Interview with Russel Hayner
Onaway Michigan
October 16,' 2008

START OF INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Would you tell us a little about who you are and where you grew up please?

Russel Hayner (RH): Well my dad was an early pioneer in Onaway, Sam Hayner. I was born right out here on 211 highway in 1913 and we moved several places. My father worked for Mr. Joiner who was a big shot up here in the Onaway area. He cut timber, built the court house, all of those things. Dad worked for him for a while and when I was born he was working for Mr. Joiner and we moved from there several times. Didn't own a place of our own at that time. He was always looking for a little piece of land where he could get to school and he was home himself. We moved out by the Rainy River for a few years and he worked different kind of jobs. He worked in the lumber camps off and on. When Lobdale built a big factory, they made steering wheels and truck wheels out of wood. He was sander in the mill. In 1926, I think it was January, coldest day in the winter. I was going to school, I was in the 7th grade that year and I got right in front of the school house and the iron bells started ringing. I had to go to Pete Heck to get in the school before the bell quite ringing otherwise I'd be late for school. I looked over in the west and the smoke was a boiling black smoke – a huge fire. I went to school like a dumb head. I missed the fire. My dad was working there at the time and they had acres of building down here at the end of Main Street where the Bluebaker's building is at this time. They had about 40 acres of wooden buildings 2-3 stories high, think in there all over, plus a saw mill, a paint shop, and that was on fires – a huge fire. Now is this stuff you want to hear?

Interviewer: Yes, continue please.

RH: My dad was working there at the fire. We lost our neighbor a Mr. Smith, a Mr. Precore, Mr. Taten, and one other man, burned in the fire. They had a sprinkler system in that place but it froze up every January. Everything went right up and burnt up. Well that was a terrible blow to Onaway. I don't know how many men employed in the mill, a lot of men and they employed men to cut the timber, they had railroads run out of Onaway 10-12 miles and they'd come in with those big logs you know. At that time, virgin timber was all around here. My dad said you could walk out sixty_____ and turn around he said and some see the sky.

Interviewer: So how did the fire impact your own personal life? Did that impact…?

RH: Yeah, it did. That ended a lot of the work up here. There moved down and set up a little plant making automotive parts in some town. Anybody who moved from here to Elma would have a job with um. We moved to Elma and for four years we lived in Elma. In 1929 when the

depression hit we still had taxes paid, we had bought this home where I'm living now and had the taxes paid within four years at Elma. So we pulled out and come back and come up here again. So that moved us out of Onaway for four years.

Interviewer: Did you ever own a farm or did you?

RH: Yeah, I owned up to 500 acres at one time, not all farm land but I speculated. I was a real estate broker for several years.

Interviewer: What did your farm produce?

RH: At one time I have 50 farms of bees, with 3 or 4 acres of raspberries. I had the whole kids in Onaway picking berries. I had cattle for a time. I planted wheat and oat and always had a garden. I always had a good garden except for this year I had the worst potatoes I ever had.

Interviewer: So it was easy for you to go through the depression then considering that you had jobs and things to do?

RH: The depression? I remember the depression alright. We got here…. I graduated from High School in 1931. The depression was in full swing.

Interviewer: Which reminds me Russ, I forgot to ask: When is your birth date?

RH: May 15, 1913.

Interviewer: Did I ask that before or…?

RH: Where did I leave off?

Interviewer: The depression in 1931.

RH: The depression. I graduated in 1931 and it was just in full swing you know? Well do you want to know about me a little more?

Interviewer: Actually yeah. I want to know exactly.

RH: I didn't like school teaching. I taught a country school one year about the size of Onaway.

Interviewer: What did you teach?

RH: Sixth to Eight grade – Middle School.

Interviewer: So what degree do you have?

RH: Hum…?

Interviewer: What degree or what college, what kind of education do you have?

RH: County Normal. One year at County Normal, you could teach a country school and if you wanted to continue you'd have to take some courses.

Interviewer: So we're talking 1931 here?

RH: Yeah, some of the people went on to become superintendant of schools and different things but I didn't take to school teaching, though I had a good year. I was getting paid 50 dollars a month. It cost me 12 dollars a month for board.

Interviewer: So, in terms of ethnicity, are you Polish or are you German?

RH: Our name is German; some of my ancestors came from Germany.

Interviewer: Like your father, correct?

RH: No, my Grandfather.

Interviewer: Your grandfather, what was his name?

RH: I don't think I can think of it right now.

Unknown 1: The name Edward is sticking out in my mind.

RH: Samuel Edward, no that's dad Samuel Edward. I never knew him. He was dead before I…He lived in New York State. My dad grew up in New York State, Scatigo Hill. Now you're talking about the depression?

Interviewer: Right.

RH: Well that leads to things. I didn't like teaching. I got 21 years old that year. Dads' family lived in New York and I had an invitation to come visit them. He had 3 sisters still living in Johnstown. I packed up and went to New York state, I hitch-hiked half the time. I didn't have much money. I went down to Detroit the state fair was on. I went through Detroit. I stopped in there and got in a checker game and the old bank were putting on an exhibition, played checkers all afternoon.

Unknown 1: He's a Michigan State Champion checker player.

Interviewer: Checker player great. Yeah, you do have a sharp mind. I can tell. From the way you speak and you remember where you left off and I can't remember so that's great.

RH: You tell me, I can remember things back when I was two, three years old but I can't remember what I did yesterday.

Interviewer: Can you tell us what you did for fun back then, when you were much younger?

RH: When I graduated from high school, I joined a baseball team up here. I played in the county league Roger City. I played that several years but when I got into New York state, that was before I went to New York. I met my wife in New York and I stayed out there 2 or 3 months and I come back home. In 1937 we got married, right in the middle of_____. I bought a Model-A ford in New York. It cost me 85 bucks. After we got married in May 17, well we took off for Michigan. I didn't want to live out there. When I taught that school I changed my mind, I'd buy 40 acres – 200 dollars for 40 acres at that time. That's a lot of land. It was right across from my uncles' place up here. We come back to Michigan. Dad and I, my dad was living there, my mother, where Houties live now. We bought a house in town here. It cost us 75 dollars and that's the way Onaway was. You could buy pretty near anyplace around for 100 dollars or 200. It was quite a nice house. Then I tore that down pulled the nails out of it and I built my house up here. We added to it a little bit. Put new siding on. The worst of it was when we were tearing it down we found out the thing was built on the hardwood boards not planned, about that thick. You had to stick a nail in a bar of soap, by the time you, ha ha ha. Well we built our little house there.

Interviewer: Could a lot of people buy houses then?

RH: If you had money you could.

Interviewer: I mean on average?

RH: Yeah, people that left um. A lot of people never come back to Onaway after they left but we did come back. A lot of empty houses, a lot like it is now pretty near. That was during the depression in 1937. Roosevelt had made work jobs, roads, highways. They'd work on a road about 45 dollars a month was a pick and shovel. They built a lot of roads around Onaway. I got a job with them for a while. By the time I got to Onaway I was broker than….you know. Starting out nowadays they've got to have 10,000 dollars to get married, you know?

Interviewer: Even more.

RH: Anyways, then you sit here in Onaway sponsored affirmative action with athletics and the playground and the horseshoe courts for the games, and baseball keeping the grounds up and we made up a horseshoe courts and things like that. One year we had the whole baseball grounds in a skating rink. A beautiful skating rink, we got there at 2 o'clock in the morning spraying water you know. Kids come from all over but I was on the baseball team. I was on the horseshoe team. We had a good team we beat everybody around including Roger City and all of them. I wasn't the best one but I was pretty good.

Interviewer: I have a question. Did you in your neighborhood, did you have people from Poland, did you have people from other ethnicities that were around where you were?

RH: Now what was that?

Interviewer: Did you have Polish people around you in your neighborhood at all when you were growing up or?

RH: Polish people?

Interviewer: Yeah, because I know that this area is popular for Polish people. A lot of people from Poland came here.

Unknown: What he's asking is what different ethnic groups.

RH: There's German areas and Polish areas. In Rogers City it's the same way but here in Onaway there were some Polish of course but there's everything here.

Interviewer: Did you go to any festival they had? Do you know how they celebrated things? The Polish people around?

RH: Oh yeah, we've been to Rogers City.

Interviewer: Could you describe one of them for the record please.

RH: I've been playing in the…could I what?

Interviewer: Can you describe one of the festivals that you went to that was Polish in nature?

RH: Well, the Rogers City festival, they have one every year now. The maritime festival. They have a card game, Spitzer. It originated among the Polish in this county. You probably never heard of the card game. We had a team in Onaway and a team from Rogers City. I went to the team this year in Rogers City. I didn't do very good but I'm the only there that played every turn since it started back in the 30's and we had a lot to do with getting that started over here. We had them horseshoe tournaments; I liked all kinds of sports. I had the skating rink, ice skates. It was a lot of fun. When I was farming I had chickens, ducks. Olive had a little green duck, a wild duck, we tamed it. One morning we heard something going around the house squawking. I run out the door in my bear feet. I thought it was a coon chasing a chicken. Later on one of them got her duck and she always hated coons ever since. As far as farming, we…it was everything. Anything you could make a dollar on. Dollars were scarce at that time. Lots of work projects. I got to foreman on a project here in Onaway. I had several men working on the skating rink and in the winter we took over a project in the school. We were working and we had a whole bunch of kids from school that would make bird houses and they made everything,

a pair of sleighs to go down the hill. One I think I remember and I've still got a couple of those articles that I made. Then I took a course in life guard and I worked at the state park at Black lake one summer as a life guard.

Interviewer: Really well rounded huh?

RH: Hahaha, I've been in everything or it pretty near seems like.

Interviewer: Can you tell us a little about the industry in Onaway? Like there was a garment factory here right? Do you have a lot of information about the garment factory, who worked there, men or women, and what they produced there?

RH: That was right around the depression.

Interviewer: So would you please tell us a little bit about what happened after the fire with the factories and how they came around. Can you explain about those factories after the fire?

RH: Well Onaway was frozen, knocked right out after that big fire that was the man on fire. Half of the town deserted and moved to other places. A lot never came back. I thought there was work in the woods. Still some timber to cut, there was a couple saw mills here in Onaway. At one time there was a single mill and a saw mill and a stave mill and all of those things but after the big mill burnt, that just took the starch out of Onaway for years. It still is struggling. The garment factory started up and they hired women. They had a big crew of women and Ray Buragaurd was the manager and Mark Mahoney was the mechanic that kept the machines going. They had rows and rows of sewing machines. I had a job in there for a few months when I was out of work sweeping the darn place. Full of rags all down them isles. I was cleaning up all night. They had a bakery in Onaway and a cream factory and things like that but farmers were bringing their milk and their cream and sell it. I worked in the bakery too for a while that one summer for Mr. Wineheart. You could by a loaf of bread for a dime and a pound of butter was ten cents or so. I think he paid me about 11 bucks a week or something like that. I'd go in at two o'clock in the morning. Carry in his wood, he had a wood furnace, hardwood. Carry in the wood. Heat up the place, get stuff ready and he'd come in and was baking and then I'd have to clean up, sweep up, scrub up. He was pretty fussy. I remember the old man one time; he put some pies in the oven. He had about 37 of them out there. He picked them up and swoooooot! Slammed right on the floor, he burned them you know. I just walked around him. I wasn't cleaning up that mess. That was funny.

I remember we had a game of baseball that spring and the Hawks team was playing against us. They'd been rubbing it in all winter that they won the year before for the championship for the county. They were going to beat Onaway with nothing to it. They came over, they had girlfriends over here, we did too. That's how we got word. (laughs) First game of the season I played down there. I was playing first base. I had a good day. I think I had a hit every time but the last time I caught my foot on the first bag base and sprang my ankle. Oh boy, I couldn't hardly move but I finished out the game and then I couldn't hardly step on that

foot for 2 or 3 weeks. I was supposed to work at the baker's too but I wasn't going to give up baseball. I quit the bakery, see.

Interviewer: Just going back to the factories, can you explain a little bit more about the factories?

RH: The garment factory for a long time, that was about the only thing. The men in the town couldn't find work. It was their wives, most of them that were working in the garment factory.

Daughter: That picture – what year would that picture have been of Danny with all those women?

RH: I got a picture showing all the women and Mr. Borgar and Mr. Montgomery. I don't remember how many but there must have been a hundred women.

Daughter: Oh at least.

Interviewer: So you were the only man working there or were there men?

RH: I was just cleaning up but they had a manager and a mechanic.

Interviewer: So what did women do in particular? Did they just sew fabric together or did they make outfits for the war?

RH: They made dresses for women mostly. They sent them all over. They made nice dresses.

Interviewer: Was there another factory you mentioned?

Unknown: When did Mr. Maxin come to town? When was that?

RH: Well that was about the same time. He was originally raised up here in Onaway and he went to Detroit and got into advertising and became a very rich man and he bought a big section of black lake right along the beach and built a lot of beautiful cabins and houses. Some of our horseshoers…..

Interviewer: Horseshoers, yeah – players.

RH: Yeah horseshoe players. I worked for them out there.

Interviewer: Now was that the same time that he would…

RH: He organized a softball team out there and he played on it. I was on a softball team too at the same time and for several years we beat Maxin's team. He bought us a nice trophy, like a new sweater or something. We'd go out there. I took Judy, she was older. He had a little

building down there where he had beer and ice cream. You name it. He'd bring us all in there and treat us, you know. I'd bring my wife and Judy was just a baby then.

Interviewer: Now is there a place called limestone quarry around here.

RH: There was a quarry on black lake.

Interviewer: Okay. Now did you work there or…?

RH: No that was before. That was done with before. Cause the largest quarry in the world is in Rogers City, Calcite. But this was quite a quarry right up on the cliffs of black lake. They mined limestone there but they quit that. That's all cottages now out through there.

Interviewer: Can you tell us a little bit about prohibition? While the liquor was… How did you deal with that in the U.P.?

RH: I can remember that, prohibition. I think every other, I think about every third house in town was making its own.

Interviewer: So how did they sell it? How was the price for like a bottle of alcohol?

RH: I don't have any idea. I was a kid then.

Interviewer: Oh you were a kid then. Your father or grandfather?

RH: They don't drink nothing.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

RH: We don't drink. None of us. A glass of beer now and then but anyways a neighbor on this side of where we live now, he made it. Joe Mills. He had some kids, they'd tell us come on down. They had bottles buried in the ground. It was (laughs), one sip was enough.

Interviewer: So where did they get the alcohol from? Was it from potatoes like vodka or was it?

RH: Barley or something, more beer. Old man Stilt made it, the guy across the road made it. Burt Breth right up the road from me, I own his land now. He bought a big flock of chickens. He'd had to buy a grain for the chickens you know but they didn't get to eat it all. I know one time when we were still living in Elma, prohibition was on, and dad had a few swarms of bees and I went with him, we were peddling honey in Saginaw. It seemed like every place we went into we were fish drunk in an hour. In a beer joint you could have got a drink if you wanted to.

Interviewer: So you mentioned that he has wealth in knowledge, anything that you can add to this would be great.

Unknown: The Railroad – the D & M railroad that went through Onaway, that helped get Onaway moving again. Can you give us some history on that? That elevator and then the Cheese Factory, this all kind of helped get Onaway back tot the point that could get flowing again right?

RH: Yeah it helped.

Unknown: The cheese was sold statewide also. Did it go outside of the boundaries of Michigan?

RH: Well I don't know if that ever got that far or not but he made awful good cheese. That's Fred Mosure that made the cheese and the cheese factory and butter. The place over on Second Street is where farmers sold their cream.

Unknown: And the railroad helped.

Daughter: That was Aubrey's Creamery.

RH: Well the railroad was there before, real early. We got a picture of the first train that come through Onaway. They hauled everything in here by railroad. My brother had to feed the train rail for a while right after WWII and I worked there and he got piles and piles of coal.

[TAPE 1 SIDE A ENDS]

[TAPE 1 SIDE B BEGINS]

RH: At that time it wasn't trucking like they do now a days you see but eventually as the railroad kind of foundered out the trucks took over you know. Trucks could go right to your house and stuff. The railroad you had to go down there and get your stuff. They had railroads going out from the Lardale's spot out through the woods to all logs. They was cutting timber all around there, virgin timber. This was a hardwood area, right here around Onaway and that's what they used in the metal and in railroads one of them went right through the back of my place. I remember seeing it come into town, big logs loaded and they had teamsters also to haul the logs in the winter time with a team. They'd ice the roads and then bring those huge loads of logs in, ya know. You wouldn't believe how much they could haul on the Ice roads. Sharp, strong horses you know. Onaway kind of picked up after people had stuck here. The mill was after the war, it was built here. I went to work with him for about 12 years in the feed and grain mill.

Unknown: When did the livestock auction go in? They felt a need, Albert Smith, I'm not old enough to remember who owned it before him but I'm to understand that he was one of the _____.

Interviewer: _____?

RH: Abachaun was one of the main ones.

Unknown: And then there was even….the railroad brought in a railroad, they talk about offloading cattle at the stockyards. Can you remember that?

RH: Well most of the cattle were hauled in by trucks.

Unknown: They had a hole that they'd come out there, along….well maybe it was just horses they offloaded. It could have been new to the logging. I don't know but I was told that once, that the train had stopped there and they'd offload into that holding pen.

RH: Well that's possible but I don't just remember what it was like. I remember I road out with Albert quite a few times when he was going for cattle, you know, bring them in.

Interviewer: Russ, just a quick question. This doesn't have anything to do with what you were already talking about but do you speak a second language? Since you were a teacher do you speak German or….?

RH: No.

Interviewer: You never spoke the language at home or….?

RH: No.

Interviewer: No, okay. Just curious and you said that you love game and that you were a part of a lot of sports.

RH: I liked any kind of sports.

Interviewer: Did you do anything in particular that interested the community? Like for instance you made a change in the community by doing something?

Daughter: My dad was active as a school board member, the township treasurer for 30 some years.

RH: 35 years. And then I was on those projects like building the skating rink and out at Black Lake.

Interviewer: So you were a teacher, a life guard, board member, all sorts of sports player, wow. Farmer, bee keeper.

Daughter: He worked on the boats.

Interviewer: Tell us about the boats. The shipping industry and all that?

RH: WWII come along and I went to _____, I was looking for work you know. They hired everybody that come in. I went in in November.

Daughter: He was married with two children and that's why he wasn't drafted.

RH: So I wasn't drafted see but I got a job down there in the bomber plant. We made B-24 bombers, 4 engine bombers. They flew them right to Germany. I almost had a chance to get a ride on one. They said two people with the best attendance record for that year, they were going to take them for a ride. I missed two days that first year I was there. Two women hadn't missed a day. They got the ride but anyway that was a huge plant. I was a riveter and repairman. We riveted a tail cone that would stand up as high as that ceiling. There was a double row with little rivets all the way around it. Two men on each side, one man outside and one man inside. One over the bar and one was the air gun on the other side. He'd stick it in there and…I remember very well the first one that I worked on. They give me a young guy to help me and he had a little experience already. Sam Hill and we worked all day to rivet that one plane. Smetty, the inspector, come down to look it over with his red pencil we had to take out about half of those rivets.

Interviewer: That you worked on again.

RH: He told me later that that guy would never be a riveter.

Interviewer: So um, just something for fun. Did you have any favorite food that people would cook back then and now people don't do it anymore?

RH: Any what?

Interviewer: Type of food that you liked when you were a little kid and now people don't make it anymore or a special recipe or something?

RH: There was one thing.

Interviewer: What is it?

RH: Suet Pudding

Interviewer: Oh and what is that?

Daughter: I thought Judy made that for you?

RH: Well your mother used to make suet pudding, made with deer fat, or cow fat I mean. A suet fat deer fat. She'd mix up a batch of it and steam it in a can. She'd have a roll about this big and a can that big around and steam it and then she made a sour sauce to put on it. Never heard of it?

Interviewer: No, I get you could burn it back then, I mean if you were working at a factory or you know doing labor work.

Daughter: He could what?

RH: ____.

Interviewer: He could burn the food. I mean nowadays I don't think you could do that.

Daughter: it really is good.

RH: It really is. Nobody ever…

Daughter: The English used to call it plumb pudding I guess. That's something I really liked. One of those things I liked best of canning was sweet corn.

Daughter: We still get that.

RH: Garden cut producing the corn you know. We always raised a good garden didn't we?

Daughter: Yeah a beautiful garden.

RH: She's been canning steady.

Daughter: He keeps me busy with his gardening.

RH: Tomatoes and green beans.

Daughter: My dad was also a real estate broker in town. You wanted to know about what he did in the community. He was a business person himself in town so.

RH: I worked about 12 years in the feed and grain mill.

Interviewer: 12 years okay.

RH: That was one of the hardest jobs that I ever did. Everything come in there in 100 pound bags or bigger and you had to handle them. Around this area there used to be several farms all the way around. Every block, every 80 acres or so and a herd of cattle. That was what they lived on. Well, what was I going to say now?

Daughter: Hardest work was that they'd bring in their grain probably and you'd have to.

RH: I was telling how they'd grain holiday they'd bring it in there and have their feed ground and mixed for the cattle you know. Well that was Barmer's not Down, he wouldn't do that. They'd send their wives in.

Daughter: So you'd have to carry the bags.

RH: They'd bring it in by the biggest bag they could get a hold of because they were charging by the bag you see.

Interviewer: Now it makes sense.

RH: Drag them inside and dump them in the grinder and catch them and take them back. It was hard work and the place was set up so it was cold so the grain would keep good and everything. The winter time was frigid in there, you know. And it's still the same thing but we had a grinder and a mixer and a Bower where you'd run grain and clover seed to take the weed seeds out and keep for planting seed and it run all on electric belts above you know going. I worked there for 12 years and it was kind of bad on my health breathing all that dust all the time you know. So I quite and I went and got a license for real estate. I got started, the first year I didn't sell nothing, hardly. Anyway the second year was pretty good and then shortly I went and applied for a broker's license. I didn't pass the first time. And I went back the next year and took the test over again and we had a book to study with questions they were liable to ask you know. There was one on there, it was a closing statement and according to the book I had it wouldn't work out. The guy giving the course, he didn't want to give you the answers. I went to him and I said according to my book that won't work out. He said well there's only one correct answer. That saved my life. I got passed that time and decided to broker for quite a few years. Marty was a salesman, Wayne's a salesmen, Judy was for a while.

Daughter: Yep, Glenn was too.

RH: We made appraisals and so forth and did pretty well in real estate. At that time I had lots of opportunities. I had a little money to invest. I could have been a millionaire. The first 40 I bought from Anne Gibbens – cost me 700 dollars for 40 acres. Nice property, good farm land. I sold it not long ago for 40,000 dollars but in the mean time I bought a 40 over here by Marsa Teller, I didn't even like it. George Stone who I was partners with said why don't you buy it? It was all bare, just a couple of trees on it. I liked a little woods on it, you know. Well I bought it and I had it surveyed and made it into 4, 10 acre parcels. I sold each one of them for as much

as I paid for the hole 40 you see. So that way I earned a little more money than just selling them for commission.

Interviewer: And what year was that?

RH: It was right after…

Daughter: 50's and 60's and 70's. He did quit till he was 90 but I think that with George Stone it must have been in like the 60's and 70's.

RH: I think so, right in that area.

Daughter: He was still raising six kids.

Interviewer: So how old are you now?

RH: 95.

Interviewer: 95 wow. So you do feel great?

RH: I feel good but I can't get around good. If I fall down on the ground I can't get up. I did that just lately.

Daughter: Yeah.

Unknown: If we were to ask you to start at the east end of Onaway, like with the Presque isle, could you tell us the business just in, im not near as old as you are but I know that there have been business that have closed and the lots are vacant. Could you just kind of tell us about how many businesses there was in town and how long was it after the depression that these businesses did, because Onaway did really bloom, or boom.

Daughter: oh, I can remember when there were shoe stores and clothing stores.

Unknown: If you could just walk us from one end of town to the other. You could start out with the Presque isle, the county building.

RH: McClatchy's store. Do you remember that?

Unknown: Yeah it was on the right hand side of the….

Interviewer: What kind of store was it?

RH: Groceries.

Interviewer: What did they sell? Like American styles groceries or ethnic style groceries? Pretty much like the packages like they are today. They'd order stuff by the week. There was a bill on Saturday. That was the way the operated and over here, your uncle was in that had the store over here on the corner. There was the Laundry room there.

Unknown: There was the little old bakery.

RH: Odd bars garage was over there and the creamer was behind…

Daughter: Aubrey's creamery.

RH: Paul Price's workshop is there so, you know some stuff like that, the Continental Hotel. That was one of the old original buildings. And for a fire escape, I don't know how they have a fire escape.

Interviewer: They jumped. (laughs) I'm kidding.

RH: They had a 2" rope tied to the bed out the window. That was the fire escape.

Interviewer: That's safe.

RH: Of course there were dangerous traps in the wood buildings too.

Interviewer: Right.

RH: Then the laundry over here and they head down this street, there were several hotels like that all over town here. People didn't have motels then.

Unknown: What year would that have been Margie because he's…?

Daughter: It'd be…

RH: This was way back.

Daughter: After the depression.

RH: it was after the big fire, you know. All them buildings was big frame buildings. We had about 20 saloons in Onaway in those days and several big hotels. One was on the ball diamond there. I was in that one. One was down by the factory, the Huron House. They had livery stables, horses. Dan Wilkshire's still living; his dad was running that, a horse shoer.

Daughter(Margie?): It was like that after the depression or was that before the depression?

RH: That was before.

Daughter: Okay, what was it like after the depression? Is that what you meant Don?

Unknown (Don?): After the depression when Onaway started to come back.

RH: Well they had the Creamery.

Daughter: Yeah.

RH: The store was run by a different man then that's still around. Georgia Wilkshire married that fella.

Daughter: There used to be a shoe maker down there. That was…..

RH: That was Shoemaker.

Daughter: Okay that was the grocery store, Shoemaker's.

Unknown: Kind of like a party store.

Daughter: We'll that's what you'd call it now, but it was a grocery store then.

Unknown: Back then yeah.

RH: There was a store here where your uncle had it here on the corner.

Unknown: That was Art's Bakery.

Daughter: I remember Bottom Bailey had that dress shop where the Sport Shop is.

RH: Winegartner's bakery.

Unknown: A lot of these stores where two story structures, weren't they? They lived up above their stores.

Daughter: Yeah, North cod Electric was right here, and the theater.

RH: The theater, yeah.

Daughter: There was a shoe store.

RH: Yeah, that was a little Jew that run that shoe store.

Daughter: Something Nate's…

Unknown: We had a tractor dealership here in Onaway.

RH: Over at the, where the Drug store is now.

Unknown: And what was the name of that. You could buy a brand new International Tractor.

RH: I tried to buy one but after the war they had a waiting list. Couldn't get um during the war you know. I went in there and you had a long waiting list. I wanted a tractor, I went to Roger's City. A little place where the A&P services is now. I went in and he had a John Deere Dealership. I told them what I wanted. He said I just sold one. It's a new model, model-M, kind of a small one but it had a power lift and everything. He said I'm going to get another in. He told me, "If you want you'll get." He did, he kept his word. He got one in a few days. I had the tractor.

Interviewer: Have you still got the tractor?

RH: Yeah still got the tractor.

Interviewer: Does it run?

Daughter: Yeah.

RH: Well it had a motor with it and a plow with it, a digger with it, and a cultivator with it. All came with it for 1,200 dollars.

Interviewer: so there was a waiting list because of the war?

RH: Because of all the parts and…

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

RH: Here I couldn't get one. I wanted a little 8 they made then.

Daughter: Do you remember who ran that Daddy, the name of it?

RH: Klett McDonald run it when he went broke but…the banker. It was the banker after a while.

Daughter: Paquette was the banker when I worked there.

RH: That wasn't him. Burns, was it Burns?

Unknown: Yes, Burns that's the name.

Daughter: It was Burns.

RH: He was going good you see. Klett McDonald from Millersberg come, bought him out and bought him at a bad time at a big price and he went broke. He committed suicide. Yep. Nice guy he wasn't any good at collecting his bills or something.

Interviewer: Is there something that is very significant that we need to know about the business and everything that started?

Daughter: In Onaway?

Unknown: He's got some pictures that he could lay out. That'd really bring back some stories too.

Interviewer: Because in terms of time I have to…

Daughter: Oh he's got a ballgame he's got to go to.

Unknown: One other thing, he is a writer too.

Interviewer: Okay, so what did you write about?

RH: Well I wrote several of these things that happened. One is from my youngest sister that was born out here in the country. My aunt and my daughter from Grand Rapids came up and stayed with us. We didn't know what was going on, us kids. I was 6 years old and they said, "Why don't you guys go over to Porter's and play for a while in the morning? And from where he yelled Porter's lived back in the woods and we had to cross a big field, played around there for a while. Mrs. Porter made us lunch. She said, "You better go home now." It was right in the virgin timber where there house was. And then you come out in an open field. We looked over here. Black clouds was rolling up on the west, you know. Kind greenish and we beat it right home. Got in home, Dad was shutting the windows and doors and looking out and we sat down in the room and by that time the lightning was coming pretty hard, you know getting darker and darker. We sat in there looking out the front window, when come hiking down the hill with a big load of hay with a team of horses pulling it. The wind hit that load of hay and tipped it right over in the ditch, right in front of the house. He slid down the load and run in there, unhooked his team and he went running down the hill. My aunt went out to the back kitchen. It was pretty dark in there and the wind was wiping around fierce. "Aha!" she says. There went to roof off of the barns she said. About that time the front door blew open and we all run and got against it, Helen and I and Joseph. Dad got a hammer spikes and nailed her shut. That was the day my sister was born. We had a new baby in the house. That same winter, had a bad winter. Soldiers was coming from, back in 1919. I remember when the war ended I could hear the whistles blowing in Onaway. I was 5 years old then.

Interviewer: You mean World War I?

RH: Yeah, World War I. Well he nailed the door shut. Then I was going on to tell you about that winter. A hard winter. Dad was working downtown here somewhere and I guess the mill was still there at that time. On the way home he stopped and took Charlie and Rosie into the barbershop for a shave. Charlie wasn't feeling good. Dad next few days was sick. If you ever heard about the flu like it was then. Big, healthy young guys. In a few days they're dead. They didn't have no resistance to it. The Spanish flu they called it – the Spanish influenza. Well, here we are, four little kids, a baby, Ma got it. Hers turned right into pneumonia which is usually fatal.

Daughter: Grandpa was better?

RH: No he was still sick. He was so sick he couldn't pump water. We had a pump outside. It was quite a deep well with iron pump rods and Helen and I, she was ten – we'd all three get on the pump outside to get a pull of water. He couldn't do it but he kept going, night and day. He set the clock every two hours to give Ma her medicine. Doctors come. One old doctor come and sit down by her bed and went to sleep. I was right there standing there looking. Next day dad had another doctor. They'd come on their horse and buggy you know through the snow in the middle of winter. It was miraculous that none of us kids got the flu. Ma got better and Dad got better. There was, they say over 22 million people worldwide died in the epidemic between 1918 and 1919. Our neighbor up on the hill, Bill Critomen lost his wife and one son. It was a hard time for people. Everyday somebody was dying, you know. They couldn't take care of all at night. I wrote down about that too. So the kids can read it.

Daughter: Many, many poems. Wonderful poems, all of his dear stories, not all of them you still got some...

RH: I got to put them into a book.

Interviewer: Great.

RH: I love to…

Unknown: He's a very avid white tail hunter.

RH: I love to hunt deer.

Daughter: He got his deer last year but this year you can't bait deer in Michigan so that cant be easy for a man like my dad to hunt.

RH: I built a log cabin when I was about 60 years old. I had a little time in the summer. I bought a little chain saw. I cut the logs right out of my own place there – 32 feet long. I cut them the

full lengths I could. I said if there that long I'll make the cabin that size. I didn't plan it quite so big to start with – 28 feet wide. I laid them logs up. Put them logs up by myself.

Interviewer: Very talented.

RH: Well I used a skid and a little tractor and a chain you know, and a hook on handle and have the other and in the skid and you could lay it on top of the wall. And then you could pry them around and notch them.

Interviewer: So anything else you would like to add or did we leave anything out?

RH: Oh, you get me talking I'd talk all night I guess.

Unknown: Well yeah. (laughs)

RH: What time is it?

Daughter: Of course there's tons of things he could tell you but I mean.

Interviewer: You said you have a ball game?

Daughter: That game started at 8.

Interviewer: Uh Oh.

Interviewer: So Russ. Why don't you tell us about your voting experience?

RH: That was right in 1946. They wanted me to stay in the Censure ward for a while. So I got a job on a boat out at Calcide, hauling that limestone and coal. I was the night cook. Night cook, well I didn't have to cook much you know. The crew would come in after a shift. I fried an egg anyway you hear of frying an egg. Everyone wanted an egg right side up, sunny side up. Hard up, not soft…terrible every, every guy wanted it different. Anyways and I get stuff ready for the cook. Peal potatoes, peal apples. I sat there one day in the harbor over here with a five gallon bucket of potatoes. They were about this big – small. Boy when I got done they were about that big you know. I sat there going like this. Here come the conveyer man, probably had a few drinks. He sat down by me he was going to help me peal. Pretty soon away he went. Well, I had to get lunch's ready forum at night time……

(TAPE ENDS ABRUPTLY)

END OF INTERVIEW