

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of Leetonia Project

Resident Experience

O. H. 771

CHALMER LODGE

Interviewed

by

Theodore Carchedi

on

May 16, 1986

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of Leetonia Project

INTERVIEWEE: CHALMER LODGE

INTERVIEWER: Theodore Carchedi

SUBJECT: World War II, pottery, airplanes, transportation, ethnic groups, mafia, coke ovens, brewery, slaughterhouse, WPA, recreation, area businesses, railroads

DATE: May 16, 1986

C: This is an interview with Chalmer Lodge for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Ted Carchedi, at Leetonia, Ohio, on May 16, 1986 at 4:05 p.m., dealing with the history of Leetonia.

Why don't you start off talking about your family, your father, your grandfather? How far back did they go in the village of Leetonia?

L: My great-grandfather started just south of Leetonia in 1826. My grandfather was born on that farm in a family of nine children. They all went to Leetonia schools; the schools were there at that time. They had twenty-five hundred acres; that was their farm.

C: Where about was this located?

L: Just south of town, about two miles. It was the old Lodge homestead, which is now gone. The house is still there; old logs, but they have covered it. It doesn't look the same as when I was a little boy. As they married off, they married into different families. They gave them so much land, each one of them. That's the way we did it in those days. You have probably heard of it. There were the Miller's, the Halverstadt's, and the Adams'. Then my grandfather married Louella Adams and they moved on to the homestead. They kept it. Then he passed away. He was a blacksmith and a farmer. He made buggies. My grandmother and I, after he passed away, moved to another part of the farm which only had about fifty acres in it. She and I farmed it. I was only a little kid when that happened.

C: And the rest of the farm was . . .

L: It kept being subdivided into different families. The Miller's and the Halverstadt's, and all of those clans, as we called them. About 1918, World War I, my grandmother and I moved into Leetonia onto State Street. I was raised there. I lived there even after I was married. I brought my wife there. At that time there were two furnaces here called the Salem Iron Company and Cherry Valley Furnace.

C: In 1901?

L: That was before my time, but they were both here as I remember. The Hanna brothers ran the Cherry Valley Furnace which was right over here. The W. D. McKeefrey Company ran the Salem Iron Company. As far as I can remember about 1917 or 1918. I can remember that far back. I must have been about seven years old then. Then we had an Acme Cultivator Works which was on Main Street. It was a three story building where they made Acme cultivators.

C: Let me ask you something about the Salem and the Cherry Valley companies. Did they essentially produce the same thing?

L: Both of them made pig iron, ore, and up here they had their coke ovens. They had their own coke ovens. They were independent of each other. It was a big thing for the Pennsylvania Railroad at that time because they did a lot of hauling out of here. At that time it was all steam locomotive. They picked the water up on the fly. I haven't been out there for years but there used to be pans and stuff.

C: How did that work?

L: Oh, it worked perfect. They would get a full tank of water before they would ever get to the other end of the pans. It was just forced in that fast.

C: Can you describe it a little?

L: Well, within about six inches of the rail on each side it was about ten inches deep, and it ran a quarter of a mile. They would scoop it down. They would start in with a scoop; there was a flag there and they would get the scoop to fall. By the time they got to the other end their water was completely full on the engine.

C: That is unbelievable.

L: They never stopped. Some of them went through here seventy and eighty miles an hour, some of the passenger trains at night. They would pump all their own water. It was a big thing.

C: You mentioned the McKeefrey-owned iron works. Was that as big

an employer as the Cherry Valley?

- L: It was about the same size. There was not too much difference between them. They both put out about the same amount of iron per day. My wife's father worked down there. He was in where they poured all the time. It was something to see. People nowadays have missed something. It took two men with one sledge hammer to break the ingots. Have you seen those ingots? They come in double. They would have to break those when they would put them in the car, in the hoppers when they shipped them out. One sledgehammer on the top and two handles. That is the way they built those. It was really an educational show.
- C: I can imagine it would have been a lot of hard work.
- L: Twelve hours a day you worked then. When I got old enough I got married and I worked down there as an oiler in the engine room.
- C: What did you do there? What did it entail?
- L: Oh, just kept the engines oiled. We furnished all the pressure for the whole Cherry Valley, skip hoists and all of that. Everything was steam at that time.
- C: How much money did you make?
- L: The most I made was a dollar an hour. About twelve dollars a day.
- C: That is about when?
- L: October of 1929.
- C: Can you remember the World War I years? You were pretty young then.
- L: I was only about seven or eight years old. I was born in 1910 and 1918 was when it finished.
- C: So you are seventy-six years old now?
- L: I will be seventy-six this October.
- C: What do you remember of what people have told you or what relatives have told you about that era? What was it like for the town?
- L: It was a very busy town during the time and place. As fast as they could make iron it was shipped out. It had to be used for tanks and everything under the sun. It was a very busy time. At that time we had twenty-three saloons in this little village. It was a drinking village.

- C: All the people I interviewed . . . One person told me twenty-seven. Obviously, there were a lot. Why were there so many?
- L: I could never figure out why. Of course, I don't drink. I could not figure out why they needed that many. They were all heavy drinkers. This was an Italian village, Italian and Irish. It was more Italian than Irish. They were both heavy drinkers.
- C: A lot of the immigrants, the Italians or the Irish, had opportunity for employment. That is probably why they came here.
- L: Right. It was awful hard work and they were the two people that worked the hardest.
- C: Going back to the war, as far as the villagers were concerned, were there a lot of people that went from Leetonia to the war?
- L: Yes. I wouldn't want to guess the amount, but it was a big amount. Then I went into World War II. There was an awful lot of us. I was one of the last to be called. I was thirty-six years old. I had two children. They called me in February 1941 and I was in until August of 1945.
- C: Were times generally pretty good in Leetonia during the 1920's?
- L: Well, up until 1929, that is when everything went down. I got married on October 23, 1929. In November, Cherry Valley shut down, approximately a month or a little less. The next April of 1930 I went over and helped to tear it down. Things were really bad here; there was no work at all.
- C: Were other businesses affected? Can you tell?
- L: Oh, yes, a lot of them closed up. I think it ended up with three saloons left. We used to have a wallpaper store; they all closed up. People couldn't afford to even paper the house. Both of them closed down. The Salem Iron Company closed before this did. It was already half torn down when they decided to . . . The Hanna Brothers, a relative of theirs was a chemist down there, and he was moved to Aliquippa. The Hanna's had Aliquippa, and Struthers and two other mills. So they just tore this one down and forgot about it because it was a small one.
- C: What other businesses were in town that were affected by it. Can you remember any of those?
- L: Well, the Acme Cultivator moved out of here. They moved to some other city. They are still a big name.
- C: You mentioned the saloons went down from twenty whatever to three. Was there a brewery in town?

- L: Well, we had small breweries right down at the end of Wadell Street. Down where it dead ends there was spring water. They had a brewery in there and a slaughterhouse.
- C: What was the name of it, do you remember?
- L: Scattergood. You have probably heard that name too. Scattergood owned and operated that. He had a place down here where he kept it in a refrigerator. Then there was Slater's slaughterhouse, Floding's slaughterhouse where Mariam lives.
- C: Who is that?
- L: My sister-in-law lives on the old Floding place where there used to be a slaughterhouse. Downtown there is a new brick building right on the corner right next to the bank. It used to be a three story building. That was Floding's meat market. It went out of business.
- C: So the town was pretty devastated by . . .
- L: Oh, yes, it was hit hard. He had another meat shop in town; he did run it through about twenty-five years ago. The competition was too great.
- C: So, you got married right as this thing was starting, and the Depression was going on. What did you do? How did you work? Did you work?
- L: Well, I didn't do anything from that fall to the next spring. Then they brought the WPA and all of that in. They shifted me to Columbiana toput streets in. I made ninety-eight dollars a month. I had to find my own way to Columbiana and back everyday. All that time I never went on relief. I always had something to do.
- C: The projects that you worked on were WPA projects?
- L: Right. We put bricks back. We took all the bricks out, I ran the roller, resanded the base and then they set the bricks back in and threw sand on top of them so they would filter down smooth. I ran the roller on top of that, that heavy roller, so they would all settle in and be smooth and even.
- C: Do you think a lot of these jobs were what they called "moon-doggling"? Do you think it was a lot of work that was unnecessary? Some people say that.
- L: No, I don't think so. No, those streets in Columbiana are still laying there. The bricks are still laying there. They are in good shape. It was worthwhile. It was something that helped out all of us, for those who just didn't have the money.

C: It was better than direct relief.

L: Oh, yes.

C: A handout rather.

L: That is what went on. A lot of them had took it that way, but I liked working.

C: When did things start getting better in town?

L: About World War II. It took that long, that is around here. The Depression lasted from 1929 to about 1940. In the bigger cities it started to come in better but here we didn't have anything to come back to. The coke towns were shut down, the furnaces were shut down, the Acme Cultivator moved out. All we had was the little Leetonia Tool Company down here, and what they called Crescent Machine Company up here.

C: Was Grafton Supply still around at that time?

L: Oh, yes. That was quite an outfit down there. That was owned by McKeefrey's too. They had an ice wagon drawn by horses. They would fill up the front and you could get a hunk of ice and put it in your refrigerator.

C: Did the McKeefrey's own the ice company too?

L: Yes, they owned the whole thing. Grafton Supply, they had that store down there and they had ice. They made their ice southwest of town in a pond out there. Floding's had a pond; they made ice.

C: Did Weikart's have a . . .

L: Weikart's bought their ice but they had a big supply. They had a great, big place where they kept ice the year round. That was before you had a refrigerator; you had ice boxes.

C: Do you remember how much it cost?

L: I would say fifty pounds was something like fifteen cents.

C: So you would buy a block of ice and then stick it in the ice box?

L: At the top.

C: How long would it last?

L: If kept good and cold, it would last a couple of days. If you forgot the pan underneath, you had water all over the place. Because it all drains down into a pan underneath.

- C: Let's go back a second. As you were a young boy growing up, 1920 or so, what type of things could you do for recreation in town?
- L: Well, we had a picture show here called the American Theater. That was about it. We didn't have that much. A lot of baseball was played here. We had two or three teams of grown men who loved baseball.
- C: What kind of league was it?
- L: It was just little leagues within the village. They played Salem or Alliance. They would all go up in their own individual cars and play baseball.
- C: It was even popular among the adults that played?
- L: Oh, yes. A lot of the local people would participate.
- C: Was there a common place everyone could go to such as a park? Was the park in town utilized for . . .
- L: Well, we had Wick Park. It used to be used quite a bit, of course it isn't anymore. It was used a lot. Down here where they play baseball now, that was always a field that was used. The village owns it now but at the time George Woods, an undertaker, owned it.
- C: Your talking about the little league field?
- L: Berg's Pretzels was up here on this corner. We didn't have that building that is down there now.
- C: Dan-Dee Pretzels?
- L: It was Berg's Pretzels then. My wife worked up there for a dollar and a quarter a day making potato chips. They were all made by hand; there were no machines.
- C: When was that?
- L: About 1934, 1935, somewhere in there. A dollar and a quarter a day is what she got.
- C: Is that right?
- L: It was a big thing. The best pretzels I ever tasted. They had their own potato chips which they made. When Dan-Dee came along and bought it, they built that building where the plastic factory is.
- C: Wasn't there a facility right outside of town going towards Columbiana? Sort of a park out there?

L: Kelly's Park.

C: What was that like?

L: There was a big dance hall there, a place to swim, and they also roller skated on the dance floor. There was a lot of time spent out there. I enjoyed that out there. I used to roller skate.

C: When was that around?

L: 1918 until 1928. They used to have a little air field out here. The same fellow that owned Kelly's Park owned the airfield and he also owned the theater that was downtown. He was called an entrepreneur. He put his money back into this village. He was a big help here.

C: Why? What things did he do?

L: Well, he would see some little thing that had to be done and he would donate to it. He never donated in his name, just anonymous. Everyone knew where it was coming from. His name was Patrick Kelly. He had this littleplane field out here. They were little single seaters at that time.

C: Could you buy an airplane ride?

L: Buy a ride or if you wanted to make a special trip someplace, Pat was always ready to go. We used to have a grainery out at the edge of town. Do you know where the Mennonite is out here? It is at the end of the street here on the right.

C: Oh, it's the end of Columbia Street, going out of town.

L: The house that sits on the other side of that, that used to be a grainery.

C: Is that right?

L: There was a watering trough in front, you could put your horse up and let him drink water while you unload at the mill. It was a pretty big thing here. That little house is only half as big as it was then.

C: Did Kelly own that too?

L: No, it was a fellow by the name of . . . I can't think of it now.

C: If it comes back, just mention it.

L: Crescent Machine Company was a big thing here. They made the same type of machinery as National Rubber does now. That is the reason why National Rubber came down, because all the machinery that was here was usable to them.

C: They bought out Crescent Machine?

L: Yes.

C: Crescent Machine was in existence until when, do you know?

L: I would guess around 1960. It was here for a good many years.

C: After the Depression, and the WPA projects were no longer needed, did you go to work then?

L: I worked for the village of Leetonia for twenty-six years.

C: What did you do? What capacity were you in?

L: I was an all-around man. I was a policeman for twenty-six years. I also worked for the water department. I worked for the street department. I was the foreman of the whole business at that time. At that time you didn't have to have a license. Now you can't run a water or sewer cleaner without a licensed man. You didn't have to have one at that time. A policeman, you didn't have to school for that. You learned it the hard way. So I had twenty-six years. Sixteen years out of the twenty-six as a police officer. Then I left that and went with the State Patrol. I retired from there. I taught dispatchers. It was a heck of a nice job. I was only ten years there, and then I retired. I retired in 1965.

C: Can you tell me about some of your experiences as a policeman in town? What were the highlights of your day, or were there any?

L: The only thing that sticks in my mind, I got a call one day at noon, right at noon. There used to be a freight station that sat on the side where you cut across the tracks. They called me and I went down there. I don't know if he was a big black man, at least he looked that way to me. He had a knife on him. He was going to kill the station master if he didn't give him the money. I was just a young man, and I marched in there and I pulled my gun and said, "If you make one move, you're gone." I was afraid to put him in the patrol car. We didn't have screens in those days. So I marched him right up the street to city hall. I got to thinking, "What a damn fool you were to do that." What I should have done was just have him get out of the building before I woke up. That stuck in my mind.

C: When were you on the police force?

L: 1946, I think it was, or 1947.

C: So this is after the war?

L: Yes, when I came back.

C: Can you tell me about your war experiences, World War II?

L: Well, I don't talk much about it because some of it bothers me. It bothers me a great deal. The thing that bothers me the most is, I had two buddies who were starting up on top of rice paddies in the Philippines. They started shooting, and all at once I was standing there by myself. I looked on both side, and they were both dead. A sniper got them. I had a little Japanese-American interpreter with me. He said, "I'll get that S.O.B." and he went down and came back with the fellow's head. They were not allowed to have any weapons, the Japanese. He had two. Two cartridges, 30 caliber cartridges, a piece of piano wire and a switch blade. He would crawl up to you, boy, you snapped right off. That was scary. Now I went out to the Philippines into occupied Korea. The cholera was so high, the degree of death of Korean people that had been made prisoners by Japan . . . They would be dead on the ships; it was full of cholera. We took shots everyday. You got so full of that stuff it would make you sick, awful sick. I did that for about three months. Then they shipped me home.

C: You were in the Pacific then most of the time?

L: Yes, I was in the Pacific where it was hot.

C: Did a lot of other people from Leetonia that went into World War II go there?

L: Oh, yes.

C: You said you were thirty-six when you were drafted into the army, and you had two children?

L: There was my mother, aunt, and two daughters and my poor wife. She had a hell of a time for a while there.

C: My father was drafted when he was thirty. No, he was twenty-six.

L: He was probably thirty when he got out. That's the way it was with me. I was forty when I got out.

C: I don't know if you can relate or not because you were not here, but what was it like for the people at home here in town during the war as far as rationing and that type of thing?

L: During World War II, I don't think there was too much rationing going on as far as the village of Leetonia because those that were left here were all working night and day in mills and places like that needed to keep the war going and to make the material for it. So, Leetonia was not hit too hard then. Some of the bigger cities were hit very hard, but we were not hit too hard. Everybody was working. The women were working. They would jump in the car and go to these plants such as Packard Electric. Packard Electric

was around at that time and a lot of women worked up there. In Salem there was what was called Mullin's Manufacturing. A lot of women went in and replaced the men. The village of Leetonia didn't have too bad of a time during the Second World War.

C: What did they produce at places like Mullin's?

L: They produced shells. They converted them over from automobile bodies to the big shells. They were about that big and round and about that long. Things like that for the war.

C: So a lot of these local industries had to convert over to war time industry.

L: Yes, right. Some of them used to drive clear to Canton where they made ball bearings. I can't think of the name of it. They drove clear to Canton because those were needed in tanks, in trucks and automobiles.

C: Were there any industries in town that produced things for the war?

L: Well, Leetonia Tool Company did. They manufactured picks and crow bars and all types of bars for the government. They worked night and day. Now I don't think they have two or three people working there. That is all they have. Sledgehammers and all types of hammers, from the smallest hammer to the largest. Just such things as that they manufactured. Of course, there was Crescent Machine Company at that time. They remained the factory of big machinery for the tire and rubber companies in Akron and all over the world. So they were busy. National Rubber didn't come into the picture until after that. National Rubber was a part of it, but they were just a young outfit at that time trying to get started.

C: Do you have any idea of how many men were involved in the war from Leetonia, World War II?

L: I wouldn't even want to guess. We have a plaque on the Catholic Church down here that covers one whole wall. I would say there were two or three hundred names on it.

C: Were there a lot of casualties do you think?

L: It wasn't too bad for us. I know there were some . . . I would say that there is three or four hundred names on that thing down there, but now that is World War I and World War II. We have got one man still living from World War I here in Leetonia. You probably knew that, right?

C: I am going to talk to him next weekend.

L: Yes, he is the only one left. Culvert Stewart was another one.

- He lived right over here, but he died.
- C: What was his name?
- L: Culvert Stewart. He just died about two years ago. They are getting up into their nineties now.
- C: There are not too many of those fellows still around.
- L: There are not too many in my outfit. There were eleven of us that ran around here in town. I am the only one left.
- C: Is that right? A lot of the World War II veterans are getting a lot older now.
- L: A lot of them were heavy drinkers. They drank themselves to death. I think it was partly because of the war, such as that, they just drank until they died. It was something that couldn't be helped.
- C: You don't hear as much about the World War II veteran and the psychological damage that the war had on the veterans as Vietnam. Why is that?
- L: Well, I think the big thing is that Vietnam was not a war that was declared and a lot of them felt bad about having to go to protect their country when there was actually no declaration of war there. They felt that the war was a lost cause, which it proved to be. It proved to be a lost cause as far as they were concerned. It affected them. It was just like if somebody told you you had to do something even though it was wrong; that's where it ended up. My personal feelings I don't think we ever should have got into it. It left us in one heck of a shame, as you can see.
- C: The war veterans from Leetonia and yourself when World War II started, what was the spirit about going to war? I am sure there was a lot of apprehension.
- L: Well, for the most part most of us were willing to do it because it was really giving protection to our families and such. It was better to go there to try to stop it than to have them come here and destroy our families and our country and everything else. My age and everything, I was still willing to go. My family needed protected and I didn't want them to come over here to fight with us or ruin our country or anything else. It had started in another country, so why bring it back here?
- C: As the war got started over in Europe did Americans generally feel that one day we were going to get involved militarily? Was it inevitable?

- L: It was more or less a surprise when Japan attacked us. In Germany they saw it as one of those things that had to be done. The kaiser, Hitler, was bound and determined to take over the world. They say he was crazy. He might have been, but I am not the judge. God, I can't judge them when their crazy. I guess it has been proven since that he was a little bit off, but who am I to say.
- C: You're of German descent?
- L: No, I am English. I am English and Scotch. My grandmother on my father's side was Scottish. His father came from England in 1826. That is where it all started.
- C: Steve, your grandson, Steve Deffenbaugh, he was telling me that you are related to Henry Cabot Lodge, the senator from Massachusetts.
- L: He passed away not long ago. We were distantly related. His great-grandfather and my great-grandfather were first cousins, so that is what it goes back to. My great-grandfather's name was Ivon. His grandfather was Avon. My grandfather was big Tom, his cousin was little Tom. They named their children after each other and everything else in those days. Ivon Lodge, my great-grandfather, came over here in 1826. He bought this acreage off of the government. Then it formed into the state of Ohio and then he was granted what he had bought plus another fifteen hundred acres to make a twenty-five hundred acre farm down there. It went from where the public gas station is. Do you know where the public gas station is? Going from here to Lisbon, down here about three and a half miles. There is a road there. It's called Lodge Road. From there south we called it Flatiron because it came down. It was all that property in there, plus all of it on the east side, back for a quarter of a mile. All the way down there, it was twenty-five hundred acres.
- C: Your father inherited that and worked the farm too?
- L: No, my father was a welder. He didn't stay on the farm. He left. My grandfather died and then my father's brother, Lawrence Lodge, took over the old homestead and he farmed it. But each one as they grew older and added another piece to the family, would cut a piece off and say, "Here you are. You're in the family now. You havethis many acres. This is yours to keep." The last time that it was cut there were forty some acres left. That was all that was left of the old homestead.
- C: It is all spread out, split up. Can you tell me about transportation as a young man growing up in town?
- L: Well, at that time we lived on the farm out here about three miles. We used to come into Leetonia to go to church and Sunday school. We came in a horse and buggy, "surrys" they called them.

That was a fancy name for buggy. A lot of fringe on them. You have seen pictures of them. It had a shield on the front, if it rained you put that on. The horse was so old that if you could start it on Sunday mornings, it would bring you right into the turn as you go to church. It knew its way back, you didn't have to guide it. It knew the way so well. The first car that I ever remembered was what they called an EMF. That was the name of the car. I don't know what EMF stood for, but that was the initials they used on them. The back wheels were about three feet high, the front wheels were two feet. You could hear it coming for miles. Puffing away down hills and up hills, it would just about make it. Solid rubber tires, chain drive. That was the first car I remember.

- C: Do you know when that first appeared? Can you place it in your mind how old you were?
- L: I would say I was about eight years old then.
- C: About 1918 then?
- L: Somewhere around there. It was right around when the war started.
- C: Did a lot of people in town have automobiles during this time?
- L: No, they were just coming in. There was another car they called the Cole 8, eight cylinders. The Studebaker was fairly popular at that time; it was a small car. The EMF was the first one I ever remembered.
- C: Did only the prominent families in town have automobiles?
- L: Yes, the rest of us couldn't afford them.
- C: How much was it? Do you know how much it would have been to buy an automobile in 1918?
- L: I don't know. I bought a new Ford Roadster for \$695.
- C: What year was that?
- L: 1927.
- C: Was there a garage in town that sold automobiles?
- L: You had to go three miles over the Columbiana. Then we had a garage called . . . Bim Walters, he had a garage down here and had a really big horse barn. You could buy, rent out surrys or wagons or whatever you wanted. They furnished the horses and all. There was a big red barn there and a hotel on the corner. Where the Sunoco Station is right now there used to be a meat market. There was a little laundry right down at the bottom of this hill.

C: There was a laundry?

L: There was a laundry. You didn't do your own laundry like you do now. You brought it to them and they did it.

C: Tell me about the streetcars.

L: Y & O, that was Youngstown and Ohio River and then we had the Y & S, which was Youngstown and Suburban. The Youngstown and Suburban came out of Youngstown into Leetonia where you had to change cars if you wanted to go to Salem or East Liverpool or Lisbon. Then you got on the Youngstown and Ohio River to go through Washingtonville or into Washingtonville, then to Salem. It was up on Ellsworth Avenue, clear down at the other end of town. That thing wound around up the streets, came up South Broadway and then down State Street, circled around Ellsworth Avenue and then to the station. Youngstown and Suburban would take you to downtown Youngstown.

C: How much did it cost you to do that?

L: I think it was a quarter.

END OF INTERVIEW