

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of Industry in Youngstown Project

Farm Equipment Industry

O. H. 475

ELBERT AGNEW

Interviewed

by

Janice Cafaro

on

July 17, 1986

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of Industries in Youngstown

INTERVIEWEE: ELBERT AGNEW
INTERVIEWER: Janice Cafaro
SUBJECT: Farm equipment industry, farming in Boardman,
tractor business, lawn mower business
DATE: July 17, 1986

C: This is an interview with Mr. Elbert Agnew for the Ohio Historical Society and Youngstown State University's Industrial History Project, at 7700 Market Street, in Youngstown, Ohio, on July 17, 1986, at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Agnew, can you tell me a little bit about your background, where you were raised and went to school?

A: In 1824, the Agnew's came to Youngstown and Thomas Agnew bought a piece of property here at 7700 Market Street. It was more or less a large log cabin, and there were several rooms. They also ran it as a hotel for a while. He had a son, Ralph, who was the marrying justice of the Justice of the Peace at Boardman for years. In 1883, they added a large addition onto the house and made it a very large home. At that time, they were farmers and probably milking twenty-five dairy cows and probably had fifty pigs. Everything was done with horses, the plowing and making hay and everything. My father, Frank, was born in 1875 and he continued on with the farm. He started growing potatoes early in the 1930's. That continued on until I was born. I am Elbert Agnew. I was born in 1915 and carried on with the potatoes. At one time, we had twenty acres of apples and seventy-five acres of potatoes. We were growing twenty thousand bushels full of potatoes a year. That more or less ended in 1957 when we sold two hundred acres of property to the Lake Forest Development and Jack Anderson and Earl Bucheit developed the property. They put two hundred acres into a home development. That put me out of the potato business.

Two years later, Boardman needed forty acres for a junior high school. The only place they could find in Boardman was the rear of our farm, so we sold them forty acres. A few years later, Boardman High School had to have ninety acres for a high school. The only place in Boardman that was available was on the Agnew Farm. They told us that if "You don't sell it to us, we will take it by the right of eminent domain," which they have the right to do. "You either sell it at this price or we will take you to court." The only thing we could do was to sell the property. We sold Boardman High School ninety acres for their high school. That has become a really nice building in a nice location.

At that time Glenwood Avenue was not in existence. Hitchcock Road was just a follow-through. They extended Glenwood Avenue down and they extended Hitchcock Road down and made the development a really nice one. Let's get back to business.

When I started to school in Boardman in 1921, I started in an old, wood building, more or less at the present site of Market Street School. After one year, they tore that down and built a brick structure, and then in 1932 they built what was then the high school and a gymnasium. The original people who built the gymnasium in the high school forgot that people came to take games and they didn't build any bleachers. The new addition that was open in 1932 was a real addition. At that time around 1915 and 1920 the only activity in Boardman that drew a lot of people was the Southern Park Race Track. It was on the corner of Market Street and McClurg Road. As a six year old in 1921, I remember automobiles coming down here by the thousands. Sometimes it would take you fifteen minutes to run across Market Street because the traffic was so heavy. The governors and presidents would all come down to this Southern Park Race Track to speak. The first airplane that came into Mahoning County landed in this spot, I assume around 1921.

Getting back to farming, Frank Agnew, my dad, bought the first Fordson Tractor that was ever sold in Mahoning County in 1916 to do away with horses and bring his farming up to date. A little bit later we bought a Farm-All tractor. In 1939 Agnew Farm Equipment was born; they were dealers with the International Harvester Company. At that time, there were a lot of farmers around and we sold manure spreaders and combines and tractors, hay bailers, and hay rakes.

Going back in 1942 I was president of the Potato Grower's Association of Mahoning and Columbiana Counties. There were 175 potato growers left in the whole territory. The dairy farms have gone out. Most of the orchards have gone out.

There is no use having any of them. International Harvester dealer is selling farm equipment when there are no farmers around. We changed from International Harvester to garden tractors and lawn mowers. At the present time in 1986, we are the largest dealer of Bullens Tractors in the state of Ohio. We are the largest seller of Lawn Boy lawn mowers in the state of Ohio. We exchange, repair, and sell all lawn mowers and garden tractors and equipment.

Now, let's get back to when I was a kid back in 1921. The only store that you could buy groceries in was Ruleman's down in Steam Town, which is now known as Woodworth. It is on Western Reserve Road and Market Street. There was a store across from the high school at that time. Even up until 1940, if my wife wanted to buy a spool of thread, she had to go to the uptown section of Youngstown to buy it or any equipment. There were no stores in Boardman at that time. There were no other businesses in Boardman at that time. There was a big mansion on the southwest corner of the center of Boardman. It was the Hitchcock mansion. On the northwest corner of Market Street, there was a lovely home that belonged to the Ewings. On the northeast corner of Boardman Center there was a house torn down to build the first Catholic church in Boardman.

The Catholic church in Boardman was built, I believe, in the late 1930's. There is a different change in the people of Boardman. When I went to high school, there was only one Catholic family in my graduating class of sixty-seven people in 1933. That was the Mastriana family. Now in 1986, over 40% of the people in Boardman are Catholic. There was no manufacturing yet at all in Boardman of any description at that time in the early 1930's.

- C: When did the manufacturing and businesses start to move in?
- A: They moved in during the late 1930's. There were a few of them that moved in. Our equipment building was built around 1940 through 1943. Edward J. DeBartolo, the young contractor, was to build our building. Eddie promised to start construction on our other building at a certain date and he was so busy that he didn't show up. We bought the block and laid up the block and built the building ourselves instead of Eddie DeBartolo doing it. At that time and some time after that, he did start the Boardman Plaza and then later the Southern Park Mall.
- C: Was that about the 1950's?
- A: Yes.

- C: . . . until there has been a steady, but slow commercialization you would say from the 1930's to the 1950's, beginning with one or two businesses and then more and more coming in?
- A: Yes. The Sheet & Tube office building was built in the early 1950's. That was a piece of property that was in Boardman that was all abandoned farms and creek and swamp land. Sheet & Tube came in and built that beautiful building. I planted 1200 trees and all of the grass over there for them and then they built the building.
- C: What other types of businesses were there?
- A: There weren't any. There weren't any type of businesses. Boardman was a bedroom of Youngstown and there were farmers and nothing else. There was no business at all.
- C: You relied on Youngstown?
- A: You relied on Youngstown. The people of Newport all worked in Youngstown. The people of Boardman were farmers.
- C: What happened? When did the farming start to decline in Boardman and why did it decline?
- A: It declined very much during the Depression of 1930 to 1932. In the 1920's to 1928, there were a lot of farmers in Boardman. Market Street from 224 to Western Reserve Road was all farms. In 1932, a lot of the people went broke. A lot of the property sold at sheriff's sale and went out of business. Agnew's remained in business to more or less grow potatoes and that was about it.
- C: You mentioned that you had an apple orchard?
- A: We had around twenty acres of apples. We had to buy spray materials and sprayers and so we sold spray materials, and sprayers, and fertilizers.
- C: There still must have been a farming population in the 1950's and 1960's, maybe not within the immediate Boardman.
- A: Not in the 1950's. I believe there is only the Heberding on Tippecanoe Road who you might call the wealthy dairy farmers and beef growers. They had money to put in. The first milking parlor was on the Heberding Farm in the early 1930's on Tippecanoe Road in Boardman. It was the second milking parlor in the United States. That goes back a long way.

- C: Who were you selling to? Were you selling to the people in Canfield? Who were your customers since Boardman had declined as a farming area?
- A: We sold International Harvester Company in eastern counties in Pennsylvania and in Trumbull County and Columbiana County. The next closest International Harvester dealer to us was in Salem, Ohio. There was nobody north and there was nobody east. We sold an awful lot of International Harvester Tractors in the 1930's and 1940's.
- C: Why were they a big seller?
- A: International Harvester was the best at that time; John Deere was not too popular then. The case didn't have the good equipment. International Harvester was really the only equipment manufactured that kept up with the times at that time. Since, the International Harvester has gone down through poor management. John Deere and the Japanese tractors have almost taken over.
- C: Oh really? When did this start happening?
- A: This started in the 1960's and 1970's. We sold our first Farm-All tractor in 1947 for \$550. We sold the Farm-All M Tractors at that time which were the new forty horsepower line of international tractors for \$900. John Deere and some of the international equipment are now selling for \$140,000. You had to be a big farmer to keep up with the times and make any money.
- C: Would you say that this area like the trend throughout the country is depressed in their farming?
- A: I would say very, very depressed. If you don't have big acreage, you are just out of business. Most of the people at this time kept a small farm in Boardman and worked in the steel mills and other places to get their income for a nice place to live on a farm. They didn't make any money on the farm.
- C: When was this in time?
- A: This was in the 1930's and 1940's.
- C: Let's go into your business. Why did you start selling farm equipment? Why did your father start?
- A: We needed tractors ourselves and if the discount on a Farm-All tractor was 25%, it was a good opportunity for us so we took on the International Harvester Company. They helped us out

a lot. We were farming potatoes, orchards, and so on and we were raised mechanics. They helped us finance to get started and brought us in some tractors. For example, in that time you would buy a manure spreader and it would come in pieces with a thousand nuts and bolts in a box to put it together. It would take two men almost two days to put a manure spreader together. That has changed now, so that they are all prefabbed and you can buy a manure spreader and it might take you a half an hour to put it together. It is the same way with tractors. To put a cultivator on a Farm-All M to cultivate your corn at that time would take probably four hours to put the cultivator on a tractor. At the present time, it slips on it and you can do it in fifteen minutes. Times have changed and tractors have changed and it is the same way with the modern automobile. They are modernized.

C: They are more efficient.

A: They are very more efficient.

C: How big were you when you started? How have you grown until you stopped selling the International Harvester?

A: Our sales in the early 1940's were probably \$100,000 a year. That was on one hundred tractors. Now we are up to \$800,000 just selling lawn mowers and garden equipment. A sixteen horsepower tractor is worth five times as much as a forty horsepower tractor was in 1940.

C: You have had a continued growth?

A: Yes.

C: Even though you have changed your products that you sell? Now you sell Lawn Boy mowers. You don't seem to advertise and how do people come to know you?

A: The Agnew name has gone back to 1824. Everybody in Boardman and almost everybody from Youngstown knows that Agnew name. If you sell three hundred lawn mowers a year and you do that for twenty years, you have an awful lot of these lawn mowers out there. Eventually people get to know the Agnew name and we advertise on radio and in the Vindicator. We advertised in the old Telegram.

C: It is reputation too?

A: Another thing is that we are right here out on Market Street

where an awful lot of people go by. We always have equipment sitting out at Market Street. When I was a kid, Market Street was a two lane road. They expanded it now into this four or five lane highway.

C: During the 1950's, this area of the country was hit with a recession. Did it affect your equipment selling at all?

A: We really didn't start until 1939 until after the Depression was over, but there was a farm right in the middle of our property. It consisted of around eighty acres that went through sheriff's sales that we had to buy, which really put Agnew's in a very bad financial state because we had to buy the farm. When I was a youngster, our big old home on Market Street had a nice front yard of around sixty feet and three really nice pine trees probably three feet in diameter and nine feet high. As they continued to widen Market Street a bit at a time, the last time they widened it, the street was right up to the front porch of the house. There is a little layer of quicksand running through this area and every time a truck would go past, it would shake the old house. We had to dispose of the old house.

C: That was when?

A: That was in the early 1960's.

C: During the war years of World War II, when the economy was generally picked up, how were you doing and the farmers doing in your business?

A: The farming equipment dealers at that time were under the jurisdiction of the federal government and were allotted so many tractors by them. In other words, if we wanted twenty-five tractors to sell, the federal government would come and say--Agnew, you have a possibility of getting fifteen and that is all you are allotted. That went on for several years. You couldn't get anymore because the government said that was your limitation and that is what you could sell.

C: It makes sense because other people were rationing things too.

A: Right. It was a peculiar situation. There were some people in Montana that wanted to buy a bulldozer. The number of tractors and bulldozers that could be sold in Montana was limited, so Agnew Farm Equipment allotted several bulldozers that we had no use for and we sold them to people from Montana that came in here with a truck that hauled them to Montana. The same way with Western Ohio. They wanted some tractors and we were allotted some tractors that we couldn't

sell; they went out to Western Ohio. It was really a confusing mess. That is how the government operated.

C: Were people still able to meet the demand then?

A: Yes.

C: It was just more difficult?

A: Yes.

C: How about in the 1950's when the economy was going and the war was over? Did business pick up or did it stay the same or continue to grow?

A: It picked up getting back to the farming business. In the early 1940's there was a tremendous demand for potatoes in this territory, and the freight rate from Maine and Colorado into here was very high. This section of the country grew the potatoes for potato chips in the United States. The growers around here--as I said there were 175 growers in the 1950's--grew Kenebeck and Sebago potatoes that were shipped all over the United States because they are the best quality potato chips in the country. The other section of the country developed some potatoes that were almost as good as ours. We declined from 175 growers down to 5.

C: When did this decline start? Did it start in the 1950's?

A: It started in the late 1950's.

C: By when was it done?

A: By 1960 they were pretty well weeded out.

C: It was quick?

A: Yes. We had to quit in 1957; that was our last year of growing potatoes.

C: Why couldn't you compete?

A: There were a few houses starting to be built in Boardman, and they raised the taxes so high that you couldn't afford to. I remember that there was a county commissioner by the name of John Palermo, who is a really nice fellow, and I went down to complain about the taxes on our 300 acres. John Palermo shook his fingers in my face and he said, "Agnew we're going to raise the taxes so high on your property that you are going to have to sell." There were no if's, and's, or but's about it, and they did. We had to sell it.

- C: That is unbelievable.
- A: You can't grow corn. You can grow potatoes. You can't grow corn and beans and the other farm produce and milk cows on high-priced property. You just can't do it.
- C: They wanted you to sell because of commercialization?
- A: Yes. The more commercializing they got, the more homes you got and the more taxes they got for Mahoning County. That was what they had insisted on having and that was what they got.
- C: Yes. Look at Boardman today. That is fascinating. You would say then from the 1960's on you started selling to people throughout Ohio?
- A: Yes. There is an interesting situation. I got married in 1941 and I bought a house on Charles Avenue for \$4200. It was a small house and I wanted to build down here on the farm, so my dad sold me an acre with 125 feet of frontage on Market Street for \$500. We went out to the woods and cut timber for the subfloor. The timbers and the sheeting came out of the woods to build this house. I took a soot scraper and dug the basement with the soot scraper and a tractor. This house was built in 1944. There had not been a house built on Market Street for thirty years, and there has not been a house built on Market Street between Youngstown and Woodworth since I built this house. That was 1944. For seventy-five years there has not been a house built on Market Street.
- C: Amazing. During the 1970's, again, farming was depressed. What were the people telling you? What were their problems?
- A: There were just too many farmers in the country. You could grow potatoes in a little better area than you can here for a lot less money. We can grow them. One year we sold a train carload of potatoes for \$1.35 per one hundred. Now you go up to the store and pay \$1.35 for ten pounds. There is a lot of difference.
- C: In part, this might be due to modernization and improvement of equipment. Do you feel that way?
- A: It has somewhat affected it. When I was growing corn here, for example, we used to get thirty-five bushel to the acre and we were doing marvelous. If you don't get one hundred bushel of corn per acre, they just can't make it.
- C: What equipment do you now sell?

- A: The people we sell to mostly have large homes with large lawns and it is too much exercise to do it with a hand mower so they have to buy a garden tractor and riding mower to keep up with it. If there are 45,000 people living in Boardman and you divide that by four, how many homes are in Boardman? Ten thousand homes? Every one of them has to have a mower of some kind so we take care of them.
- C: What is your best seller in mowers?
- A: Lawn Boy.
- C: Those are only push mowers.
- A: Lawn Boys are all for small yards. The Bolens Tractor is the larger one now and you can mow up to thirty acres with one of those tractors. We have Snapper Mowers if you have an acre and a half to mow; we have the Snapper Mowers to handle that. When I was a kid, up until the 1940's the only lawn mower that was available was a reel type mower. It was either pushed or self propelled. The mowers came in really in the 1950's that you could come out and buy a mower, a gasoline-powered mower, rotor mower, to mow your lawn with. We were right there at the start of it and pushed it and we were very successful with it.
- C: Prior to that, it was hand mower with mechanical . . .
- A: It didn't make any difference if your lawn got six or eight inches high because everyone else's did and you didn't have to keep it manicured and mowed like they do now.
- C: What other things do you sell?
- A: We sell some fertilizer. We still handle parts for all of the old International Tractors, the Cubs, A's, B's, the H's, M's, and we still sell sprayer parts. If you have a lawn mower that had Briggs and Stratton Tecumseh puller that is twenty-four years old, we have the parts to fix it. We have around four thousand parts of Lawn Boys. We have three thousand parts for Briggs and Stratton engines and Kohler engines. We probably have four thousand parts for a Bolens Garden Tractor.
- C: How have you purchased these parts or have you had them? To me, it would seem that after a while the company would stop producing parts on an older model.
- A: According to law, they have to keep them for ten years and

they have sold so many of these Bolens Garden Tractors that they keep twenty or twenty-five years. If you have a twenty-five year old tractor, chances are the Agnew Farm Equipment will have the parts for it.

C: That is great. You don't repair, though?

A: Oh yes! We repair all of them. We repair anything that comes in the door. If you have a Sears Roebuck or a Montgomery Ward or a Snapper or any kind, we repair it. We don't repair any of the big tractors anymore. We sold our big trucks that it gives us the excuse not to repair the big, heavy farm tractors anymore.

C: How many people do you have working for you?

A: There are about fourteen of us total. There are the three owners of Agnew Farm Equipment, Inc. The rest of them are hired help. There are four elders in the gang too that help us.

C: What are the ages of your employees?

A: From my age that I work every day, six and a half days a week, and I am 71. My brother is 72. My nephew is 24, and another nephew is 62. We have a couple of boys that are 30 to 35 years old.

C: Who repairs?

A: We all do.

C: Then you are all mechanics?

A: We are all mechanics. We have two girls in the office. They take care of the book work and they are both salesmen also.

C: Tell me about that. How do they go about selling?

A: If you have been in the business long enough, you know what the garden tractors and the lawn mowers are and their features and prices. We have trained the girls. They are really good salesmen. If you come in to buy a Lawn Boy, they ask you what you want and how much you want to spend and they arrive at a price.

C: Do you still have companies coming to you saying will you put my stock in lawn mowers?

A: Oh yes. Agnew has the name and location. Every dealer in the country who handles any piece of equipment wants Agnew

to handle them. We limit ourselves to what we feel are the best products on the market at the best price. For an example, if you want to buy a belt for any garden tractor, there is really only one place in the Mahoning County that you can buy the belt and that is Agnew Farm Equipment. We have 5500 belts on stock for different equipment.

- C: Then you are looking to put a product in price and quality of the product?
- A: Yes.
- C: How have you expanded your products over the years in addition to the Lawn Boys?
- A: At first we started with the International Harvester. That was the only thing we had and Hardy Sprayers. As you know, International has gone defunct and Hardy Sprayers have gone defunct. They are out of business. A lot of the makes that we used to handle have gone out of business. Lawn Boy and Snapper and Bowlens and these other companies have taken over. There is not a manufacturer in 1986 in the United States that makes a good diesel tractor. Every tractor that Agnew Farm Equipment, Penney's, Sears, Montgomery Ward, and any other company has is made in Japan. There are a few of them that come in from Sweden and Italy and Germany. Ninety percent of the tractors, the diesel tractors and the small ones sold now, have to come from Japan. They are just not made in the United States. Forty years ago, we would have never thought of buying anything from Japan. Things have changed.
- C: Why are they better? What have you noticed?
- A: When I was in the 1940's, if you looked at something made in Japan, you knew it was terrible. It was poorly made. Something in 1986, if it has a Japan name on it, you know it is the best made material in the world. I hate to say it because we like to sell American products, but there is not anything in the United States that can compare in our gardening equipment line that will compare with the Japanese line.
- C: Are they priced competitively or are they lower?
- A: They are competitive. The only small diesel manufacturers in the world are not in the United States. If you want to buy a really good trimmer, it is made in Japan. If you want to buy a snow blower with a two cycle engine, it is made in Japan. If you want to buy a really good four cycle engine, Briggs and Stratton or Tecumseh are the best made and they are made in the United States.

- C: You feel that with the equipment the Americans have not been able to compete with the Japanese and that is why they have gone out of business?
- A: They have in the small equipment. The larger equipment is made the best by Americans such as the tractors, diesel tractors, and gasoline powered tractors and larger tractors. America does a better job.
- C: You mentioned that taxes in Boardman were raised on all of the property on Market Street. Could you tell me how it was raised for maybe 300 acres of property?
- A: Let's go back a little further to 1932 when we bought eighty acres from the sheriff's sale. We bought the eighty acres for \$8,000, which had around 800 feet of frontage and as time has gone on the farming was a little tough and there was some land development in Boardman. In 1957 is when I had the meeting with the county commissioner complaining that \$1,000 taxes on 300 acres was prohibitive and we just couldn't pay it. Taxes were so high that we were almost forced to sell and so in 1957 we sold about three-quarters of a mile of frontage on Market Street and \$125 per foot a half a mile deep. This was before Glenwood Avenue was put in. This was the property between Market Street and what is now Glenwood Avenue. Then we had fifty acres between Glenwood Avenue and Hitchcock Road that had a half of a mile frontage. That frontage brought \$50 per foot a quarter of a mile deep. You figure that there was a little over 200 acres sold for \$125 per foot a half of a mile deep. At the present time in 1986, the property is bringing in between \$600 per foot and \$1,000 per foot 600 feet deep. Between the 600 feet and the half of a mile was used for the development of houses, schools, and the like.
- C: That was a big increase.
- A: It is a tremendous increase. In complaining about the taxes now, the taxes on 100 foot of frontage per year 600 feet deep was around \$1,000. That is 100 feet. We were complaining of the taxes on three-quarters of a mile of frontage, \$1,000.
- C: You mentioned that you sold some of your frontage?
- A: Yes. We sold three-quarters of a mile frontage to the land developers.
- C: Did you have to?
- A: More or less we had to. We just couldn't afford to pay the

\$1,000 per year taxes on it. The school property was bought off of Glenwood Avenue. At that time Glenwood Avenue was not through yet when they bought the first property.

C: Getting back to your business, where have your boom times and low times been throughout history?

A: It has been almost even. We just gradually have gone up from opening in 1939 until the present time in 1986. It has expanded maybe 10% a year for that length of time.

C: What do you contribute your growth to?

A: The Agnew people treated people right. I hate to say it, but it was about the only place in the country that people would come to buy International Harvester parts unless you drove another thirty miles.

C: You got into the market because you needed a tractor yourself and for your father?

A: Yes.

C: What would be a typical day when you began working and a typical day now and how has it changed? By a typical day I mean what you do, the problems you face and just running a business?

A: Let's go back to when I was growing potatoes. We were growing seventy-five acres of potatoes and we were the largest employer in Boardman. When we were picking up these potatoes, I would hire a lot of my colored friends from Struthers and Campbell to come out and pick potatoes for me, digging seventy-five acres of potatoes and yielding 25,000 bushel of potatoes. You had to pick these up by hand because there were no harvesters made at that time. It was all hand work. I would employ forty to sixty people for picking up potatoes. The potato digging period in good weather would extend probably around fifteen days from the time we started to the middle of September until the middle of October. I was the largest employer in Boardman for years and years. There wasn't any other person in Boardman employing over ten people at the most.

C: What is a typical day for you at your business now?

A: You mean as my working schedule?

C: Sure, exactly.

A: Being the boss you have to be there first. I get to work

at 8:00 in the morning. We close at 5:00. Usually a lot of people come in just at 5:00 and a lot of times it is 5:30. We open at 8:00 on Saturday and close at 2:00. At 2:00 there are still a lot of people in there, so a lot of times we don't get out until 3:00. We have around fifteen acres of lawn to mow. I mow Eddie DeBartolo's runway that we sold him in the back of our property. We've mowed Eddie DeBartolo's runway and frontage and I'm still mowing 2500 feet of frontage on Market Street. If you leave the center of Boardman and come south, the frontage on all sides of Agnew's is mowed really nice and some of the vacant lots have grown up in weeds, brush, and so on. It looks terrible. Agnew's side of Market Street has always been mowed to look nice.

C: How much do you charge for that?

A: Well, we are mowing 800 feet of frontage for DeBartolo; we are mowing all of his runway, and we do some snow pushing off for the runway for Eddie. We charge Eddie \$1,000 a year. Now you can't keep up equipment and you can't hire labor and do that. Eddie DeBartolo is a friend of mine. I enjoy doing it for him. Eddie enjoys seeing me out there working, and I enjoy doing the work.

C: You give him a price break?

A: Yes.

C: What would a normal be?

A: Probably \$3,000 to do that job. If he would hire somebody else to do it, it would be in the neighborhood of \$3,000.

C: How did you get involved in that?

A: I have done it for years. When we had the three-quarters of a mile frontage on Market Street, it was always mowed and always nice and taken care of. We still like to have our street look nice.

C: Did you approach these different businesses such as DeBartolo or did you offer your services to him?

A: No, I inherited it. We sold the property to Edward DeBartolo. We sold him 800 feet of property where the pine trees are, and I inherited keeping it.

C: Could people call Agnew's up if they had a Market Street location and ask you?

A: We used to. Getting back into the 1940's, Agnew Farm Equipment took care of almost all snow removal in Boardman and did all of the churches and funeral homes and businesses in the 1940's. In the 1950's we still did most of the snow

removal for most of the businesses in Boardman, including the Boardman school system. We more or less have retired from that now. All we do for snow removal is the restaurant we have; it is the Bonanza Restaurant. I ought to mention that in 1969 we made an agreement with the Bonanza Corporation to open a restaurant in Boardman, Ohio. They selected our property. For two years the Bonanza Restaurant was the largest growth income of any store in the United States for two years. Then the Bonanza Restaurant went defunct and became BOF and then it became Alisio's Seafood Restaurant and then we closed it out. The Pier 1 building that we also own between the five Agnew brothers is one of the good Pier 1 stores in their 234 store chain.

- C: What would you have charged in the 1950's for snow removal?
- A: A very reasonable rate. I believe probably \$10 an hour for a forty horsepower tractor with a twelve foot blade. Now these little Jeeps with a five foot blade are charging \$40 an hour.
- C: You still do snow removal for Mr. DeBartolo and other businesses?
- A: Not too much. We do the Boardman Methodist Church.
- C: Do you charge yearly?
- A: I might mention that the Boardman Methodist Church is on the property that Frank Agnew bought for a three gallon jug of maple syrup. The church was built in 1940 for \$40,000. In 1957 we built an expansion on the Boardman Methodist Church for \$55,000. Our new sanctuary was built in . . . The Boardman Methodist Church has more or less been in the Agnew family for years and years.
- C: In closing, do you have any final remarks as being a farmer all of these years, and your experiences and farm equipment?
- A: I have enjoyed life. I have enjoyed farming. I enjoyed growing apples. I went to Ohio State as a horticulture major and I was a county agent out in Massachusetts for three years. I came back here as an expert. We grew good apples. We grew good potatoes. We were doing research work for the Ohio State University on our farm to increase the production of potatoes. That is all gone now and I still enjoy life, repairing lawn mowers, and talking to people. I have been on the Canfield Fair Board for twenty-six years.
- C: Thank you very much. You have been very helpful.

END OF INTERVIEW