

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

The Depression

Personal Experience

O.H. 958

GEORGE E. BLACK

Interviewed

by

Maribeth Harry

on

May 24, 1976

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: GEORGE E. BLACK

INTERVIEWER: Maribeth Harry

SUBJECT: Herbert Hoover, W.P.A., the New Deal, Bank Stock

DATE: May 24, 1976

H: This is an interview with Mr. George E. Black for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on The Depression project, by Maribeth Harry, on May 24, 1976, at 85 Pine Grove Drive, Hubbard, Ohio, at 5:00 p.m.

We'll start off with a few basic questions. George, tell me what you remember about your family and your parents?

B: Well, I remember my dad's birth date, June 12, 1867.

H: That is a good memory. My father can't even remember mine.

B: My mother was August 20, 1892.

H: When were they married?

B: Sometime in 1911.

H: Then, when were you born?

B: March 4, 1912.

H: Were you born in Youngstown?

B: Columbiana.

H: Then, when did you move into Youngstown? I know you live in Hubbard now.

- B: Well, my parents. . . . My mother went to her mother's house up at my grandmother's place for the event, but they actually lived in Pennsylvania. They stayed there until I was five months old. Then, I lived in Pennsylvania until I went to the Army for awhile. Then, I came out of the Army, and I went in to Youngstown in 1937, just about six weeks before the 1937 Steel strike.
- H: Oh, boy. Then, when did you move to Hubbard? Just recently hasn't that been?
- B: Yes, March 1, 1974.
- H: When you lived in Columbiana, was it on a farm?
- B: No, Pittsburgh Street, the last house on Pittsburgh Street.
- H: In Columbiana, what type of work was your father in?
- B: Farmer.
- H: And then, your mother, did she work at all?
- B: She worked in the overall factory at Columbiana.
- H: When you were grown?
- B: Before they were married. I told your mother and dad about this the other night. In the same community, of course, in those, why, every day, why, the girls would put their name and address on a packet of a pair of overalls.
- H: Then, what did they do with the overalls? Oh, you mean the ones that they would make?
- B: Yes.
- H: They would have no idea who they were going to?
- B: My father bought the overalls.
- H: Is that how they met?
- B: Yes, 120 miles apart and very few automobiles in 1910.
- H: That is really interesting, now. Your mother put her name and address in the pocket?
- B: Yes.

H: How many did she make a day?

B: Well, I don't know. She was high on the incentive several times, but they were only working ten or twelve or fifteen hours a week at that time. That was the going rate.

H: That was a fair wage, wasn't it?

B: Yes, more or less.

H: Then they would. . . . That is really interesting. Then, how long did it take your father to get to the area to meet your mother? Did he write her?

B: Well. . . .

H: That is really interesting.

B: To go make the trip at that time, we would leave home when we went for a visit around 7:40 in the morning. That was the train time. You would get into Columbiana around three in the afternoon. But, we rode the train to Butler. Then, you rode an inter-urban streetcar line to New Castle, another one to Youngstown, and come in on Front Street and then on Poland Avenue. I could see it later on, the wrecked cars piled up and wonder how they piled them that way. Then, we rode Y & S, Youngstown and Southern, which it was commonly called. It went into a southerly direction down to Columbiana.

H: A lot better than they have, now. A lot better connections. What do you remember about your childhood, any special games?

B: Well, one time on one of those trips, we had a train wreck. Some man--I don't know who he was--carried me because I was small. This was during World War I. From one train to the other. It was pretty late at night when we got home. Then, another thing I mind in World War I was seeing various calendar pictures, soldiers, Navy. This particular time, we went to Columbiana by the way of Moss Grove, then to Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh. Then, from Pennsylvania, we rode again another branch to Columbiana. But, before Moss Grove, that is on the Allegheny River and Pittsburgh, we encountered a ship. The way the train was, you could look right down as the train was going by, and I was kind of provoked expecting to see a lot of nice sailors. This ship was more like a river freighter. The men all had overalls and stuff on like railroad workers.

- H: Your great childhood disappointment.
- B: It was just one of the things.
- H: I bet you have many. Tell me, is there a special game that you used to play?
- B: I wasn't too much into games. I liked to watch baseball. I did play a bit of football in high school, but I didn't set the world on fire or anything.
- H: As many people didn't. What do you remember about school, your elementary and high school?
- B: Well, the grade school was a one-room school. There was a mining company right next to our school. Several times, I would be the only American in sixty students.
- H: What nationalities were represented?
- B: Hungarian and Italian mostly. You had some Polish.
- H: Was the teacher American?
- B: Yes. It would be something. You would meet one family. They would come to the community and work six months or a year, some of them several years. Then, they would be gone again. Some went to. . . . One very good friend of my dad, a coal miner, he moved up to assistant superintendent. Then eventually, that mine closed, and he ended up as a motor man at another mine. Some of them went to the Chicago area, and I don't know in what really type of work. Some of them migrated to Detroit and into the automobile works.
- H: Migrated. How would you classify a good quality of education in a one-room school? There was a one to what grade?
- B: One to eight.
- H: One to eight. Was there any kindergarten, or was that an invention?
- B: No, that was a modern day invention.
- H: Modern days.
- B: Then in high school, we had what we called a vocational high school where they were culturally oriented.

- H: Is it in Columbiana?
- B: No, Dayton, Pennsylvania.
- H: Oh, Okay.
- B: They had an interesting class there. It was Woodenberg Woodworking. Science was more or less interesting also, and physics. Civics was necessary, but it was kind of boring.
- H: I can imagine. I couldn't handle that today. When you were in the one-room school, what were the subjects that were taught?
- B: You took from one to five difficulty in the reader in the eighth grade. Say from fifth grade to eighth grade they used a common reader, the red reader. I don't know how high up the rest of them were. For each grade, there were their own colors and texts for subjects, like mathematics.
- H: And those were the basics?
- B: Yes.
- H: And sometimes, you were the only American?
- B: Yes.
- H: Did you ever pickup any other language?
- B: No, I should have, but, the reason I didn't a lot of times [was] they would use their language and take advantage of me. I had known that I probably couldn't understand their language. If he wanted to holler something, while he was hollering something, I was looking at him and another, at this big one down behind me. Then, I would get pushed over backwards.
- H: Oh, they picked on you?
- B: Oh, yes. They all did.
- H: Wasn't it fun?
- B: Sometimes and sometimes not.
- H: And when you were in Youngstown, after you were married, what was your profession?

B: Well, I worked for U.S. Steel at various jobs.

H: Was this in 1937?

B: No. I worked for Republic Steel Stenson and Stanford. Then, I cracked coal for awhile. Then, I went to U.S. Steel, and I worked first at maintenance. Then in production, I worked at the fifth. . . . Then, I lost out on cutbacks in the mills. Then, I worked odd jobs. Then, I got on inspection, and I worked inspection until I retired.

H: What made you decide to go into this profession, anything special in this steel?

B: Inspection?

H: Well, the whole working experience.

B: You left the barn for somewhere, where you could earn a living with such things, is the basic reason.

H: Is there any reason why you came to Youngstown, especially?

B: Well, my mother's people were from the Columbiana area.

H: Were from Columbiana?

B: Then, on my father's side, my one uncle settled in the Niles area originally. His farm was covered with Meander Lake.

H: Then, you settled on a happy medium?

B: Then, he left from there and went to the New Middletown area.

H: Then, you relocated in Youngstown?

B: Yes.

H: I'm very interested in the Depression years. How were the 1930's? How were you affected?

B: Well. . . .

H: Do you remember some personal experiences or those of your friends?

B: Yes. Minors, you get a bit of credit. The public

worked, but one good friend of mine was on the WPA, Works Progress Administration. He could not get any credit, any place.

H: Why?

B: The WPA was temporary. They didn't recognize him. It was wages like it, and couldn't be attached to Ohio. Pennsylvania doesn't have the garnishee law, like they have in this state. I don't know. They just didn't seem to recognize that, because projects would come and go. They would have one project. They started WPA projects, such as they would pave a certain street and clean it up and put in sidewalks and clean the ditches. That project, once it was exhausted, then the men would be out of work until another one came up.

H: That was an FDR project. Wasn't that his idea?

B: Yes.

H: He also came up with the New Deal. Social Security came out after. Were you pleased?

B: What?

H: Were you pleased with the New Deal?

B: Well, I didn't care too much for it because I did not qualify for anything in any of those programs even though I was passed twenty-one, because they figured that I could live at home.

H: Oh, so you were by-passed.

B: That was my reason for going to the U.S. Army in the package known as the CMTTC, Citizens' Military Training Corps. I went through the four year course of that. I was up to a good correspondence course, or extension course as they called it. I was up to where I would take the examination in one letter. I would become a second lieutenant. I wrecked the car going to school one night, and it kind of made me mad. I never went back.

H: I see. You were married at the time, weren't you?

B: No, no.

H: When were you married? What was the date?

- B: [In] 1946, December 24. It seemed like a lark at the time. It was all weeks after that you were so busy in it. The Christmas season would go by, and that would be it.
- H: And your wife was a teacher, wasn't she?
- B: Yes.
- H: That is what I thought. Back to the Depression again, did you lose your faith in banks? Do you still?
- B: Well, no, I was kind of teed off. I had an experience. I will tell you a little story. A nearby farmer gave me five dollars to build him a wagon box. So, I bought a saw. The farmer gave me his word to tab him. The saw I still have. It was 96 cents at that time. I wrote a check for it. I got caught in the bank closing. So, for twenty some years, I didn't bother with banks.
- H: What did you do?
- B: Used money orders.
- H: Oh, I see.
- B: I've been in two years of banks now.
- H: What would you do? You say you used money orders. Do you mean that you get your pay check and write some money order?
- B: No, no, a guy wanted to send money away. He would use a money order, and he would just use cash.
- H: But, you never put your payroll checks in the bank?
- B: For savings, not for checking.
- H: Then, did you hide them?
- B: No.
- H: Sometimes you could?
- B: In times, you took a hold to go. In one instance, I built a garage up . . . in the previous house where I lived in McDonald. I had \$89 pay and bought \$85 worth of blocks to start a garage. But, we had some money saved. That was how we bought [paid] the grocery bill.
- H: Did you lose your savings on the bank run?

- B: Well, when the bank reopened, they gave you 55 percent. Well then, on small accounts, the bank cashier bought them up himself for, I think, 45 percent. The balance was lost.
- H: You never even gained.
- B: People who had stock in the banks requested to turn their stock back in. Then, they had to buy it back for \$120 a share, which originally it was \$100. That was a wrinkle in the banks, stock it up instead of changing much. You are actually called on one of the bank bills to make good the amount you have in stock.
- H: I really wonder if they guarantee your money on twenty thousand dollars?
- B: Yes.
- H: But, I just wonder.
- B: If that is your actual savings.
- H: Yes, I just really wonder, because I think if everyone all had twenty thousand dollars, I don't know how they could meet it. The bank doesn't have that much cash on hand, I don't believe. Were a lot of people affected in your community.
- B: Oh, yes. One neighboring bank never reopened as a result of that.
- H: And how many . . . did most reopen?
- B: Most reopened and reorganized.
- H: And, how long did that take? How long were some closed?
- B: Well, various ones, at times, like First National was closed. I don't mind the date. But they opened in the summer, in four or five months.
- H: Well, that wasn't too bad, but many people lost everything.
- B: Yes. The teachers eventually got paid, some of them, from February until school closing. They drew in salaries.
- H: Those were very hard times, then.

- B: It was very hard.
- H: What did people eat during this time? My father said that he ate mostly beans.
- B: Well, a lot of people [ate] whatever they could get.
- H: What would be the cheapest, beans probably?
- B: Well, another neighbor boy and I had some--I don't mind how we acquired--but, we had a day and a dime and weeks to spend. We would go down to the candy [store]. At this particular store, it had a punch board. They encouraged us to try and net. He said that every number was a sure winner for candy. We both won fifty cents for merchandise. Well, this here keeper had a sale on nave beans, ten pounds for nineteen cents. So, I took twenty pounds, and the neighbor boy took twenty pounds. The boy had only a hundred pound bag for a sale, and he was so mad that that was all he would give us. He wouldn't give us our other twelve cents. You see, if you were winning, you were supposed to be taking out merchandise.
- H: He only had one hundred pounds.
- B: So, I took the beans home, and I still got my fifty cents.
- H: I bet your father and mother were glad to see those.
- B: Sure.
- H: Were there soup kitchens?
- B: Yes, not right in that neighborhood, but there were soup kitchens. This is the McDonald area. I heard people talk--and this is hearsay--but, my landlady, she said that she had seen people that arranged their soup in, well, part of a dinner item. Then, they were carrying the dinner pails, so people wouldn't see them suspended in a shopping bag. In other words, [they] just started down with the shopping bag. Then, they grabbed the man with the shopping bag, but they had to handle the buckets. That was how they carried the soup that way.
- H: So, people wouldn't see?
- B: Yes.

H: Oh.

B: Some people were kind of proud.

H: Oh, I'm sure many people, wealthy people, lost a fortune.

B: Yes.

H: Did you know anyone personally that that happened to?

B: No, I didn't.

H: Thank God. It wouldn't be pleasant. Do you remember anything in particular about the Depression that stands out in your mind the most?

B: Well, I skipped a class at school. Several people were in this store, where I went down to the store. It was the last period in the morning. I actually skipped a study hall. The talk then, was of the stock market collapse the day before. Everybody, just seemed to be going about their business, but everybody was talking about it, just like they would be talking about the hurricane some place today.

H: They didn't really realize the seriousness of the time?

B: It didn't seem that serious, you know, at first. It really didn't get really serious until--the end of 1932 is when it really got. . . .

H: The worst.

B: The worst.

H: And then, how long did it stay at that point?

B: Well, it started to level out about . . . well, we still had . . . the Youngstown airport was built with the WPA labor, originally. It happened in 1939 and 1940.

H: Oh, I see. Then, it started. . . . Then, the war really brought it up and escalated it.

B: Then, World War II came out instead, besides that. It was starting to build up in 1938 and 1939. Things were picking up a bit. I said no politics--but, this is not actually politics--but, I will tell it to you just for the point. Our CMTC company for our drill and stuff for something that we were doing kind of as a prank, we were

taken to Washington, D.C. and treated to a movie and a ball game, but between the movie, or before the movie--the ball game first and then the movie--before that we were presented to the president, President Hoover of 1931. His hair was sandy. We had a picture taken with Hoover. Then, we had a repeat performance in 1932, and in that year's time, his hair got snow white. That was what it had done to him.

H: Oh, how terrible. Were you impressed by Hoover?

B: Well, you had the same situation then, as you have today. You have it at the state level, and you have it at the national level. The two parties. . . .
(Laughter)

H: Everyone tended to blame the Depression on Hoover. Do you think that was justified?

B: No, I don't think.

H: Who was to blame, or anyone?

B: Well, it actually started in Austria, in Europe and spread to this country all along.

H: And what was the cause?

B: Well. . . .

H: Many causes?

B: Many causes. War production is never any good.

H: No.

B: In World War I, there was a lot of money lost, but the Army had 86,000 horses and mules. That included riding horses for the cavalry draft horses, and mules--draft horses and mules at the other cavalry and stuff used. It is hard telling what some other things that they didn't have instead of the horses. They were starting to get some automobiles. Well, here is where the loss is at. Somebody ordered a million and a half of saddles for 86,000 horses. You could buy saddles most any place at the surplus stores for years, even up until the mid 1930's.

H: What a horrendous error.

B: For like six or seven dollars [each]. They ordered--I

think it was 2 million--bridles and 2½ million halters for 86,000 horses.

H: What a mistake. With errors like that, no wonder. That is terrible. Maybe you don't, but what about the horseless carriage, when the first car came, do you remember?

B: Well, some of them were scared. We had more horses scared, when the railroad went through our farm, we had more horses scared by the railroad than the cars.

H: Was it accepted readily?

B: Yes.

H: The cars?

B: There was one make of car. They had a big horse head on the front of it.

H: What kind was that? Do you remember?

B: No, I don't, but I have a picture of it in a book. It was a fair size, almost life size, and the cars were a big difference. This would be the day they had a short buggy. Then, they had a horses head there, with the idea that it might not scare the horses.

H: Did it work? Oh, you probably don't know.

B: Then, I also had a picture that shows a tire made out of sections of leather with steel hooks on the clincher. Then, I actually saw one of those pairs in a junk pile, but it was pretty well deteriorated. I have a picture of that tire in a book.

H: Oh, you do?

B: That was made that way.

H: What book?

B: Well, you know, like the shoe is shaped out of various pieces of the. . . . It had studs on it.

H: That was interesting.

B: Like hobnail shoes.

H: That would be interesting. How did your parents react

to the car?

B: Well, my father didn't take to it too good, but towards the last, he realized that they were here to stay.

H: What type of candies did you eat when you were a child?

B: Oh, the various hard rocks. The old chocolate drops were a good stand by. One more thing, I forgot to tell you, coming back to that train wreck. I had a toy horn. That one guy didn't like it. He tried to shut me up. There were two strange men. Another guy, it was amusing to him. He gave me a nickel to keep it up.

H: This was on the train?

B: On the train, yes.

H: I mean did you jump the train, or were you a legal passenger?

B: Legal passenger.

H: And, you were blowing your horn?

B: Yes.

H: Did you keep it up, or did you stop?

B: Well, I kept it up for quite awhile, I guess, and earned a nickel.

H: Were they friends together?

B: Oh, I don't know if they were friends or not.

H: You know, I know that inflation--well, today, is just terrible. Can you give me an example? You did already about the navy beans. Any more examples?

B: Well, in World War I, sugar went up to thirty-four cents a pound, and people thought that was terrible. Then, not only that, it was hard to get. My father went. . . . He accumulated forty pounds to make apple butter, but he went every place he could to buy two or three pounds, and that was the way he accumulated it. Then--this is World War I again--I was in school, and candy and stuff being hard to get, my mother made me candy for a school treat. We got six pieces of candy, two chocolate, four seafoam, and an apple. That was our school treat that year.

- H: Sounds good, yum.
- B: A lot of them didn't like it or go for it.
- H: No, I sure would.
- B: That was just the way things were.
- H: Seafoam, that was what my grandmother used to make, too. Is that what people made more?
- B: Yes.
- H: Today, they don't make it that much anymore, at least I haven't been aware of it in their homes.
- B: No.
- H: I love it. Was that a treat for you? Did you like it?
- B: Oh, yes. We had more homemade candy at home, at times, than we did the other because, well, we had the milk and the butter and stuff on the farm. We always had lots of pork on the farm.
- H: Yes, and was it smoked?
- B: Yes.
- H: Did you slaughter on your property?
- B: Yes.
- H: Is that the same method they use now? How is it different?
- B: Well, wood was very slim there. First, they soaked them in a brine of salt. Then, they drained it, and they dried it with a mixture of salt-peter, salt, pepper, and brown sugar.
- H: Oh, that was good.
- B: To flavor the hams. Then, they smoked it. Then, after they smoked it, they would bury it in the oat skin in the summer time so the bugs and flies couldn't get to it. Oats was somewhat cool. Without the benefit of refrigeration, we would have from the late smoking, from late April to early May, we would still have ham in September.

H: That sounds good.

B: Keep it that long.

H: What did you do with lack of refrigeration for dairy products and so forth?

B: Spring house. You would just keep milk a couple of days; then, you fed it to the hogs. Of course, before you fed it to the hogs, you skimmed it and made butter. Butter would keep a week or so. We churned it and made butter every week.

H: Did they have the ice men?

B: Some places they did, yes.

H: Did your parents?

B: No, some of the farmers had the old icehouses, and they cut ice in the winter time. It would have . . . that they stacked the ice. But, they stacked it in such a way that they would leave two, three, maybe four inches between each block; and they kept covering it up with sawdust. That would keep ice up until six or eight months. Now, this is hearsay, but they kept ice at one time in the butcher's shops on the Mahoning River in Youngstown, before the river was so commercialized and polluted with the acid and hot water. The river doesn't freeze well, now that the water is actually hot from the mills.

H: You remember so much.

B: Well, I cut ice on the Mahoning Creek. I did my thing on Mahoning Creek. It was a different location, and we could pick up a little work in the winter time cutting ice.

H: What is the location of the Mahoning Creek?

B: Armstrong and Indiana Counties, Pennsylvania. It originates up around Punxsutawney and flows down by Moss Grove and Pine Furnace, and from Pine Furnace and Moss Grove to Kittanning and into the Allegheny River.

H: You remember exactly. What do you remember about the prohibition period when they were your parents?

B: Well, we had hard cider, and people were always coming around to bum that.

- H: Did your father make it, or did he just let it ferment?
- B: Well, the idea was for vinegar, and we enjoyed the sweet cider. Why, we had, back in that day, around three to four barrels a year and would end up with a couple barrels of vinegar, which were sold at the big price of twenty-five cents a gallon. Actually, they could be cut and made into two gallons; it was that powerful.
- H: That powerful!
- B: The other two barrels would be consumed as fresh cider and hard cider and so forth.
- H: Did your father sell it?
- B: No.
- H: He just gave it to his friends?
- B: Yes. Vinegar he did sell.
- H: That was the twenty-five cents?
- B: Yes.
- H: Did you make ice cream?
- B: In the winter time, and we would buy ice and make ice cream for the Fourth of July, something like that.
- H: Did your mother make it, or would that be a family project?
- B: Family project.
- H: How did you make it? Do you remember?
- B: Well, you made up the custard, and you had a regular what they called an ice cream freezer. It had a steel inner shell and a wood outer shell. You packed the ice between the steel and the wood outer shell. Then, it had a crank arrangement. You would crank it until it froze.
- H: And, how long would that process take?
- B: Oh, half hour to forty-five minutes.
- H: Everybody had their turn at the crank?

B: Yes.

H: Did your parents ever speak of the Roaring Twenties?

B: Somewhat.

H: Did they think it was sinful?

B: They didn't have too much to say.

H: Did your mother wear the flapper dress?

B: No.

H: They didn't have much to say about it?

B: No, I remember some jokes that was told about the Roaring Twenties.

H: Oh, please.

B: Well, I better not. One especially about the charleston.

H: Did your mother dance the charleston?

B: Yes.

H: Did that affect the area that you were in greatly?

B: Well, those were more of the old time square dances in that area.

H: Where you were from. Looking back now, what changes would you like to see, or would you like it to remain the same?

B: Well, I had a Model A Ford, in that day when you were dealing in gold. I wouldn't mind having a car with gold, either one.

H: Gold?

B: Yes.

H: The coin?

B: Yes.

H: Oh, it would be worth so much, now!

B: Well, up to 1933, we could go to the bank and exchange for gold.

- H: Get the gold price. Are there any other changes you would like to see, besides getting your gold pieces back?
- B: Well, they paid us. . . . I will tell you about the gold. They paid us. . . . Every once in awhile, there would be a five dollar gold piece in the pay envelope, here. I accumulated these until I had the six hundred dollars, and I bummed a twenty dollar bill from my dad and five ones from my mother; I paid for that car.
- H: But, you liked the gold pieces.
- B: The gold or the car, either one would be something to have today.
- H: I know.
- B: At that time, the gold was common. It was money.
- H: Not like now, where it is so valued. You are a coin collector yourself, and you know how much the coins are worth. Were you involved in World War II?
- B: No.
- H: World War I? No, of course, not.
- B: No. In World War II, I was turned down by the draft on account of previous military service; and then, I was instructed to get in a defense plant and stay there.
- H: And, that was what you did?
- B: Yes, I went to U.S. Steel in 1943.
- H: And, you stayed there until you did retire?
- B: Yes.
- H: I have a question. When the cars came--when did they . . . in the 1920's? No, when was the first car?
- B: Late . . . early 1880's, they were experimenting with them. But, we got our first car, a 1917 Model T.
- H: Was that one of the first? Were people really starting to be interested?
- B: Yes. Then another time, we made a trip. We were going to Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, and we went by the way of

Porter, Pennsylvania. It was the day before Decoration Day in 1921.

Well, it was thundering and lightening. We stopped at this place. It was a typical old time store. They had the porch with the right height for a wagon to back up to and unload her or a Model T pickup. For the gas, the guy opened the trap door and pulled up what looked like a giant tire pump. He was going to pump the gas, and another guy came out and said, "Ralph, don't be fooling with that gas when it is threatening thunder and lightening." So, Ralph put that pump back down, and we sat and waited until that guy thought it was safe to pump that gas. There were no more service stations. You had--you had to wait; you just sat there in the car and waited.

H: Everybody carried their own gas?

B: Well, a lot of people had these special cans that they bought to carry gas. Another time, we went to a family reunion. This was with the Model T. We stopped at a local harness shop. The man's name was Nick Collan. He was starting to fix them up, and eventually become part of an accessory store. He had a gas pump. The practice was then that we bought a tire in the wrapper, hung it on the top bow, on the side of the Model T. Then, we didn't have an occasion to use it, so we took it back. But, that was standard practice. If you had a flat tire and you needed to use a tire, you went back and paid for that. But, you never do that today.

H: No, of course, not.

B: But, that was just the way people were trusting and so forth in those days.

H: It has changed so much.

B: Yes.

H: Did they have trade-ins like they do now, if you buy a new car?

B: Yes, but that wasn't as heavily pushed as it is now. Of course, you didn't have. . . . Usually, a lot of people kept the car for . . . they would drive it in the winter time and saved the good car, the newer one. Then sometimes, they would pass them on to friends and sold them that way. Then later on, they started to trade-in.

H: Did they depreciate as greatly as they do today?

B: Oh, yes.

H: Did many people get broken arms?

B: I did.

H: Did you?

B: Yes.

H: Did it kick back?

B: Yes.

H: Only once? I mean once is enough.

B: Yes.

H: Did women drive too much?

B: Not as much as now.

H: Did you have to have a driver's license to drive? When did that come into vogue?

B: Well, in 1926 in Pennsylvania and in 1937 in Ohio. In Ohio, we just really bought our first driver's license. You didn't have to take a test or anything.

H: You just went and bought them nothing. Do you remember how much it cost?

B: [It was] 40¢; 25¢ for the license and 15¢ was the write-up pay.

H: The write-up. Before that and prior to that, no driver's license at all?

B: No.

H: Anybody that bought a car could just drive it?

B: Yes.

H: More like hit and miss.

B: Not in Ohio but in Pennsylvania, they have a driver's license from 1926 on. In fact, I think they had them

awhile before that.

H: Ohio took a little bit longer. Didn't Pennsylvania have the first turnpike?

B: Yes.

H: I believe. I don't know if that is related.

B: In 1904.

H: Pennsylvania has a lot of history involved. Was there anything else you would like to talk about, that you don't think we have covered?

B: I don't know. You have to ask me.

H: I'm really interested. You said that you met President Hoover, and you were how old then?

B: Twenty.

H: You were twenty the first time. Did you have faith in him by meeting him?

B: Well. . . .

H: Some people you meet and right away you trust.

B: He seemed to be presentable because a bunch of us. . . . As he turned to leave--he was with a Navy man and an Army man, and his military aides come out flanking him with one more civilian--a bunch of us, just for the heck of it hollared, "Goodbye Herbie." He took his straw hat off of him and waved it like that as he left, but he seemed in good humer that way.

Then, one more thing, previous from one of the visits--the Secretary of War at that time was Patrick Hurly--we had a surprise inspection by the Secretary of War.

H: You were speaking of Pat Hurly.

B: I was in the front ranks, and I was purposely standing with my chest out there. He came along and said, "There is a fine young man," and slapped me in my chest, and I almost went over backwards.

H: It sounded like a fun time. You saw Hoover twice, you said.

- B: Twice.
- H: Was he as jovial the second time? You mentioned he had grey hair.
- B: He seemed more reserved the second time. I think the men realized it, because they didn't holler or say anything like they did [before]. They didn't actually heckle; they just hollered, "Hi, Herbie."
- H: That sounds fun. Well George, thank you so much for everything. Is there anything else? I know you are a coin collector. When did you begin your coin collection?
- B: Oh, 1960.
- H: Oh, and you lost all those gold coins, those six hundred dollars worth? When did savings bonds. . . . That was in what, the second World War?
- B: Yes, they called them . . . they started out in civilian time as Baby bonds; and then, "E" bonds for effort during World War II. Then, in World War I, they called them Liberty bonds, a similar type of bond.
- H: Things have changed, but it is still the same principle. Do you remember Fred Allen?
- B: Yes.
- H: Tell me a little bit about Fred Allen.
- B: Well, I don't know too much about him.
- H: He was a radio host, wasn't he?
- B: Yes.
- H: You don't remember too much about Fred Allen?
- B: No.
- H: What about Will Rogers?
- B: I remember him, some of his pictures. I . . . 1936 that that thing was the Shirley Temple, the wholesome, what have you.
- H: In 1936?

B: Yes, and the movies and so forth.

H: I love those movies today.

B: It would come around to where they said it took a marriage and a divorce, and I don't know what all, for people to realize that she grew up.

H: That is true. Those movies . . . they still show those, and I love those movies.

B: Yes.

H: Were people really thrilled with those? I mean were they received well?

B: Oh, yes.

H: Was there a "Good Ship Lollipop?" That is one of the famous ones. Well, I know it is about dinner time. Thank you so much. I appreciate your time, and it is wonderful of you because many people don't want to do this. Thank you very much.

B: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW