it was religious campgrounds and they would have their summer meetings and group meetings and stuff there in the summertime. Did Rebstock start to put rides in for attractions?

H.H: That part of it I can't, right off the cuff... to get it correctly I... I have pictures of the grove and postcards. I have all the postcards that were the old boats that used to pull in there and the old rides, what it used to look like. As to the... and I even probably have it written up here someplace as to who started the park, whether it was Rebstock, when they started to build the rides. I'm not sure when they started to build the rides. It's the same thing as... I have pictures of the old Peg Leg Railroad.

S.R: Could you tell me what that is?

H.H: It was an elevated railroad. It ran from Crystal Beach to Fort Erie, and not too many people have ever heard of it, the Peg Leg Railroad, but I have the pictures.

S.R: Could you describe how it operated?

H.H: Well, it was just a car... it was electric.

S.R: Describing how the posts were and how it...?

H.H: Well, it was elevated. It was an elevated railroad. It was a one track railroad, and it was elevated on stilts. How many years it operated I don't know. I'm still looking into that myself. But I've got pictures of it and there's more history on it but it's awful hard to find. I showed you the two pictures of it and the best way to do it is for you to describe it or I can look at it. It's elevated on columns... a trestle, just like a big long trestle.

S.R: And it had an open coach.

H.H: Yeah, it had an open car, on top, and it just worked by electric.

S.R: Living in Point Abino, where did you do your shopping? Do they have any stores, corner stores, post office, any Fire Department, Police Department, or anything?

H.H: We used to shop, do a lot of our grocery shopping right in Crystal Beach. Kimberly's was on the corner of Derby Road and Erie Road, the grocery store... big... Kimberly's. In Crystal Beach you had Kimberly's, you also had Smith's. That was on Erie Road. That building's still there.

S.R: Point Abino didn't have any stores at all?

H.H: For fresh vegetables we used to go up to Welland to the open air market up there. I can remember going up there for fresh vegetables then. Then you had stands all over the place for fresh vegetables.

S.R: But there wasn't just a corner store around or anything like that?

H.H: There used to be a little store right up here on Point Abino Road. What's Bob's last name again? Bob owns the house where the store was. I'm just trying to think of Bob's last name. I know it as well as I know my own but I just can't think of it.

S.R: Where are the cabins that you mentioned?

H.H: That's where Tiffneys is now. That there was there a long time.

S.R: Tiffneys is the little store?

H.H: Well, it's just a little store. There's a lot of little stores around. There's... Sherkston used to have a general store going down Sherkston Road there. Right by where the railroad tracks cross Sherkston Road, a store and a post office and the train went right there, in Sherkston.

S.R: Speaking of trains, what kind of train service did Point Abino have, or didn't they?

H.H: Actually there was a... in one of these houses up there in Point Abino, I think it's next to the Pan-Am House, I think it used to be a post office for the old Grand Trunk Line or whatever went through here. I think that house was moved up there.

S.R: Where is the old Grand Trunk Line? Where in Point Abino did it go through? Was there a station?

H.H: Well, I think that there's... the only ones that I know of... I mean, you're asking me way back originally, I can't answer that. But, right where it goes through now, right up Point Abino Road. You've still got a railroad track there. It crosses Sherkston Road and it goes through Ridgeway.

S.R: Was there a train depot or anything that you could get on and off or did you have to go to Ridgeway to use the train service?

H.H: Well, I think we went to... yeah... no, I think you could get on and off at Sherkston. I don't know whether you could get on and off at Point Abino Road, but a lot of these trains, milk trains and stuff, they'd... you could probably flag them down. Whether there was a station on Point Abino Road or not, I don't know. There was one on Sherkston Road up there where the tracks cross and there is also your Ridgeway station. That's all I know of. But on the Peg Leg Railroad there used to be a train station right in Crystal Beach,

about where the bus stop is, right across from the original drugstore, the old main entrance to the park, right at the foot of Derby Road and Erie Road. There used to be a train station right in there.

S.R: Is there anything else you can recall about the train system?

H.H: Well, there's a... I have pictures of a lot of the train wrecks that happened up here, in the area. There was one just east of Ridgeway, there was a train wreck, and we have pictures of the train wreck right up here on the... when a train hit one of Jackson's trucks on Point Abino Road, we have pictures of that wreck. That was later. That was the latest one. Well, that's just the train wrecks in the area, different ones.

S.R: Going on to smuggling, you said you knew things about smuggling in the area.

H.H: I don't know too much about smuggling in the area, except that old Gordie Haun always said that he used to be a rum runner, or whatever you want to call it, you know, but it was all booze mostly... nothing about the Chinese in this area that I know of.

S.R: Was it a very big thing, the rum running around here?

H.H: In those days sure it was, I mean, in those days.

S.R: During the Prohibition?

H.H: Yeah. They used to have all kinds of things down in Fort Erie, there's all kinds of stories. In fact, we were just talking about, I don't know, recently, about some of the rigs they used to have to smuggle across the Niagara River, in the Fort Erie area.

S.R: What kinds of rigs?

H.H: Oh, they'd have underwater rigs, rigs for Chinamen, and oh, I forget now. That's something else I'd have to go into, to talk to you about.

S.R: What did Point Abino do for a Police Department or a Fire Department?

H.H: Crystal Beach.

S.R: Crystal Beach had a Police station and a Fire Station?

H.H: Yeah, we always... everything was Crystal Beach. Then later on Crystal Beach would just service Crystal Beach property and if there's a fire up here, I think a lot of it came out of Ridgeway, but this is mostly Crystal Beach would service this.

S.R: You had mentioned something about the Town of Ridgeway starting in a different spot than it is right now?

H.H: Well, let me put it this way, the main part of the Town of Ridgeway and the general store, is now Smokey Trider's house, which is on the south east corner where Nigh and Ridge meet. That house used to be the old general store and I don't know, there used to be a horse livery. You'd have to talk to them about the history, but it was his wife's family. That used to be the general store and the main part of the beginning of Ridgeway.

S.R: Would you know what his wife's family name was?

H.H: No.

S.R: Do you recall what other industry Ridgeway had, changes...? Did you know anything about the fires in Ridgeway?

H.H: No, I didn't know anything about the fires, at least I never saw them. A lot of things haven't changed that much in the area, you know. You had Stewart's Drug Store, you had Beeshy's, you had the sweater shop that used to be there in Ridgeway.

S.R: What did you do around Point Abino for entertainment... dances, on a date, the closest movie theatre, things like that?

H.H: You'd go to Crystal Beach.

S.R: Did Crystal Beach have a cinema?

H.H: We didn't go to movies that much over here. If I go to a movie... oh yeah, Crystal Beach had a cinema.

S.R: In the park itself?

H.H: No, not in the park, right on Ridge Road.

S.R: Was it owned by the Ziffs?

H.H: Who?

S.R: The Ziffs had two movie theatres in Fort Erie, and they used to...

H.H: I don't know who it was owned by, I mean, I don't remember who it was owned by. But there is a movie theatre there. In fact, I think it had an explosion and burned down. It was right next to where the Fire Hall, right in that area there, where the Crystal Beach Fire Hall was. That's where the movie theatre was. There was a fire. That's not too long ago. But, in my days, you asked me where we went out, when we went out and there was no place to go we went to the Canoe Club. We used to have dances there. They had dances out in the boat house. They still do. It was very active, teenage dances and stuff like that. You'd go to the Canoe

Club or you'd go to Crystal Beach, or you'd go down to the Royal Ballroom.

S.R: What was that?

H.H: That's right at Crystal Beach... right where Bay Beach meets Crystal Beach, at the west end.

S.R: Is it still there?

H.H: The building's still there. It's owned by Rebstock. It's used for summer homes, or apartments.

S.R: Oh, that place.

H.H: Yeah, it's right on the shore. It's where the old Royal Hotel used to be. There used to be a hotel there, way back.

S.R: Is that before you were here?

H.H: It was before my time, yeah. You're going back a little while, I'm not that old.

S.R: They have all these boating facilities here, where there any big...?

H.H: Yeah, and in Crystal Beach there used to be another hotel just up from the Brewers there, the Bon-Air. That was right in on top of the hill there. It was the Bon-Air. I've got postcards showing that.

S.R: That's not there anymore?

H.H: No, no, no, it's all gone. Now, you had Dexters Rolling Rink there in Crystal Beach. That was one of the original main attractions.

S.R: Was that in the park?

H.H: In the park. Then you also had the Old Mill there. That was an old attraction. They had the Fun House, that was a main attraction.

S.R: What was the Old Mill?

H.H: Where you take a boat through...

S.R: Lover's Lane type thing.

H.H: Yeah, you know, it was all enclosed. You come out of... it was all dark and you come onto a scene. The Old Mill. Then there was the Fun House, the Cyclone, the Dance Hall, and the Ferris Wheel.

S.R: Were you ever on the Cyclone?

H.H: Oh yeah, lots of times. The Merry-Go-Round, the train. I liked the Cyclone. I thought it was a great one, they gave you a good ride.

S.R: It got your stomach real good, did it?

H.H: Nope, it didn't bother me at all. Not like these twirly things they have. It was just a good thrill ride. I liked the Cyclone.

S.R: Have you ever been on the Comet?

H.H: Oh yeah, I've been on that.

S.R: How would it compare to the Comet?

H.H: Tame. I mean, the Comet's tame compared to the Cyclone.

S.R: Would you know why the Cyclone isn't there anymore?

H.H: Why the Cyclone isn't there? Well, that's a question you had better ask the Crystal Beach Company, not me. I would say that it was probably due to the insurance company and whatever.

S.R: Was anybody ever hurt on it?

H.H: Oh yeah, there's been people killed on it, by falling out, but I'm not saying that it's the fault of the ride, it's probably the fault of the person riding it, you know, acting up, standing up and doing things they shouldn't do.

S.R: Like on the Comet people have been killed by the same things, falling out.

H.H: Well, I mean, that happens on any of these things when there's somebody out there doing things they shouldn't do.

S.R: With all these boating facilities around were there ever any big races, or famous things like that here?

H.H: Well, the Canoe Club, you have all your... well, there's all kinds of races, always has been. Now, right back when the Canoe Club used to have the old war canoe. The old war canoe's still hanging in the top of the boat house there, one of the old war canoes. You can see it. They used to have canoe races at the canoe club... big old war... Indian war canoes.

S.R: Why were they war canoes?

H.H: That's what they were.

S.R: Oh, they were just canoes used during the war?

H.H: No, they're big canoes. You'd have to see them. I mean, you're asking things that you can't even... you've never heard of and you can't visualize. They are super big canoes.

S.R: How many people would they hold?

H.H: A whole bunch.

S.R: Oh, big.

H.H: Now do you know what I'm talking about?

S.R: Yes. Was it just local races or races that brought in a lot of people from other cities?

H.H: It would be whatever yacht clubs were around. It could be Erie Yacht Club, Buffalo Yacht Club, Buffalo Canoe Club, maybe it'd be Dover Yacht Club... I don't know when they were formed. I don't know if they were formed that early or not, but whenever these other yacht clubs were formed, the other yacht clubs would participate. Plus you have your own races among the clubs. They have their own races within the clubs... within the clubs. Then later on, you know, in more recent years, you get into the... well, I can go back in the Canoe Club, they had the Knockabouts. That's about the size of a 21 foot sailboat. You had the Knockabouts, you had the Snipes, which is a smaller, a little smaller boat, about a 16 foot sailboat. You had classes of those. You had... and then the Knockabout fleet got burned out by fire at the Canoe Club and it was replaced by the Lightning fleet, which is about a 21 foot boat, a sailboat. The Lightning fleet, now you're talking about a... well, it ended up, the Lightning fleet, they ended up having World championship, let alone North American and all the others. We have a lot of World championship in a lot of different class races right here in this bay now.

S.R: Still?

H.H: Right now. It has been going on for quite a few years. I mean, you don't, you probably don't realize all the boating activity that's out here. On some days there's thousands of boats out there. There's... you have the Sharks, you have all... There's a lot of different classes, I mean, I don't know what all went on this year. They had all kinds of races out here. You'll have a Mayor's Cup Regatta going in here from Buffalo. You have the Erie Dover Races, the Maitland Erie Dover Races, Dunkirk Races... these are all bigger boats, cruising class sailboats. Oh, there's all types of class racing. You have all types. There's all types of fleets out there. I mean new ones, all new boats.

S.R: Would you know why the Americans settled this part?

H.H: Why-it's a 15 minute drive from downtown Buffalo. They used it for summer homes.

S.R: Well, why didn't Canadians buy it?

H.H: Well, because the Canadians living in the area at the time had their homes. They would live where they worked or farmed, by the grocery store, in around the town, so why-five minutes away would they build a summer home.

S.R: Well, why didn't the Canadians build their winter homes here?

H.H: Because it's too far away from the centre part of town.

S.R: Those towns started someplace.

H.H: What?

S.R: The Canadian towns started someplace...

H.H: Crystal Beach.

S.R: Yeah. Well, you know, I can't understand why-it was that the Americans had to settle this.

H.H: Why would they come out into the woods in Point Abino? There's a few, yeah, there's a few.

S.R: Well, they had to clear the other places. Everything was woods at one time.

H.H: Well, alright, so it started in Crystal Beach, in Ridgeway. That's where it started. I mean, you asked me a question, why wouldn't the Canadians build where? Fort Erie? They started Fort Erie so they settled along Fort Erie. They settled around where there's water or there's this and that and...

S.R: So Point Abino didn't have any industry or anything like that to attract the Canadians so then the rich Americans liked the looks of it.

H.H: No. Well, Point Abino was just strictly a summer resort area, strictly a resort area, but there were industries.

S.R: But the other towns had to start someplace.

H.H: Point Abino is just a point of land going out into Lake Erie.

S.R: Okay, so it didn't really have anything to offer.

H.H: Well, the only thing out here was, they had some lumbering on the Point and they had sand, the sand company... Point Abino, and Sherkston had a quarry. You get all of the stone out of these, and Windmill Point had a quarry. We had three quarries. They get all the rock

out of there . They take it and they built the Buffalo breakwater with a lot of that rock, plus other things. That's where they got a lot of that rock. No, Point Abino isn't an industrial area. It's strictly a... there's no industry out here.

S.R: Well, that's why I say, like Crystal Beach and Fort Erie, they all had to start at some point, you know, some focal point, and I was just... that point could have easily been put around Point Abino, as around Fort Erie and Crystal Beach or Ridgeway, to have the Canadians in the settlement.

H.H: Well, a lot of that has to do with your... where do your roads go, and where do you get crossroads, and where does your train decide to go through? So, wherever the trains start going through, then that's where you get your main roads going through and that's where you get your crossroads, and that's where they'll start a settlement.

S.R: Okay, so yes, Fort Erie was started through the trains then, so you had all the Canadian settlements around the trains, okay, so then, Point Abino had really nothing to offer for the Canadians.

H.H: Point Abino was just out in the country.

S.R: That's what I was just saying.

H.H: That's all, Point Abino is just out in the country. You can go out and fish, and then there's... as I say, except for the sand company and the lumber, that's all the Point was. It was just a bunch of sand hills. As a matter of fact, years ago it used to be just sand hills and a bunch of little lakes, like... our backyard here was, that was all lake. Our backyard, the water level right now is only about two foot below the grass... you know, about two foot down was water level.

S.R: So, the lake's shrunk this much then? Is that what you mean?

H.H: Well, I think that the lakes used to be higher. Now, you're going way back. You're going back several hundreds of years. I don't know just when... that's way way back. It was when the Indians where here. The sand hills shift too, they move. I've seen this big sand hill, over here, I've seen it move a lot. I can remember when certain trees... I can go back and show you where all of a sudden that tree used to be, you know, no sand hill, and all of a sudden the sand hill is half way up these big trees.

S.R: From ground shift or from the wind?

H.H: The wind blowing. It just keeps moving it, erosion, they move them.

S.R: You recalled a couple more Crystal Beach businesses?

H.H: Yeah, Woolover was your photographer there. He used to have his office on Derby Road, where the old post office used to be. A fire burnt his store of operation out, and all his negatives and pictures and everything else went with that. I know another one that had... mostly it was very big down in the park, were your novelties and things, that was Sherrif's. They had their stands down in there, in the park itself. I remember the old Park Hotel on Derby Road. In fact the, if you go down there now... that's on Derby Road... it's a vacant lot and you can still see some tile from the floors. It's still there.

S.R: Who was the first political representative that you can remember from around here, a reeve, mayor? Did Point Abino ever have it's own Council or was it Crystal Beach?

H.H: No, it was Crystal Beach. Point Abino didn't have anything that I know of, or remember.

S.R: So who was the first reeve then that you can remember?

H.H: I really forget. I remember Jack Milligan was Mayor for a while there. When it comes to names of all these mayors and politicians, I forget names.

S.R: You had mentioned to me that Milligan was the ice cream man, and through hearsay and stories that he was a bookie or something but none of that was said on tape.

H.H: Yeah, I think I know where he operated out of too.

S.R: Where would that be?

H.H: On Derby Road.

S.R: Where was his little ice cream operation run from?

H.H: I'm trying to remember where he kept his ice cream trucks.

S.R: Did he peddle it around?

H.H: Oh yeah. The ice cream truck ringing the bell. He had several ice cream trucks. He'd ring the bell, yeah. He'd call. He had the best ice cream call there was. We used to ride the trucks. You had Northern Springs. Now, Northern Springs had pop, Northern Springs pop, soda water. Northern Springs also manufactured coca

cola here in Crystal Beach. There's a Northern Springs coke bottle, and that's a rare find. Now, I have a lot of Crystal Beach midway bottles.

S.R: Oh, that's just the bottles of pop that were sold in the park?

H.H: Yeah, midway, and I think it was put out by Northern Springs though, but Northern Springs was a big... and they used to deliver. We had no water out here. It was mostly all sulphur. We had to drill our own wells, and Northern Springs would deliver your water for you, your drinking water.

S.R: For a boy, if he wanted a summer job while he was over here, what would he do to make a few dollars spending money?

H.H: Work in the park or, I don't know, clean boats. You're... as far as the summer residents is concerned, most of them weren't looking for summer jobs then, you know, you go back in those days. Another business that was very popular was Kinsmans in Ridgeway.

S.R: What was that?

H.H: Oh, you'd get all your sweaters and china.

S.R: Something like Beeshy's?

H.H: No, Beeshy's was always china. Hers was more of a sweater shop and woolens and, you know, things like that, and she had both. She had some china too.

S.R: More crafts?

H.H: No, not crafts, not crafts.

S.R: Already made.

H.H: China. China, good woolens, no crafts. I'm talking about Braemars and, I mean, the good stuff, Braemar sweaters. I'm talking about your good, good woolen store, your good Canadian woolens. I mean everything... you're looking at modernized where everything is made in Taiwan, Hong Kong, or so on and so forth. Your good stuff was all, I mean, your Canadian woolens were the best.

S.R: Yes.

H.H: They were. You had the sweater shop and you had Kinsmans, and they were the two big ones. You had Beeshy's which was your expensive china. You could go in and you could buy wool material by the yards in either one of them. But Kinsman also had, she also had china, good china. I remember when Crystal Beach had it's own

post office, Fire Department, Police Department, you had Brodie's Drug Store, you had Kimberly's Food Market, they had Smith's Food Market, you had Woolovers photographer, you had Borden's Dairy, Northern Springs, of course you had Crystal Beach Planing Mill...

S.R: So why doesn't Crystal Beach have all these things anymore? Was it from the amalgamation?

H.H: You're asking an embarrassing question.

S.R: Why would it be embarrassing?

H.H: .Because I don't want to get into politics.

S.R: Was it from the amalgamation then... regional?

H.H: As far as I'm concerned it is.

S.R: You have a little story about the Point?

H.H: Well, we can talk about the Point and some of the wrecks around here. I can remember the Britain, a grain freighter... it was a grain freighter or flax seed or something, but it was basically a grain freighter... ran aground off the lighthouse off of Point Abino, and I can remember when it was above water.

S.R: It's below water now?

H.H: Well, they blasted it to level it so many feet below the water. That's navigation rules with any of the wrecks. But, then I can also remember some sand suckers out there trying to pull it off the rocks. They would get on the rocks themselves. Before the lighthouse there used to... I have the anchor off the Britain and all the chain, and the anchor is standing right on the front wall out here, next to it. I also... I'm also a deep sea diver and marine salvage, and I also have the ships bell off the Britain. Nobody's seen that. It's a big brass bell and I found it down in the wreckage off the Britain. The old... it would be before the lighthouse, they used to have a light ship off the Point, and it went down in a storm, and I have the years and dates and everything like that. I can't just come up with them right now, and there's a whole story about it, and everybody thinks that light ship is still out there. Well, they'd found it and they salvaged it and they turned it into a training ship. I have the name of the ship, what the ship was when it was restored and converted and I have the whole story of the ship going down, the old light ship off of Point Abino, and the number and

the whole story on it.

S.R: Were there any other wrecks that you would know about?

H.H: I found, off the Point about a mile out, now I recovered and old Spanish windlass in the bay here. I had old Jack Sinclair, who was the last of the clipper ship sailors, go up and look at it. He is the one that said that it was an old Spanish Windlass. Now, I have pictures of it. It was very large. It must have been, oh, eight foot long anyway, and the cogs, you know, the gears, the cogs, they were carved into wood. It was just a plate, a steel plate on them, and Jack Sinclair looked at it and he said that that's an old Spanish windlass. He's the one that called it a Spanish windlass. And he said that that must be 250 years old.

S.R: And that's still there?

H.H: No, it's not still there. I salvaged it out of the bay. It's not still out there, I brought it in.

S.R: What would you do with something like that?

H.H: I had it in the yard here. I tried to find some museum that would be interested in it and no museum had room for it. I went to the Buffalo Historical Museum and asked them if they wanted it and they had no place to put it. So finally, our gardener got out here and he burnt it and I was sick... I was down in Florida at the time, and I was sick when I found that out. So, the metal that was on it, the cogs and everything, I took it up to Port Colborne, to the marine museum, and the pictures of it and I don't even know whether they have it on display. If they don't I'm going up and get it back. I still have one part of it. I still have... but in the meantime, a mile off the Point, when I was diving one time, I ran across... this is strictly by accident... the remains of an old wreck, an old sailing ship. It's in about 65 foot of water. Going out from the lighthouse you have a lot of shelf rock, and then about a mile out you've got about, you run into... it goes into about... it runs about 35 foot of water, 40 foot of water, and then you run into a lot of broken rock, and then it drops right off to about 65 foot of water. Right in that area there is where I ran into this little wreck, the remains of it. I can remember that the bowsprit's still down there. I'll go out and look for it again some day. The bowsprit's still down

there and I saw what looked like a big chunk of marble, I mean, maybe 10-12 foot long, and maybe two foot square, or a foot and a half square, and I says, "That's not normal rock down here". I said, "That looks like a chunk of marble". The only way I can figure that is that they used it for ballast. So... but I did bring up a lot of... and I'll show you one of them so I'm not lying. I'll show it to you. I brought up a lot of block and tackle, you know, old wooden blocks and old ironwood blocks, everything was wood on it... old ironwood blocks. They were so amazing. I knew Scott Misener very well at the time... I had a foundry up in Port Colborne... and I showed some of them to him, some of this block and tackle. Boy, he'd just love to have some as conversation pieces, so I gave him most of them and he put them in the fireplace in his office up in Port Colborne. Of course that's Scott Misener who owns Misener Steamship of Canada. But I have one here and I'll show it to you. Now, there's supposed to be a rum runner that sunk off the Pan-Am House out here in about 30-40 foot of water. I never located it. There's a whole out there. But there's lot of anchors out in the bay. I've salvaged a lot of big, big anchors. There's one sitting right out here. There's two of them sitting right outside the door here. One... three of them I gave to the Canoe Club for decoration, one I have sitting right out here and then there's another one that's about a 1912 anchor. Now that's a big one. That's off an old sailing ship, that black one, painted black out there. There's... right now I know where there's an old lumber schooner from Tonowanda that was brought over here by the Smith boys. They were going to do something... use it for docking facilities for the Buffalo Yacht Club. I know where that's sunk out there. I also know where there's some rudders, but I've never brought them up yet because when you bring them up I like to preserve them, they make a good cocktail table or something, and they're big, they're big. I might bring it up and donate it to the Crystal Beach... the Canadiana, or somebody. But I've got to find somebody that's going to use it.

S.R: Oh, it has to be preserved right away?

H.H: Yeah. I have a lot of stuff I keep... I just... I know it's out in the lake and I keep it there. It's the best place for it, because once

you bring it up then you've got to preserve it or do something with it, so as long as it's underwater it stays in good shape. So, there's a lot of stuff that I have out there that I know where it is and I just leave it there.

S.R: That wreck...?

H.H: But the one off the Point, I'd love to find that. That could be a real historical find. When I have time I'll go back out and look for it again.

S.R: The one with the marble on it?

H.H: Yeah, that has the marble. Now, they used to use marble ballast. If you read on this convict ship Success that came through the Great Lakes, it had Marble ballast. Ballast is what you put to weigh the boat down, you know, it's down in the bilge of the boat, down in the bottom of the boat, the inside on the bottom and it gives the boat weight. It holds them down in the water so it doesn't flip all over in the waves. But they were marble... that ship there, if I could ever find it, find out where it is, it could be one of the old fighting ships, you know, the War of 1812, or even before.

S.R: So, are you going to look next summer?

H.H: I went out this summer with my footometer and found the drop-off but I... I don't have my diving equipment rigged up.

S.R: Well, thank you for the interview Mr. Holzworth.

H.H: You're welcome.