

INTERVIEWS WITH STEPHEN WASHKO
March 16 and September 29, 1984

Windber, PA

By Mildred Allen Beik

SW = Stephen Washko (1889-1985)

MB = Millie Beik

MM = Stephen Washko's daughter Mary Margaret Washko

Beginning of the Interview (March 16, 1984)

Beginning of Tape 1 Side A (March 16, 1984)

MB: Do you mind if I take a couple notes?

SW: No

Like if you say a name or something. Now your name is Steve? Your first name is Stephen?

SW: Stephen R. Washko

MB: Stephen R. Washko. And how old are you Mr. Washko?

SW: I am 94 years and three months old

MB: When is your birthday?

SW: December 16. I was born in Shamokin, Pennsylvania.

MB: Shamokin, I don't know where that is

SW: North coal region, near Sunbury, Northumberland County. I was born there and my brother John was born in Baltimore. He's the oldest child and then the rest of us – the other two were born in Shamokin.

MB: How many of you were there together?

SW: Nine children.

MB: Were your parents immigrants then?

SW: Yes, they came from Czechoslovakia. My father came to Baltimore and he worked on a fishing boat, an oyster boat. He was here long enough to raise the money to send back to Europe and brought my mother over here. My brother John was born there and then my parents moved to Shamokin.

MB: Do you know what year your mother or your father came to America?

SW: Let me see now. No, I don't remember. I remember my brother John was born in Baltimore and he was the oldest one and then my sister Anne was born in Shamokin and then my sister Mary was born in Shamokin and I was born in Shamokin and my sister Verna was born in Shamokin and my brother Thomas was born in Shamokin and my brother Joe, Joseph was born in Shamokin and then my brother Andrew was born in Payne Borough at Mine 30 and my brother Charles was born at Mine 30. They are both deceased.

MB: That's too bad, I'm sorry. Boy that's a large family.

SW: That should give you an idea about when they arrived in Baltimore.

MB: So what year were you born? That would have been- if you're 94

SW: 1889

MB: 1889. Oh boy. And then you had these older children who would have come in the 80s at some time. 1880s. Did they ever talk about what the area was like that they came from in Europe?

SW: Well, yes they did.

MB: Can you tell me something about that? Was it an agricultural area?

SW: Not much, but they used to talk about my mother was an orphan and they used to talk about the way they lived and the work they had to do.

MB: What kind of work did they do?

SW: My father lived and did mostly farm work over there. That's how they existed over there. Most of the people in Europe, at that time, some farms, if they wanted to live, they had to farm and raise their own food.

MB: Right

SW: But anyway, my father was a strong man, but he died when he was 50 years old and the reason he died was that he was a miner.

MB: Your father was a miner.

SW: He became a miner when they moved to Shamokin and he was a miner and then my brother John, in those years they had breakers- did you ever hear of a breaker?

MB: What is a breaker, exactly?

SW: A breaker was a- now I'm telling you what I first did see when I was about 6 years old or 7. Breakers, let me set it up step by step, inside, there were chutes and they hired boys between 10 and 12 years of age to pick the rocks and the boney- what they called the boney- as the coal came down the chute, they'd start at the top and by the time they got to the bottom there wouldn't be any boney or rocks down there.

MB: And who did this, your brother or your father?

SW: By brother, John.

MB: Your brother John was doing that.

SW: My father was a miner there and they had collieries and they're real high and they had what they called- they were elevators, but they called them cages would come down and the men would walk in them and go down in the mines. In the hard coal mines the ceiling is high so they could stand up, but in the soft coal mines, the ceilings are low so they're down on their knees all the time. Didn't you know that?

MB: I didn't know the difference. I didn't know that you could stand up in the hard coal.

SW: They could pick it or they had what they call, hammer jacks, jacks. Jacks, I think they used air compressors to make them work and then jacks would go like that to loosen the coal. And the hard coal was hard to get. In there the men could walk around, but they used mules in the mines at that time to haul time coal out through this cage and, of course, they would haul the coal up, but the mules always stayed down there. The mules lived down there.

MB: They never saw any sunlight I guess.

SW: They'd haul it up real high, then they'd dump it down the chute.

MB: So did your father work in the mines all his life or did he do other things after?

SW: No, he didn't work there all his life, he worked for Thomas Meyer, they had a wholesale liquor store and my father worked there and he worked in the bottling plant at that time. That's where they made temperance. They didn't call it soda and they didn't call it pop, it was called temperance. They had different flavors and I used to like to take his lunch there because when I got there I always got a bottle of temperance and then they had green bottles and there's an automatic closure, cap, there and when they were bottling, the machine would fill that up and then fit it with a seal and when he handed me a bottle, all you had to do was go like that and push it down, the rubber part, and it would fizz. It would shoot. If it was cold, it would do that. That's where he was for a long time and then I remember he worked in the mines at Shamokin and it wasn't too far from where we lived. He could walk probably a couple blocks.

MM: And Dad, don't forget, before that, where did he work? Down in Baltimore. Did you tell her that?

SW: Yeah

MB: Yeah, he did. When your father came, did he speak English? So many people didn't in those times. Did he know any English when he came to America the first time?

SW: Maybe, yeah.

MB: Did he speak Slovak or Hungarian or what?

SW: He would speak Slovak and Polish because if you can speak Polish you can speak Slavish.

MB: Oh, ok.

SW: But anyway.

MB: What are in Europe? I know it's Czechoslovakia now, but do you know any towns that they might have come from. Do you know the names of the towns or the regions?

SW: Yes, remember we worked on that?

MM: Yes, I have that somewhere, I can't remember where I put that.

MB: It would be nice if you could find that. Did you father get to go to school in Europe before he came to America? Did he have any schooling in Europe at all?

SW: I don't remember.

MB: Did your mother have any schooling at all? You don't know.

SW: I don't know.

MB: I just wondered. I was just curious.

SW: Anyway, my father was, he always said he was a smart man because he used to write letters to his relatives and friends.

MB: In Europe?

SW: Yeah, he had an early edition of the typewriter.

MB: Oh, yeah?

SW: He used that for a long time, it took longer than to write, but there they are.

MB: He knew how to do those things.

SW: So he must have gone to school.

MB: Yeah, if he could read and write because some people couldn't when they came.

SW: Oh yes.

MB: Do you know, did he ever talk about why he came when he came? What had he heard of America or had he come with relatives? I mean, with other people from the area, region in Europe?

SW: It seems that most people who came from there, when they would arrive in New York, Ellis Island I believe that was, that most made an agreement with the Berwind-White Coal Corporation that they needed miners and they would send many of them to Windber, Scalp Level and Windber. That's right. At that time, it was always, Scalp Level, see?

MB: Windber didn't exist. There's always a start.

SW: Yes, and then to Windber, too.

MB: But when your family came, did they know anyone in Baltimore when they came? Or where there people from the area? You don't know?

SW: Not until they lived in Shamokin.

MB: I see, there were relatives there.

SW: There were relatives there.

MB: Did they ever plan on going back to Europe? Did they ever think of that? Some people came to buy land in Europe. They were going to make a fortune. They thought they could make a fortune easily in American and then go back and buy land.

MM: We saw that- his mother's certificate

MB: If I could get a good map maybe.

MM: Didn't I look for that on the map?

SW: Yeah sure, sure.

MM: We went through that. We found it. I think we found it.

MB: Is this the Godparents certificate? Her baptismal certificate?

MM: This is her – what certificate is this for your mother? This is for your mother, what certificate is it?

MB: Is that baptism? Looks like – isn't "caratilist" Godmother? I think it is.

SW: This is a birth certificate.

MB: Oh, birth certificate. Oh, I see. Ok. I just wondered, I wasn't sure.

SW: There it is.

MM: Mother's birth certificate is in there with it.

MB: How nice.

MM: We have the old pictures.

MB: Do you? Do you have a picture? Can I see it? Now that's really nice, you really should preserve it.

MM: We had a huge one made from that.

MB: That's nice.

MM: This must have been a wedding picture. Mother and father.

MB: Oh, that's how you spell Shamokin. I was trying to spell it and I have it all wrong.

MM: Now that was his sister's wedding. You might have known the Kajursky's in Scalp Level.

MB: I don't, my father probably would have.

MM: That was his sister who married a Kajursky. They're descendants are still here.

SW: But notice the dress my father has, look at that! What great trousers. Look at that. They're well dressed.

MB: Right, they certainly are.

SW: Look at that kerchief she has on, right there, you see that?

MB: Uh, huh. That is just beautiful, that really is. That's nice. So you had some relatives in Shamokin? Who were your relatives in Shamokin?

SW: In Shamokin we had, let's see, a fellow by the name of Getsik, Michael Jurik, Michael Jurik came to Windber then and then there was a John Pollock.

MB: Are these aunts and uncles of yours then? Cousins?

SW: My father had a sister and she lived in Shamokin and the man she married about that time they were opening up Indian Territory and he planned to go there because he knew that he'd get a good job and the name was Landon. She met a man by the name of Landon.

MB: I see. And she married him.

SW: Landon and they had a number of children, but they went to what is Oklahoma now. It was Indian Territory then. He had a sister and she lived – he died, they had a service there, but he

died. They had a son named Stephen and Mary, Mary lived for many years. I'd say she died only 5 years ago. My mother's sister, my mother had a sister when we lived in Payne Borough, her sister was going to visit her and she lived in- what was the name of the place we went?

MM: Canonsburg.

SW: Canonsburg, but she used to come to Payne Borough to visit my mother. I met her down there once in a while, but when she came, she'd stay for a long time, but anyway, then after my mother died we went to visit her in Canonsburg and then she died not long after. Now those Jurik's they had a number of children.

MM: They're all dead.

SW: The father's name was Michael and they had a son named Michael and they had a daughter named Verna and then Elizabeth and Anna. Anna came to live with us for a number of years.

MB: Did your parents ever keep any boarders in Shamokin?

SW: We didn't keep any boarders in Shamokin. Maybe after we were here and the children broke up a bit, you know, scattered.

MB: When did you come to Windber? When did your family come to Windber, then Mr. Washko?

SW: That's another story. So anyway, Anna she lived with us.

MM: She was Anna Kajusky, Daddy, she married a Jurik.

SW: That's right.

MB: So you had a lot of relatives in your area. Most people did. They didn't just come by themselves and not have other family members around, so you had a lot of family.

SW: Now I want to tell you, do you want to know how we got to Windber?

MB: Yeah, sure!

SW: Well, anyway, when we arrived in Payne Borough on the train at 7:00 April 30, 1900.

MB: That's amazing.

SW: We walked down- was there a railway station when you lived at 40?

MB: No.

SW: The train used to pull in there at 7:00. The train came from South Park. They'd change at South Park and they came in on the branch to Windber and that's where they shipped all the coal

from that branch, to South Park. And then from there they'd break it up, but anyway, we came and we came down and I thought, well, I'm going to like it, it's nice here. Well, there were trees around, it smelled good and so forth. So about the next day or so I had to look around, I was a boy then about 10 years of age.

MB: Oh, that's how old you were then.

SW: Yeah, I heard a noise so I went up and it was the drugstore right on the corner. So you remember the drugstore right on the corner?

MB: At Scalp Level? When you come around the bend?

SW: Yeah.

MB: Yeah, I do remember that. That I remember.

SW: The drugstore was right on the corner when coming down the hill. The line was right below the drugstore- Cambria County and Somerset County.

MB: Right.

SW: So anyway, there's a drugstore there and I heard this noise so I went up and I looked and when my mother sent me to the drugstore in Shamokin she'd give me a dime to buy a dime of James' Headache Powder and when I'd come out, I stop and sit down and listen and later I'd find out that's what they called the soda fountain. And later there was a big globe like that and there was a mermaid inside of it and I thought it was sand that made that noise because it was a globe and it was glass and it came out and so I had a listen and I walked out and I presumed it was Mr. Taylor and I said – they called him Doc Taylor- he was H. Lynn Taylor.

MB: And who was he exactly, because I don't know.

SW: He was a druggist.

MB: He was the druggist? I see.

SW: So he sat down and I sat down and he started asking me questions- You're new here? Yes, yes. He asked me about the family and so forth and after he said I'm looking for a boy to pedal and deliver newspapers, but since you're new here it will be all new to you, but it won't take long to find out because houses are numbered and so forth. So he said I'd like to have you come and do newspapers for me. Would you like to do that and I said sure, but I have to ask my parents first. So I asked my parents. I knew they'd say yes just to get me out of the house, so I took the job. So I worked there doing that, we to Payne Borough School.

MB: Had you gone to school in Shamokin before?

SW: Oh yes.

MB: How many grades would you have gone?

SW: 4. It went up to 4th grade in Shamokin.

MB: So then you moved. Then you went to Payne Borough School? Tell me about that.

SW: Well, that was 1900. I think that's the same year it was built. They put me in second grade. I was only there a short while, maybe a day or two and I was done with it. Third grade, I stayed there that time and then the next year on to 4th grade. Each year I'd move over.

MB: How long did you go to school then, Mr. Washko?

SW: Well, anyway in 1900 in the meantime Mr. Taylor sold the drugstore and came to Windber and opened a drugstore in 1903.

MB: That's fantastic that you remember these things.

SW: So I kept on doing work for that drugstore and the store was bought by a man of the name Hall and his wife.

MB: The one in Scalp was bought by somebody named Hall?

SW: It was sold.

MB: I see. Where were you living then?

SW: We were still living in Payne Borough, 30.

MB: Where those new houses then?

SW: Where?

MB: In Mine 30.

SW: Oh, yes.

MB: Hadn't they just been built then if you came in 1900?

SW: They're all double houses- double houses below the mine. Anyway, in 1905 the telephone rang and it was Mr. Taylor. He said, well, Stephen I need a boy, something like that, would you like to come up here. I said sure! So I went up there in 1905. And in those days all the bottles, 8oz, 16oz chemicals going down- all had to be cleaned. You started at the top and when you got through with those then you had to go back in the laboratory and wash bottles. Back in those days panel bottles were very popular, very thin, very tall. They used those regular bottles for a prescription for some medicine they prescribed but I had to do that. Then we had what was made out of saturated magnesia, doctors used to recommend that, to drink the contents. Anyway we made that. I learned right there.

MB: So you were learning about all these medicines and drugs – sort of apprenticing.

SW: Yeah, and while I was there I learned how to make good lemon flavor. You had to grate lemons in the grater and then after they're grated put some sugar in there and then macerate it with the pestle.

MB: Sounds good.

SW: And then cut the lemons in half and squeeze them, put the juice right in there and then later on – you know, we had glass funnels then, about 6 sizes. We'd put gauze in there and then pour that mixture in there and then I would finish it by filling it with rock candy syrup- a full gallon. Now that was all ready. If you put 2 oz of that into a soda glass, soda, you got a 5 cent glass of lemon soda. It was just a nickel.

MB: It sounds good.

SW: Just a nickel.

MB: Sounds good.

SW: For a 10oz glass. Add phosphate and shake it in to make a lemon phosphate. It was very popular. It was our biggest seller- any drugstore that I ever worked in. So then I was working there in 1906 there was a big strike.

MB: I want you to tell me what you know about that.

SW: A big strike. And

MB: So you would have been 16. What do you remember about that?

SW: In 1906 in Windber there was a policeman named Mac McMullen and most children were afraid of him. If you got him, you'd say you'd call back. Well, anyway, the strike was going on and he liked to know what was going on and so the meeting was held in Payne Borough downtown where the baseball field was. Do you remember where the baseball field used to be in Payne Borough?

MB: I think so. At least I know it was once one.

SW: By the center of the town, Jefferson Avenue ran by there. And so he went down there to see what was going on to spy there and of course

End of Tape 1 Side A

Beginning of Tape 1 Side B (March 16, 1984)

SW: They chased him and he ran and he ran and went into a house on 8th Street and the lady gave him a run and they knew where it he was, so he got out of there and he went down and locked himself in the jail. Do you know where the jail used to be in Windber?

MB: Uh huh.

SW: Right on the corner in the middle of town.

MB: Ok.

SW: Windber Fire Company and it was at the end of it. So they chased him and there were from 4-6 guards standing in the doorway and they started to throw bricks and rocks and these guards fired. First they fired, no hits, then they fired and suddenly when they dispersed there were a number of people killed. So anyway, while this was going on there was a man, Delaney, Berwind- White architect who spied him near the drugstore, so there's a livery stable back behind the drugstore so he ran back in there and when he got back in there they had him cornered because when he looked out the window of the drugstore it was a dead end, couldn't go anywhere, so he had to get out of there so there was telephone pole and he was standing there and somehow or another there was a squire standing next to the drugstore and he was out there, you know, he was a squire and there was a miner all ready with a brick to throw that brick and just then the squire hit him and knocked him down and Mr. Delaney got away. He ran over, got into the Lorry building and so they picked him up and took him to the hospital and that's how they got him out to the hospital. Of course, then those people were killed. The town quieted down, but by that time.

MB: They lost the strike I'm sure.

SW: We had leave 30 because the strike was organized in what we called the hot iron building, down here on Grant Avenue. So my brother happened to be seen coming out of there so they reported him and they discharged. We had to leave.

MB: Had your father been mining since he came in 1900?

SW: Oh yes.

MB: And your brother, the older brother named John.

SW: So they saw him coming out of this so we had to move down there.

MB: The company owned the house so they could say you just had to get out.

SW: So we moved down to Jackson Avenue and that's where we lived.

MB: Was that a private house then? There were a few private houses, weren't there? I always get confused about which ones were because there were so many changes, I can't keep track sometimes.

SW: So, we went down there and then that was 1906. 1907 I decided that I was ready to go to the city, so anyway I didn't decide because one day the phone rang and it was Mr. Taylor again.

MB: Mr. Taylor enters your life every now and then.

SW: He said, I have a job for you. Do you want to come down? I said I have to find out. So I asked my parents, they said yes. So I went to Pittsburgh.

MB: When did you leave school Mr. Washko, how long did you go to school, what grade?

SW: It must have been 1905. I know I had 16 counts- I had to have 16 counts to enter University of Pittsburgh Pharmacy program.

MB: Oh, I see, so you went to school through 1905.

SW: Yes. 1905.

MB: I just wondered how old. So tell me about what you did then.

SW: I went to Pittsburgh and I went out on the train. That was in April again. That was in April. Anyway, I went to Pittsburgh on the train, not recently. I got to the depot and got off and had directions to catch a streetcar and went down Penn Avenue, corner of 6th street. Get out there and there's a drugstore right on the corner. He said if you're not sure and there's a policeman, you ask the policeman. He told me the name of the drugstore, PC Shilling and Company. He said, you go there. So I went there and Mr. Taylor was there and I got the job.

MB: So you said something about going to some pharmacy school or something in Pittsburgh. What happened?

SW: So that was my plan. Anyway, I worked there and I worked from 12:00 to 7 at night, night shift. Then on the Friday, this is in the fall, now, around October, I had a terrible pain. So I stuck it out until 7:00, took something I thought would help me out. I was living on Art Street on the North Side, so I had to cross the 6th Street Bridge. So I would always walk 6th Street and that was on Friday or Saturday morning and then on Sunday I only drank water, still had the pain. Monday morning I got up early in the morning, I dressed and put everything in my suitcase and so I went down the street and around the corner to a Dr. Carter – a novice. I rang the bell and he came in and I said my back was bothering me and he examined me and he said I'm going to take you to the hospital now. So he took my history, my home address and so forth and he said he'd take me out there and he did, so they operated on me that morning when I arrived there he ordered that they put me in the bathtub and wash me, got me prepared and they operated on me. My appendix was broken. And most people die.

MB: In those days- was not an easy operation, still isn't.

SW: But for several days my temperature was 104, 105 but I had one sister who lived in Wildberding, Westinghouse Airbrake, you've heard of them.

MB: Uh huh.

SW: A lot of people lived and worked down there.

MB: So you had your appendicitis operation, I guess.

SW: So I was there for a long time. I was, as I said a while ago, most people die when their appendix was broken so the nurses had preserved it for me and put it in alcohol or formaldehyde and the nurse, Miss Gregs and Miss Thorwat and of course I had to come home and I sent a note to her.

MB: You have a great memory if you can remember your nurses' names. That's wonderful.

SW: See, when they gave my sister Mary in Wilberding, she used to come over about every other day.

MB: So did you work in this drugstore then in Pittsburgh after you recovered.

SW: I couldn't work. They discharged me and I went to the drugstore and they were surprised to see me and they owed me some money from my work. I went down to Horns. I had some money left so I bought myself a suit.

MB: Did you? Was that your first suit?

SW: When I first come home, stepped off the streetcar and there was my father right there. Right there. The streetcar stopped where the barbershop used to be. Remember? Mine House was just across the street.

MB: I've seen pictures of it. I know where it is.

SW: So he was on his way to the post office, so I walked with him and they had given me some medication and some gauze bandages. My mother had to dress my incision and my incision was very very large. I've been paying for it, the surgeon told me last year at the hospital. So anyway, while I was home, my old boss came he had heard about what happened and he wanted me to work down at the Taylor drugstore, he said what are your plans? And I said, I'm not sure. I'm broke now. I want to work and save that money to go back this year, 1907. So, anyway, I went to work for him and I worked there, I wanted to come back home for the holidays, see during the holidays you could take up house and I made a lot of friends.

MB: Where was this that you were working?

SW: Mr. Householder.

MB: Uh huh. And what were you doing?

SW: The drugstore, do you remember Hardy's shoe store?

MB: No, I'm sorry. I don't.

SW: Do you know any places down in Windber?

MB: Yeah.

SW: Do you know that telephone company, big building? Right next to it is a big frame building. One houses the shoe store and the other was the drugstore. Chrissman came from Philipsburg and settled it in 1887.

MB: Oh wow.

SW: They bought that building and the stairway was the demarcation, that's- all the property on the left side belonged to Mr. Chrissman and Mr. Hardy. They came here at the right time because they were both successful. So I worked in there and then I went back, during the holidays and then I finally went to Pittsburgh and I went there and you know, I had to work down there too. And go to school so I could work in the evenings and I could work Saturdays and Sundays. So I did. I had to have a job to go to college. It was a man named O'Donnell. H.E. O'Donnell in Homestead. You're heard of Homestead?

MB: Yeah, I've heard of Homestead.

SW: There were steelworks there. He said I need a junior.

MB: Partner?

SW: Student.

MB: Oh, I see.

SW: So he gave me the job and it was hard to go and work there, it was a streetcar ride and when I came out I still had to go on, so after I rode the streetcar, it would be about 15 minutes from there to Homestead. I had to leave at certain times, I liked it there. Then, in March, my brother Thomas was staying in the mine.

MB: In Windber?

SW: And he was with a brother-in-law of mine, his name was Jursky and he married my sister Ann. My father was working in the mine and so was my brother John. You had to work hard, it was hard work with those jackhammers so they took him in for a couple days and one day the rock face fell while he was down there and just fell on his head and killed him.

MB: Who got killed?

SW: My brother Thomas.

MB: Your brother Thomas, oh for heaven sakes. In Windber mines? In the mines in Windber.

SW: 30 Mine.

MB: Mine 30.

SW: Mine 30 was the biggest mine, you know.

MB: Oh, yeah. It was then.

SW: They used to fill 100 steel cars a day. I counted them. Before I got mixed up in all this other stuff and I was still at the drugstore. My father used to tell me, the miners knew. So then when I went back to Homestead I told Mr. O'Donnell I'm sorry, but I have to go because I missed so much. He comes to be me because he wanted me to stay because I made a lot of friends, I said Mr. O'Donnell I'll have to work so hard, I've lost some time, I'm missing classes and I've got to go out of business, I've got to get through. That's what I've done. I went back, I didn't work anywhere on Saturday or Sunday, I just studied.

MB: Where did you go to school exactly?

SW: The University of Pittsburgh.

MB: They had a pharmacy branch?

SW: That's right. At that time it was called the University of Pittsburgh Pharmacy School and that school at that time was up on what we called The Bluff. Where Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh, do you know where that is?

MB: Uh huh.

SW: Right above there on the corner. Bluff and Pride Street and I used to use the student ticket for \$5 to ride from Wilmerding to Pittsburgh- \$5 a month. I was traveling. I wasn't allowed to ride on the special passage trains. I would get dressed decent and I finally graduated in June 1910. I would be 21 the following December.

MB: So you were still 20 when you graduated. That's young. That's good.

SW: So anyway, I came back and I started working for Mr. Householder with my degree and I passed the board and I made \$90 a month. I said Mr. Householder, that's not enough. I understand that the pharmacy students in the city are getting close to \$125 a month and I need paid more than \$90. So he thought about it and then Dr. Shank. Do you remember Dr. Shank?

MB: Yes, I remember Dr. Shank, down Scalp, when he was coming down here he'd always stop to see me, it was always nice to see me. Didn't know why, so anyway in the meantime that

drugstore was opening in the county by the name of Clancy Shaffer. Changed the Keystone Pharmacy and Dr. Shank owned half of it and he had the other half. So Dr. Shank came to me and he said Steve he said, I have a proposition for you, I think it's good one. He said we'll give you \$50 more than you're making now and we'll also share, give you a quarter interest in the drug company. So it was a good deal. So anyway, I took it. So this time Mr. Shaffer was killed in 1915 and from then on I was the boss. I ran it until January 1, 1956.

MB: Wow. I remember that store, that was here when I was young.

SW: We had about 16 employees. We had 2 shifts. Especially the girls, we had a waiting list everybody wanted to work at Shaffer drugstore.

MB: Right

SW: Before I left there, a young telephone operator by the name of Mary Conroy brought a friend with her this one night to the drugstore when I worked. Close to when I closed at 10:00. I saw the streetcar and so I walked up and she brought this friend and introduced to me her name was Madeline McDonald. Her parents, in the meantime, came from Pittsburgh and bought the Mine House from a man by the name of A. R. Hounton, he was a very prominent, big coal operator. He thought the best place for Miss McDonald was to go to Mine House to work for his help. So we went there. Anyway, that's where I met Madeline McDonald and sometime eventually we became engaged. I was still working at the drugstore, down Shaffer Drugstore. We got married then.

MB: When did you get married?

SW: October 16

MB: What year?

SW: That must have been –

MM: 1912

MB: 1912, wow. Did you have a wedding, Mr. Washko?

SW: Oh, yeah.

MB: What kind of wedding did you have?

SW: The wedding was in Pittsburgh at her parents' home. We were married in St. Philip's church. The priest's name was Fr. Kelly.

MB: Was it a Roman Catholic Church then?

SW: Oh, yeah.

MB: Was that what your parents were, Roman Catholic? Did they go to church in Windber or Scalp somewhere?

SW: When my folks came here there was only one church- where it is now, St. John's.

MB: It wasn't the same one that's there now, was it? Wasn't it an older one?

SW: The church was remodeled. It was a frame church.

MB: I guess everyone went there at one time who was Catholic.

SW: When I was a boy, that's where we went to mass, my first communion. A fellow named Patrick Hannigan and I, by the way, I saw in the paper, his name, someone in the family died.

MM: Just in the past 10 days.

SW: So anyway he and I went there for catechism and stuff like that. So anyway we got married and somewhere about October. It was October 16 wasn't it? Josie's birthday?

MM: Josie's birthday was October 4, 1913.

MB: Your first child.

SW: You'd think I'd know better.

MB: October 4, 1913.

SW: It was a year later then Stephen was born and then 2 years later, and all this time before the stork arrived Madeline had Aunt Molly from Crafton, she'd come up and help her nurse and then 2 years later Aunt Molly was there and she was suffering. She called Madeline upstairs and when she come down 2 steps from the landing to the kitchen. She missed one of those steps and the stork arrived the next day the string was tied around her neck, she was dead. And then a couple years later Mary Margaret came.

MB: Is that you?

MM: That's me.

MB: I didn't know your first name.

SW: August the 1st.

MB: I think he's pretty good at these dates and memories. Do you have any more after her?

SW: No, that's all.

MB: So there would have been 3, I guess.

MM: There were 4, and Stephen died in 1919 from meningitis.

MB: Oh dear. So did you have a different house the? You didn't live with your parents when you got married, I assume. Did you live with your parents when you got married? Some families did do that.

SW: No.

MB: Where did you live when you got married, Mr. Washko.

SW: When I was working and we were engaged we had an idea of when we'd be married and then a man named Timothy Varner had a lumberyard down here and one day he came into the drugstore and he said to me, hey Steve, I understand that you're going to be married and I said, I hope so. And he said, well I have an idea, well he said, I'm building a house up there, a little house and I plan to live on the one side and I wonder if I could rent the other side to you. I said that depends on how much the rent would be. He said it would be \$15 and that house still stands up there.

MB: Did you live in that a long time then?

SW: For 7 years.

MM: Let's see, you were married in 1912 and you lived there until 1921.

SW: This house was built in 1921.

MB: And then you moved right to this house, then? And you've been here since 1921.

SW: 1921.

MB: It's a nice house.

SW: And we moved in this is what you call a Curtis house a Curtis home. Curtis you've seen the ads in Good Housekeeping.

MB: I don't really know, but I could always look for it.

SW: The toughest time in my life was during The Depression.

MB: Oh yeah.

SW: People didn't have any money when they were sick and they would charge it. They just charged too much. Terrible. When they got better, some paid and some didn't. Just zeroed it off. It was the toughest time in my life.

MB: You couldn't make a go of the business if the mines weren't working and they couldn't pay.

SW: I had a loan from the bank to finance it. This was a beautiful home at the time.

MB: It's beautiful now! Not just then.

SW: This time we always made due with the necessary. She'll tell you.

MM: The Depression was much worse than this. Much more terrible than it is now.

MB: There wasn't any help.

MM: There was no help for people. No help.

MB: That was the worst time of all for living in Windber -that period of time in the Depression. Could you tell me, could you describe what Windber was like in those early years? Not many people can do that for me. What was it like, how would you describe it, if you were talking to somebody who had never seen Windber or any mining town in those early years? How would you describe it? Could you tell me how you would describe it?

SW: I would describe it as a new town.

MB: New town.

SW: People were moving in.

MB: Was it a boomtown sort of atmosphere? Because this is hard to imagine today.

SW: It was when Windber was President of the Metropolitan Coal Company, coal town, new business, you know there's drugstores, Chrissman was first, George R.S. Miller was, too and Shaffer Drug Company and then there was the Palace Hotel and then Joseph Betts and Scalp Level had George Faust. You know George Faust.

MB: Uh huh. Yeah

SW: He had a drugstore down there. By the way, he went to Pitt. When I came out he went in.

MM: Tell her about how many other businesses there were, too.

SW: Oh yes, hotels, lots of hotels and Eureka Stores, 5&10s, we had Grant's.

MM: How about those different food stores, specialty stores.

SW: two or three stores were by the Brickers. He had a racket store down on the corner where there's a pizza place now.

End of Tape 1 Side B

Beginning of Tape 2 Side A (March 16, 1984)

MB: Not many people can remember this kind of description from real life.

SW: Brickers and Atkinson's Restaurant. What else, Tommy's restaurant and then there was.

MM: Towers

SW: The Towers hotel, that's where, we came back from the honeymoon that's where we stayed- about two or three days. Until we could set up housekeeping.

MB: The Midway? Had that existed? They called it the Midway.

SW: That was the busiest place, the Midway. At that time at the corner was a newsstand, owned by a man named McKinney and then there's a Judol's the tailors next and then there was Metz brothers tailor shop and up further was Bartos store.

MM: That's the one on the corner where the electric store is.

SW: And the hotels I mentioned. There was at that time, there was the Easter hotel and then uptown on the corner was the Palace Hotel and up further was Turner's Hotel and then up across the street was Ben Craig's hotel. That was in that story. Ben Craig was in that story in that Weekender.

MM: Richland Weekender.

SW: And then right about then was Murphy's Hotel.

MB: There were a lot of things then. It was really booming.

SW: Later on there was a hotel, it was called something, it was called the Midway hotel, halfway hotel between Payne Borough and Dan Cole had that and then he sold it and bought the opera house.

MB: That was thriving I guess, too.

SW: It was a rich family and then the Arcadia Theatre was built. We were stockholders. We had stock in it, it was a nice building.

MB: What kind of ethnic groups were there in Windber in the early days, what kinds of people came?

SW: Well, I'd say most of them were Slovaks, Polish, Welsh, English, Hungarian- there weren't - I couldn't tell you if there was one Italian family there were 30, they were all out at the east end. Most lived out that way.

MB: Did most tend to live where their own nationalities were? Like Hungarians together and Slovaks together?

SW: Sure, sure. 35 opened up there were a lot of Hungarian people.

MB: Goodness, how did all these groups of people get along with one another then- in the earliest days that you remember? Because later I know a little bit more about.

SW: Well, especially at weddings they used to get bad. I watched a man swing a whiskey bottle at another man's head. In fact I was a witness at one time. I had to go to Somerset.

MB: So were fights frequent, do you think?

SW: Just at weddings. Some of those houses at 30 had more than 2 boarders. We only had 2 boarders and they were always there when the children were gone. One of them was – he moved to 42- do you remember?

MM: 42? I don't know who you're thinking of

SW: Rosnik.

MB: Those were you boarders?

MM: The Rosnik's lived around here.

SW: And he played the violin. When he got married he got the house across from us at 30. And then things started to pick up in Cambria City and Central City.

MB: A lot of people moved around a lot I guess, too in those days.

MM: Moved to Johnstown.

MB: So, how did most people hear about coming to Windber? How did they know?

SW: It must have been advertised, passed out by relatives, people who came here, that's how it happened. Just like Washko's came here. They came from Shamokin, where we were living.

MB: How had your family heard about Windber? From somebody who was already here? Had heard about someone?

SW: It just takes one family to know.

MB: That's true. Passed the word through letters. I've heard from others that in the earliest days the miners were paid in silver and gold.

SW: Oh, that's right.

MB: Do you remember that?

SW: Oh yes, that's right.

MB: How long did that go on? When did that stop and they paid in paper?

SW: That kept up until the gold standard was called off. When I was sent to the bank, I was sent with all change and that purse bag was called Windber National Bank they called it the first time I think. They started it down the corner with the 8 stories and then Citizens Bank started in 1903. That I know because I went there fairly often.

MB: They had a Berwind bank then, not the Citizens.

SW: They built the bank and then they had the Berwind Trust Company. That's what we called it.

MB: That was the Berwind bank?

SW: That was the Berwind bank.

MB: Who ran the other one then? Because I always thought that the Berwinds were just that powerful. This was run by the Citizens. Mr. Hardy the shoe man and then Mr. Bently he hardware man and just some more

MM: Mr. Snyder

SW: Mr. Snyder worked at the bank. The president of this bank down here. Wade Snyder. He had family here.

MM: Did he just work there or was he in charge of bank operations? Was he president or chief teller? Wasn't he more like chief teller than president?

SW: Yeah, the president at that time I think was some big stockholder. It might been one of the Beeres

MB: What were all these farmers, like the Weavers and such who lived in Scalp, what did they think when, how do you think they felt when Windber was founded? You know, if you were going to like found a new town and open it up and bring all these.

SW: They came and paid at the drugstore when I was there and then they came to Windber to get their drugs.

MB: What about Windber, what did they think? Do you have any concept? Because they were so long here before.

SW: Well, you see, Berwind just bought up most of their lands around here and some didn't like it very much because they felt cheated.

MB: I guess they had some disputes over land rights.

SW: It was the Weavers and the Shaffers and the Berkeys, what were the other ones?

MB: The other thing that confuses me is that with all these stores and that, my impression was that the company store was pretty powerful.

SW: They had to do that.

MB: They had to deal there, how did some of these other smaller places stay in business, I don't quite understand that.

SW: A lot of people didn't work in the mines.

MB: So trade didn't depend on just the miners then, they had other people. I've always wondered that.

SW: There were a lot of stores and a lot of people working in them, in these stores and they had families.

MB: I see, ok, goodness. Do you remember the flu epidemic?

SW: Yes, I was in business.

MB: What do you remember about that?

SW: People just dropped.

MM: Didn't they close the town? As I recall, mother had been to Pittsburgh and she had just gotten back and they closed the whole place down. You couldn't get in or out.

SW: The government recommended it. And a salt and iodine solution to be sprayed in the throat. Fortunately we had a good number of atomizers at the time and we had the iodine and we had the other ingredients.

MB: You must have been busy. Did anyone in your family get sick?

SW: No

MB: They didn't get the flue.

SW: No, but we had friends that died. There was a time the drugstore was closed up, open just certain hours.

MB: Was that 1918?

MM: 1918-1919 I believe. Just at the end of World War I. Dad, how long was the town closed down? How did that happen? I mean, they closed the town down-

SW: Well, business were closed down, closed up. Less traffic for people to cross each other.

MB: Yeah, I've heard that was really, really bad. I guess there might have been some other epidemics, but that was the big one.

MM: That was the very devastating one.

SW: That was the big one.

MB: So do you remember anything else about that that stands out at all? About the flu epidemic that stands out?

SW: Well, I remember people died. Suddenly. Even the people that carried them out and buried them, some of those people died. We were fortunate.

MB: Do you remember much about the strike of 1922?

SW: I don't know much about that because that was the miners. I remember that they used to have at the 4th of July a big holiday up at the park, dances and fireworks but there wasn't any that year.

MB: It didn't affect your business very much one way or another that there was a strike because I guess a lot of people left the town.

SW: Money gets scarce.

MB: I've heard that there were some people living in tents in the area, too because they were now allowed to live in the company houses or evicted, too.

SW: I don't remember the tents, all I remember is that morning, the morning after that riot.

MM: Now, is the riot back in 1906?

SW: Yeah, I know that when I came down around the corner, there was a livery stable behind the drug store and these state police going up and down the avenue, that's where they parked their horses in the livery stable right behind there.

MB: But you don't remember much about 1922 at all? Was your father working in the mines yet?

MM: His father died in 1912.

SW: In May. Sometime in May, I don't know the exact date.

MB: I guess I didn't know that.

SW: He was 50 years old when he died. It was in May.

MB: Yeah, you said he was 50, but I didn't know when that would have been. So you don't remember anything else about that time.

SW: No.

MB: Ok, I just wondered.

MM: Maybe she'd like to know something about the school when you went to school over here.

MB: Sure.

MM: What kind of subjects did you have over here?

SW: It's what they had in Everett. Two boys. One was Floyd Shaffer and I we were outstanding students in mental arithmetic. We could write well.

MM: Mental arithmetic was a big one.

MB: What other subjects did you have?

SW: That's where I learned to sing a lot of songs- you see them on TV we sang all of them.

MB: A lot of singing.

SW: Mostly at the war songs.

MM: Which war songs? This was back-

SW: Civil War.

MM: That's what I meant.

MB: Civil War songs!

MM: Stephen Foster things.

SW: Wait 'til the Sun Shines. That was another one.

MB: Oh, yeah. Oh, boy.

MM: Did you have music in school?

SW: Yeah we whistled and sang loud. I used to like to sing.

MB: It wasn't a one room school house was it then? You didn't go to a one room school house then?

SW: No.

MB: Because a lot of the people in the country areas did in those days. Did you have any big school events or anything you remember? School events, like special celebrations or festivities of any sort.

SW: No, not so much.

MB: No, not so much, then. Do you remember anything else from your childhood and youth in Windber?

SW: When I went to Pitt I joined Pi Delta Chi fraternity. We used to have affairs there. They were alright.

MB: Were the teachers you had at Windber strict?

SW: Yes, I think.

MB: Do you have any examples of that.

SW: O geez, they used to make them stand in the corner. Turn them over on the first seat and paddle them. Stuff like that.

MB: Were your parents strict parents. Were they strict in raising the family? It's a big family.

SW: I would say they were.

MB: Could you give me some examples of that? How were they strict?

SW: The last time I got slapped, I went to see Jesse James and I didn't report to my parents so then when I came home my father met me at the drugstore and when I got home I got this razor strap and he said I want you to remember, you don't go anywhere, you don't do anything unless you talk to your mother and me.

MB: Times were different. What – did they speak English at home?

SW: Everybody. And my mother learned to speak English in Shamokin.

MB: Ok, I just wondered. In some homes it was different.

MM: But she was always more at home with the Slovak. She always enjoyed the Slovak more, your mother.

SW: Oh, yeah.

MM: She learned English, but when she really wanted to talk with other ladies, she liked to use it.

MB: How did you celebrate your holidays? Did you celebrate with some Slovak customs they brought from Europe or not? Did you have any special customs or traditions at all?

MM: He always had special foods at the holiday.

SW: That's right, special food at holidays.

MB: Like what? Like at Christmas, what did you have special? How did you celebrate Christmas and your family at Christmas?

SW: We always used to have [babka] on the night before with supper. Mother used to make a big bowl of babka – you know what that is with the poppy seed it. The priest used to come to bless the food and mother always had that and smoked sausage or kielbasa.

MB: You'd do that at Christmas time

MM: Or Easter wasn't it?

SW: Yeah, that was right before Easter. The thing about the third Sunday after Christmas the priest used to come around to the doorframe and he'd write on there the date of the day and the date of the year.

MB: Did that go on for a long time? Does that still go on, not in some homes?

SW: In the Polish, I don't know about the rest because I know they still go around. Now in our church they bring the baskets to the church- do they still do that?

MM: Yeah, they still bring the baskets at Easter time. At Easter you still take baskets to be blessed.

MB: When they built Saints Cyrils and Theonas did you switch from the Polish church to Saints Cyril and Theonas or did you keep going –

MM: No

MB: When they build Saint Cyrils and Theonas the Slovak church- did your parents or you switch or continue with Saint John's.

SW: We used to go to the Slavish church as they called it at that time, my father belonged to it. The society, they used to wear a badge for a funeral

MB: The sokal? I know about those, but I don't remember them in my lifetime. What were those parades like?

SW: The societies walk and the band would play

MB: For the funerals

SW: and they would go very slowly and the band played and it was hard to go up that hill in the winter time.

MB: Oh, I know. Mr. Washko, I understand that you're a charter member of the fire company?

MM: Are you a charter member of the fire company or just –

SW: No, I'm an honorary member.

MB: Honorary member. You must remember when they were starting that and all the fire-getting that organized.

SW: Now see, I didn't come to Windber until 1905 and it's down there on the plaque on the building.

MM: Oh when it started.

SW: and the early names.

MB: They made you an honorary member because you were so active, I guess.

SW: Especially financially.

MB: And you're a charter member of the Lions Club and that was founded in 1939 according to that.

SW: Yeah.

MB: You've had a lot of service with them.

SW: Yeah

MB: Well, thank you very much.

SW: You're welcome.

End of Tape 2 Side A

End of the Interview (March 16, 1984) Track time: 22:59

Beginning of the Interview (September 29, 1984)

Beginning of Tape 1 Side A (September 29, 1984)

MB: When I was here, as I was leaving, there were a couple of things that came up that you began to bring up. I know how it is, when someone begins to bring up a topic then your mind gets working on it and you recall things. One of the things that both of you were saying, when I left, we had talked a little bit about 1906 and the strike and the state constabulary coming in and then you started to tell some stories about that- like people got married and things- do you remember? Either of you?

MM: Somebody who came from the state constabulary married a Wilkinson girl, didn't she? Isn't that what you were saying?

SW: Did I tell you about the riot?

MB: You told me a little bit. You, know, I should have refreshed my memory a little bit, before coming by listening to that a little bit, but I don't know if there's anything you want to say or add to that, sure, go ahead.

SW: Well, it was 1906, the miners were on strike, and they had a meeting in Payne borough. At the baseball field that afternoon and while that was going on, the chief of police- he was doing his duty, he wanted to see what was going on, so he went down and it seems that some of the strikers had already been in the bar, intoxicated. So to spite him- they didn't like him, so they started after him and he ran and when he came to 8th Street a woman took him in and hid him in the house. So they kept on running and no one knows how he got out of there. So, anyway, they suspected he went down to the lockup. So they went down to the lockup and it was true, he was in there. And they got pretty rough, throwing stones and bricks and the strike breakers were in there already. One of the men, his name was- what was his name?

MM: I don't know.

SW: Jack Burton. He was a company man. So they started throwing the bricks and stones. And of course the strikebreakers fired and a number of people were killed. I was in the drugstore. The drugstore was handy there, so I pulled down all of the blinds and a lot of people ran into the drugstore and they were in there.

MB: You were right there then.

SW: So, anyway, the smoke was cleared and with those people in the drugstore was a young man named Barrett. Charlie Barrett was Portage and a local girl by the name of Loughery took up there.

MM: Friendship?

SW: Talking about what happened there. But anyway, after meeting at that time, they got married.

MB: But they weren't with the state police. Nothing about that?

SW: No.

MB: The state police came to town and they were here for a while.

SW: Anyway, things calmed down and of course the constabulary was called from Greensburg. So, the next morning, my folks lived on Jackson Avenue around 14th Street and the street car used to come and I'd get a ride down the drugstore. And when I got around Graham Avenue there were these constabulary men and they were there for business. Well, anyway, there was a man named Delaney to spite him, they chased him behind the drugstore before the shooting and finally he backed and out and he was standing out on the curb and the strikers were just about to throw a brick at him and the justice of the peace, that was right next door, but he was standing by and knocked him down and, of course, Mr. Delaney got away and went over to what we called the Loughery Building. They took him to the hospital by ambulance. That saved him from anymore trouble.

MM: Now did that happen the day before the riot?

SW: No, that happened then.

MM: Oh, you came to work that morning.

SW: Just before the riot.

MM: The morning of the riot.

MB: Where was the Loughery Building Mr. Washko? Which one was that? I don't know. I can't remember.

MM: It's down there where Skiruns- it's it?

MB: Is it still there?

SW: There's a totem in there now. Mr. Loughery had his offices on the second floor and there was a barber shop on the first floor.

MB: Oh, ok. And the lockup is where the fire department is now.

SW: Yes, lock up in the back of it. And that building is still there.

MB: Remodeled I guess. Do you have any more stories about that that you want to tell me about?

MM: Did one of the constabulary then marry the Wilkinson girl?

SW: Oh, yes, the constabulary.

MB: I remembered that as I was leaving.

SW: His name was George Wilkinson and he married a Forsythe girl. Three or four daughters in the family, so he married one of those. So there's so and so and he stayed in Windber and he married that woman, that girl. And joined the fire company and became drill master for the fire

company and I used to be in that crowd of firemen when were drilling for parades and all that, stuff. So there were two weddings out of that. See?

MB: Goodness. Well the fire company was pretty important, particularly in those day.

SW: Oh, yes it was.

MB: Do you have some comments about that?

SW: Oh, it was a large membership then.

MB: Was it volunteer then, they weren't paid? Were they paid?

SW: No, just volunteers.

MB: They seem to have lots of parades and bands and all kinds of things.

MM: They used to march holidays and they had uniforms.

SW: They still do carnival picnics on the 4th of July.

MM: Oh, yes, for years the fire department had picnics at the park for the 4th of July. It was there.

SW: Before they went to the park they used to celebrate on Graham Avenue and sometime in the afternoon they'd set fireworks off and one of the fireworks shot across the street and there were some people on a porch and this girl was hit by one of those rockets and killed her. And I think her name was Sowinsky. The family still lives there. So then they always had their picnic at the park.

MB: Was that area by the Midway and the pavilion a park? Was there like a park at one time in the early days of Windber?

SW: Do you know where the Lions Park is down here? Do you know where the library is?

MB: Yeah.

SW: That's Midway all along there.

MB: Yeah.

SW: From 15th Street to the stores.

MM: Well Midway was a very active part of the community.

SW: That's where the traffic was. A lot of business were along there.

MB: And the streetcar came down Jackson Avenue and then went over to Graham?

SW: When the streetcar first came to Windber. They came up to Payne Borough all the way up to the mine house and then up to 12th Street and it stopped there. A year or two later they brought it up to 14th Street. 14th Street where the Palace Hotel is and then right around there they took her down right in front of the drugstore. Do you know where the drugstore used to be?

MB: Yeah.

SW: Or, the fire company is just across the street. That's where the streetcar stopped. We used to have people come here just to take a ride on the streetcar to Johnstown and back.

MM: It was very scenic.

SW: Just for the scenery.

MM: It was also hard on the stomach. As a little kid.

SW: They claim that when Windber first started there were – artists came here from New York or somewhere-

MM: Pittsburgh

SW: Pittsburgh, to paint the scenery.

MB: I can believe that. You have such a unique knowledge of things relating to medicine. I wanted to cover that. You said when I was leaving last time that we hadn't dealt with the drugs and the hospitals and the doctors and the whole community in that way. So, I don't know, the hospital was built in 1906, I guess.

MM: They had their 75th Anniversary last year- was it last year they had their 75th Anniversary or the year before?

MB: Do you remember anything about the building of the hospital or anything about its founding that you can remember?

SW: I remember that the Windber hospital had to be staffed, so the doctor, J.W. Oz was a surgeon and Dr. R.J. Shank was a family physician. And then there was Dr. B.J. Smith and G.C. Berkheimer and then it started to bring nurses over. One was-

MM: What about Mrs. Bedshaw? Mrs. Bedshaw, wasn't she one of them?

SW: Not yet. They called her Ma Smith. She later married Dr. Smith. B.J. Smith that I mentioned earlier. Miss. E.R. Hammond.

MB: And they were some of these early people with the hospital.

SW: They were the first nurses and then as time went on they brought in new supervisors and one of the early, Dr. Stewart brought them in from Spangler and then later they brought in Dr. S.

Wheeling and he was the last big surgeon and he had a son named George. Well, George later on became a doctor. Dr. George was a very good surgeon, too. I had both of them. I was in for surgery and both times I had Dr. Georges. Chain smoker. Cigarette smoker and as years went by, hardening of the arteries so they had to take a leg off and then took another one off.

MB: When you were employed as a druggist in the early days, did the doctors write prescriptions for you that you then filled there? Because the hospital didn't always have a pharmacy, either. How did all that work? I don't really know what to ask you about that.

SW: At that time I was operating Sheaffer Drugstore that started in 1915 and Clancy Sheaffer was half owner and I was $\frac{1}{4}$ owner and Dr. Shank was $\frac{1}{4}$ owner. And it was because Dr. Shank and I was good friends, he decided that they should hire me. So they hired me, gave me \$50 more than I made before, so then I was getting \$140 a month and I got married on \$140 a month and I lived- rent was \$15 a month on a brand new house. And there were 8 rooms in the house. Four on the first floor and 4 on the second. \$15 a month. This house next door, it was here then and now – the other half of this house and it's \$200. Think of that. That's terrible. Somebody getting a lot of money. Well, anyway, as time went on, Mr. Sheaffer's wife died, they took her to the hospital and she died there. He come back home and then as time went on. A year later on Declaration day, he wanted to go to Philipsburg. So before he went there he went to Pittsburgh and bought a new car, a Hudson car. So all that time I was running the drugstore myself, day and night. But, anyway, I closed up and the next morning I go down to open the drugstore. He come down about 9:00 and he told me he was sorry and they got in late and would I like to go too, to Philipsburg. He was driving. So, before he left, he picked up McGraw, who worked for him before me and Dick Hill, and they started and they went to Altoona and they stopped at- he had a sister living there, picked her up there and the brother and they drove to Philipsburg. And that evening, when they were coming back, now this was a new car- on the way back, a place called Vale he went off the road, into the woods, into a stump and threw them all out but him, but the wheel crushed him and he died. Then after all that then the drugstore sold and Dr. Shank and I bought the drugstore.

MB: I see.

SW: So, after that, it was called The Keystone Pharmacy.

MB: Alright.

SW: Before that it was call H.L. Taylor Company. H.L. Taylor was the man who gave me my first job in Payne Borough.

MB: I remember, you told me that last time.

SW: Deliver newspapers. That's how I got acquainted with a lot of people as a boy in Payne Borough, delivering newspapers. And, of course, I started my business right there and I've been a pharmacist ever since. I'm still a pharmacist now. I am licensed to practice for the next 2 years.

MB: Well, good. Great. You must have filled a lot of orders, those year working there. Goodness. Then the hospital didn't have a pharmacy then. So you must have been the main business then. I don't know when they got their pharmacy.

SW: I recall the supervisor of nurses came about the same year. She wanted to know if I'd come to inventory the drugs in the department. So I went and did that for them. And then years later, I guess it was the pharmacy department.

MM: They didn't have a regular registered pharmacist until – they didn't have a registered pharmacist up there until the 1930s or 40s.

SW: I'd say 40s.

MB: So you filled a lot of prescriptions because all the doctors would have

SW: But you know, they didn't write as many prescriptions as they do now.

MB: Oh, really?

SW: Most of the people in those days went to the drugstore and they had to be their own doctors and nurses. The only reason they had to go to the doctor or hospital was for surgery. Mostly the miners it was broken legs, broken arms and whatnot. Of course, patent medicine market opened up and went on, and so forth. Advertising new preparations such as Pinkham's compound and Salavatica and Tanalac – they were old timers and Puruna and Liquisome- Liquisome was invented to cure tuberculosis, it didn't.

MB: Of course not. Did they have like the- I don't know what you'd call them, but salespeople who could come and try to sell them in town? I don't know, you think of these pictures where these people would gather in towns.

SW: Oh, yeah. One outfit came, he would be down there about between 14th and 15th Street on the other side, about where the library sits and he had oils and salves made from snake oil and so forth and he talked about different vegetables that people could make their own.

MB: Did they sell lots of that? Did lots of people believe that?

SW: Uh huh. One of the biggest sellers in that time was castor oil, Epsom salts and castor oil for children and then tonics to make the hair grow and ointments and hair colors for the women. There were four colors.

MB: Four colors, there were no shades.

SW: Different colorings.

MB: People buy a lot of that sort of thing. Well, how did it work with someone in a family with a serious disease? Say somebody got diphtheria or small pox was still around?

SW: Well at that time the state furnished the diphtheria antitoxin free, it was free.

MB: Were people inoculated at school or somewhere?

SW: Well that's it-

MM: They didn't start inoculating in the school until about 1925, 26, they started to inoculate children in school for diphtheria –

SW: I remember at that time I was working for a man named C. Householder and that was up – do you know where the Sheetz is?

MB: Uh huh.

SW: Up this way about a fourth of the way up, there's was a drugstore operated by a man by the name of S.S. Chrissman and he sold it to several doctors. They bought it and finally Mr. Householder bought the shares from Dr. Shank and Dr. Carlisle, and Dr. Oz- he bought them out and had it for himself, but then that's when I became acquainted with the antitoxin. And they always had 1000 units. 20, 10, and 1000, if you were stricken, you got 20,000 units, but the rest would be in 1000 units. And that went on for 7 years- which is good. Because later on they made discoveries and that's what they have today and that was a blessing. Think of it- like, well, a lot of people had a lot of troubles. They called it Liquizome, and that was nothing, so they would send them to Cresson and they would be there for a year, today we have drugs to prescribe to a patient for a year. And takes those drugs and without them prescribed, Vitamin B6, that's to keep the body from deteriorating.

MB: This is for TB?

SW: TB- you took it at home.

MM: You don't have to be hospitalized at all anymore, it's marvelous. If you come down with tuberculosis.

SW: We had one doctor up here, Dr. Miller. They sent him to Cresson, he was over there for a year.

MB: That's how they dealt with that. Now did you have certain medicines, say someone had diphtheria, you couldn't give them the toxins ones. Once the family had it, they were quarantined. Did you have to send some medicines over to them? In those early days?

SW: No, most at that time would be 1 pint cough syrup, cherry cough syrup and there's another one-

MB: That's all you could do for someone who already had the disease?

SW: Camphor oil was very popular back then. Very popular. And later, Vick's Salve came on the market. Vick's Salve.

MB: And people liked that.

SW: They liked it around here. (to MM- get something off of the table, that large white envelope- on the bottom, under there. The large white envelope.) Remember I said Vick's Salve?

MB: Oh yeah? You hear from Vick's today. Richardson Vicks today, I guess.

SW: See, these were brothers. That was a big seller. 35 cents, 50 cents, and then \$1 sizes.

MB: Were you expected to give advice as a druggist, then? Because if they didn't go, if people didn't go to doctors for these things.

SW: That's how I came by the drugstore.

MB: You had to be like a doctor. Unlike today.

SW: That's what helped our business. Even today you're allowed. Millions of dollars of over the counter drugs sold. A lot of people in those days didn't make enough to go and buy drugs.

MM: They didn't cost very much in those days, did they?

SW: No. Like I told you, most of the drugs were 25 cents, 35, 50, 75 and \$1. And the drugs themselves that cost \$1 cost the druggist 6 or 7 dollars a dozen and the ones that cost 50 cents cost 4 dollars a dozen, and the lower ones cost 2 and a quarter.

MB: Goodness. That's very unlike now with all kinds of medications.

MM: Your prescriptions that you filled, how much did they average?

SW: Well, we used to – the prescriptions were written for 3 or 4 ingredients, for instance, if it was a cough, the ingredients would be ammonium urate, that's crystalline compound. Of course you'd have to dissolve that in a little water, sometimes they'd add a medic power to reduce phlegm, and then the ingredient would be cephalosporin or tincture of camphor. That would go on for year.

MB: But when there was a mining accident, you didn't really have to deal with that because, like you said, it was mostly surgery or something.

SW: I used to buy all of the first aid items, cotton, bandages, tourniquet, all that stuff. I bought them from Johnson and Johnson. That was for the coal company and that went on for years. And then finally it was too much, too much money. More and more miners were being injured.

MB: So you supplied them with the bandages for that. That would have been something then.

MM: There were a lot of doctors in Windber then, Dad?

SW: Oh, yeah, a lot of doctors.

MB: A lot more than now?

SW: Oh, yeah.

MM: We have a good many now considering the staff of the hospital.

SW: Now, as I mentioned, was Dr. J.W. Oz, Dr. R.J. Shank, Dr. H.R. Carlisle, Dr. B.J. Smith and Dr. G.C. Berkheimer, and Dr. Falzon. His office was out there where Vespa's Beauty Shop is. And then later on Dr. –

MM: What about Dr. Grimbaugh? Later it was Dr. Grimbaugh.

SW: Berkheimer at the hospital and Grimbaugh down at Scalp. Scalp Level and then later on at Payne Borough he'd see you. The borough line at Scalp Level is a building down at the end of the intersection in Payne Borough is- that's where the drugstore used to be.

MB: I remember that.

SW: That's where I got my start. Anyway, it was right across the street. That side is Cambria and that is Payne Borough.

MM: You mean Cambria County.

MB: That's complicated. Were most of these doctors affiliated with the hospital once the hospital was there?

SW: Oh, no.

MB: They were independent from that? I don't know how that worked.

SW: They were practitioners. Family doctors, we had a number of dentists at that time. The dentists were – what was the name of that dentist who went to Portage Railroad? He had his office on 13th Street?

MM: His name wasn't Best, was it?

SW: Logan. He was the first dentist and then a Dr. Glass came and then Dr. Davis came. And then Dr. Bell came.

End of Tape 1 Side A

Beginning of Tape 1 Side B (September 29, 1984)

SW: And then another Dr. Bell came. Dr. Joseph Bell and then later on, his son came back, Dr. John Bell. Now his son, Dr. John Bell's son is here and he's junior Bell.

MM: Dr. Girley was later and Dr. Bennett

SW: John C. Girley. Didn't mention it a while ago. Dr. Girley was in the hospital when W.S. Wheeling came in the early years. He was very good.

MM: He was a radiologist and obstetrician.

SW: He was good all around, he was very good.

MB: So people didn't go to dentists very often then either, I guess? Unless they had a tooth ache.

SW: No, no. In those days, people used to go, cover them with gold. Some used silver. You've heard of that.

MB: Did you get a lot of people coming in for toothache medicines?

SW: Oh, yeah.

MB: And you would advise. I bet. Goodness.

SW: Most of them is carbon powders, that was very popular and if that wouldn't work they used to use paregoric in the mouth to numb the pain.

MB: The ads must have been different, you could see ads in old papers for morphine for sale and all those things that think are regulated more. Were you afraid to dispense almost anything as a druggist then?

SW: In the early years, yes. And then of course the law come in in the early 1900 and that controlled the sale of morphine, but the paregoric medicine you could buy opium. I used to buy a pound of opium for Chinamen down on 14th Street. The Honda agency is down there now, but that's what I used to buy, a pound used to cost \$25.

MB: Yeah, things just used to be very different. And then doctors used to make house calls. Probably only for serious cases.

SW: Yes, I've seen that.

MM: Doctors made house calls here in Windber until Dr. Huffman and Dr. Redman retired. They both retired in 1975 and that was the end of the house calls.

MB: Do you remember about midwives? How many – most women had their children at home, especially in those early days. Do you remember anything about midwives and so forth?

SW: Well, all I remember about midwives is that's what they'd do, they'd come and help with any daughters in the family to make the delivery.

MB: Did they have to be registered somewhere?

SW: Not like they do now. But anyway, at that time the instructions were to rest for 2 weeks and drink porter.

MB: I don't know what that is.

SW: That is something like beer, it's heavy. Something like Bohemian malt. Heavy and dark. Today everything is light, light, light, but then it was dark. So have that about 2 weeks they'd be christened and the reason my name is Stephen, I was born December the 16th and of course 2 weeks from then would be Christmas so I was named – the day after Christmas is St. Stephen's Day so my name is Stephen.

MB: Makes sense. So I guess christenings were big events in those days.

SW: Sunday there was a Godfather, Godmother and then the close friends would come and they'd take the baby to church. The baby was always christened after mass and then they'd come and have a lot of food and beer and wine and whiskey a lot of whiskey sold in the early years and it was cheap. You could buy a bottle, quarter bottles, now they're called quart bottles for a dollar. And now, of course it's \$5 or \$6. We had a bond during Prohibition. We sold whiskey – only for doctor's prescriptions and it was \$2.50 a case and the doctor would charge a dollar to write the prescription. So not all doctors were open, we only had 2 or 3. Remember one was Dr. Carlisle and Dr. Shank and I think Dr. B.J. Smith, but there were a lot of prescriptions.

MB: Well, Prohibition never really worked here better than it did anywhere else, did it? Made their own.

SW: People tried it, Blind Tiger- a place on Midway, speakeasy they called it. Blind Tiger

MB: Well the brewery must have had to close down because there was a brewery – that put a lot of people out of work, then?

SW: Oh yes, oh yes.

MB: Did they stay in town, those people or did they move?

SW: Well, not many of them. Probably the brewmaster would be.

MM: Mr. Becker, wasn't he in there?

SW: He was a brewer, but this last one, he was Elizabeth's father- what was the name? Do you know?

MM: Fronek

SW: Mr. Fronek he was the last brewer, but anyway it was his wife that was a midwife she brought forth a champion swimmer.

MM: She's supposed to be the one who helped with the birth of Johnny Weissmuller.

SW: He was born in Windber. Some tried to change it around Chicago that he was born somewhere else, but he was born in Windber because she delivered him.

MM: And now she's dead and no one can prove it.

MB: That must have been common. I bet often births weren't even recorded when people were born because who would record them?

SW: That was later. They had to report all diseases at that time when that started.

MB: Do you remember the board, I guess they had a board of health around at the same time the hospital was founded.

SW: Yeah, we had one.

MB: Can you tell me anything about that, its history?

SW: Yeah, we had that. Dr. Shank was one of them and Mr. Huey Murphy was another and Patrick Mullen was on the same board.

MB: What did they do?

SW: Fumigate, put signs up on diphtheria homes and measles and scarlet fever all of those.

MM: Quarantine

SW: The people were prohibited from entering a house with a sign.

MB: Well, I guess things were very different because people kept cows and animals and it must have been-

SW: Sure, used to keep a cow about 50 in back of the house.

MB: All over town was that true, basically?

SW: Hogs right here in Windber. Ducks and geese and chickens and whatnot.

MM: Well, right behind us, they had chickens in their yard. Lots of people up and down the street had chickens.

SW: Who was back there? Bower?

MM: And then where the high school is now, people pastured cows out there where the high school is.

MB: Oh wow. Well, when did they say you couldn't have cows in the city anymore?

MM: I'd say in the 1920s they started to fuss around about it, but I don't think that they really stopped it until the 1930s. People had chickens. And they still had cows out at the high school until they built the high school and the gypsies used to come there – about once a year.

MB: Do you remember the gypsies Mr. Washko?

SW: Not much, but we didn't want them in the drugstore. When they arrived they'd start with employees and they'd put a card in their hat because they were going to tell the fortune. And we'd see this was going on the rest were over where the drinks were. In the 5 and 10 cent stores and the Eureka stores, they put the out up there.

MB: Did you have a lot of trouble with thieves? Were there a lot of thefts in the stores?

SW: Oh, sometimes. We had 2 in our store. One time there was an alley next to the drugstore, for the theater and we had to put a door there as time went on and the theater was built. So many people used to come in, they couldn't get in fast enough so we put that door in, a glass door and they'd used one door to come in and the other to go out, see? Well somebody during the night, they took the glass out and they stole cameras and stuff, odds and ends. That's all. They weren't into drugs in those days, no, no.

MB: That's different from now, I guess. Well, what other memories? Being a druggist, that's such a unique thing, in a town like this – what else can you tell me about? I don't really know what to ask you. What do you think is important to know about it? If someone wanted to know how a druggist ran a business in a town like this, what do you think they should know what we haven't talked about?

SW: Well, as time went on, we used to get 5 cases of whiskey. This man from Baltimore brought it and in the drugstore- we'll say this, the desk was here and the 5 cases were stacked up here and there's a telephone, but there's a certain man who wanted to use that telephone a certain Saturday and they allowed him to go back to use it and during the night, a man in the drugstore who had a small building behind the drugstore where we kept, soda we'll say, odds and ends, and extra milk in the refrigerator and ice cream when we sold ice cream. Well there's a roof on there and someone transverse it and opened the door and carried it out. So the next morning I had one of the employees call me up and tell me somebody broke in last night and the whiskey was gone. So I called Mr. Mayhorn right away, he was in the police, state police, and he got out right away. So, anyway, he went to a place called Hoffa's Garage. Right across the railroad track and there were 2 or 3 men and whiskey bottles all on top that. Never drink it. That was the beginning of it. So he solved the problem. I lost the price of the whiskey and the case went to court. Pinned on just one person. I think Cliff or something like- Gilland. He went to jail.

MM: She's interested in knowing how you ran the drugstore. It was a big business and you had quite a staff.

SW: Well, anyway when I went there, that was in 1911-1912 and it was in 1915 Mr. Sheaffer was killed and I had charge of it then and our business started to grow and I had to hire another pharmacist and I had to hire a couple more females and as time went on, at one time we had 4 pharmacists and we had 2 girls on 2 shifts all the time.

MB: Were you open day and night, too?

SW: No, no, we closed at midnight in those days. 12:20 because the streetcar used to stop and people used to travel. So they'd go at that time. That time I was changing between 12 and 11. But anyway, we had very, very good vendors. We had a licensed drugstore. The drugstore was remodeled in 1914 and we had a beautiful drugstore and soda fountain and the business kept growing and during – anyway during that period I had 11 boys employed as pharmacists and 1 female and her name was Mary Timko and she owned the drugstore up the street. The building is still down there. They sell photo supplies. She died. Another one of my employees, he was in drugs with us, owned the Palace Hotel. He didn't have the money, so his father gave it. So then John Hasson had the hotel so he had a son named Charles, so he talked to his father and they opened up a drugstore and they hired one of my employees by the name of Bill McKendrick. I picked him up for the drugstore, start him off. Well he went to college, Pittsburgh Pharmacy and he also went to Philadelphia. He came back and that's when Prohibition came. They had that for about 2 years. Of course they got a liquor license like we had. Well, a man put the money up for whiskey and Bill had friends who liked to drink whiskey and anyway the time came that they didn't have enough money and weren't paying the bills so they come from Johnstown and closed up the drugstore. And Bill went to Pittsburgh and he worked in one drugstore and then another. He died there. Killed himself drinking. Well anyway, I had 11 pharmacists and one woman I said.

MB: That's quite a record.

SW: And business was very, very good.

MB: Did you work with all the different doctors then and with the hospital? With the companies?

SW: Oh, yes. We cooperated and they cooperated with us.

MB: When you then took over, you and Dr. Shank; were there many other drugstores? I lose track of how many there were. Scalp must have had one.

SW: That was one, and then there was one by the man I used to work for and he sold his drugstore to a man – Miller's drugstore and he sold his drugstore to Mr. Householder and Mr. Householder sold to a man by the name of Philips pharmacist. That man also worked in the

drugstore I got my start in in Windber. Anyway, there's another one. Then Mr. Householder sold it to a man by the name of Dettwiler.

MM: Dettwiler isn't it?

SW: Mr. Dettwiler moved out because someone bought the property and raised the rent, so he moved to Central City. Then I also had the first drugstore in Central City, I forgot about that. A man by the name of Charlie Estep. He was part of the Lowry family, superintendent, so he went into business with his sister-in-law had a hotel in Central City so he had a good business there and my brother-in-law, John McDonald run first grocery and the hired a pharmacist and then Estep wanted to buy my stock and so I sold him my share and got out.

MM: That was in 1929 wasn't it?

MB: You did that in 1929?

SW: One of my pharmacists, when the stock market crashed, everything crashed, so he wanted a pharmacy student and he wanted to know if I'd part with Robert Curtain, one of my best one. Of course I was loaded with pharmacy students, so I took him up and he got along fine.

MB: You said last time that getting through the Depression was the hardest time.

SW: Yes, that was the hardest time.

MB: That hurt your business.

SW: People didn't have any money, so we charged them, very few paid, so we just had to write it off.

MB: So what all did you sell in your store, in those early days besides the drugs. Drugstores can be so different. Little things or tons of things.

SW: We had the best soda pop outside of Johnstown. We always had a lot of ice cream and during the war, it was tight, but we had a good record of credit with the Johnstown supplier. Cigars, cigarettes, magazines, stationary. All kinds of gifts and greeting cards made in Cincinnati. All kind of medicine, Kodaks.

MM: Radios

SW: Radios too. But our candy, we used to have wonderful, all kinds of candy. Penny candy for children, they come in sodas for 5 cents for 10 ounces.

MB: So you did a lot of different things then. You always had the soda fountain, from the start?

SW: They all had a soda fountain except in Wilmerding, it was called Carl's they didn't have ice cream. But all had soda fountains.

MM: Newspapers and magazines.

SW: Yeah we had a Pittsburgh press, but we gave that up it was a nuisance because the boys they'd cheat. But we always had a big, big magazine business.

MB: Did you have drug salesmen that came around who would try – how did you get your drugs?

SW: How did we get the drugs? Well most came from Johnstown by train in the early years and some came by express. Most of the stuff came by freight. We used to buy our drugs from George A. Kelly Company in Pittsburgh a drug company and ship supplies from Pittsburgh.

MB: Today I guess they have drug salesmen who try to go and sell for different companies, go around, peddle.

SW: We had Rexall 1 cent sale that was the biggest, the best bargain the in United States. There were 10,000 Rexall drugstores in the United States at that time. Most of them were on corners. I went to Rexall conventions in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Boston, and then their mother and I took them, we had a friend by the name of Bonnie, she was our family seamstress, took her along. Those were the days.

MM: What was the name of that man who bought up all the drugstores? What's his name? He's a friend of President Regan, he recently died.

SW: Oh, Dart.

MM: Justin Dart. He's the one that bought up all the Rexalls he got control of all the Rexall stores.

SW: What was his first name?

MM: Justin.

SW: He became a million, multi-millionaire. When those Rexall drugstores, that was big business, we'd sell a copy for 35 cents that's it, but then it was buy one get one free. We had them in the back. Anyway, it was a big seller, by the case. Anyway, sometimes we'd buy it by the case and see if we could sell it for a few dollars.

MB: Were there any other organizations like the pharmacists? Did you go to any other conventions?

MM: The local Cambria, Somerset Pharmaceutical Association was very active.

SW: Cambria, Somerset Pharmaceutical Association. I joined that when it was first formed in Johnstown and the first president was Mr. Wertz, he was the first president of the association.

MB: When would that have been Mr. Washko? In the 20s or before. I don't have timeframe.

SW: Must have been about the early 40s.

MMs: It was before the 40s you used to go to those meetings and you used to drive in there, remember?

SW: That's when I got the car.

MM: That last car you got in 1931.

SW: That's the first one I used to drive. I drove it a lot until after.

MM: It would have to be in the 1920s.

SW: Most of the meetings used to be at the YMCA in Johnstown. I'd speed there in 15 minutes and then I'd have to get back to work.

MM: Then the change the meetings to night.

MB: What did you do? Just discuss new things in the field?

SW: That's right. Discuss the laws, rules and regulations, price and so forth. They control the price, the average, fair. And then the Fair Trade law came along and that's when the trouble started. Used to be the chain stores, Pittsburgh was the

MM: Walgreen

SW: Walgreen was on Main Street in Johnstown took the place of Diamond Drug.

MB: That was a chain, too?

SW: There's one in Johnstown now.

MM: RiteAid

SW: RiteAid.

MM: Well there are no fair trade laws anymore, they did away with those.

MB: You mentioned that they met at the Johnstown YMCA. Do you remember anything about a YMCA in Windber? I guess there was one?

SW: There used to be.

MB: Do you remember anything?

SW: Not much.

MB: Ok, I just wondered.

MM: You didn't have any time for that did you, Dad?

SW: It didn't stay very long, I know that.

MM: They used to have very nice affairs at the recreation hall, good orchestras used to come in there. Didn't Fred Waring come in?

MB: What did you do for fun?

SW: Well there was a married peoples club. We used to have clubs and dances. Every month we'd meet at recreation hall, just the married people. Saturday we'd go to the Rexall conventions

MM: There were movies.

MB: Do you remember the opera house?

SW: Uh huh.

MB: What was that like? What did they bring to that?

SW: The opera house that was down there in the early years because when I worked for Mr. Taylor in Payne Borough I had a couple of buddies, well, one was by the name of Frank Bottiecher and he'd stop at the drugstore and talk me into going to see

End of Tape 1 Side B

Beginning of Tape 2 Side A (September 29, 1984)

SW: Well, we enjoyed watching it from upstairs in peanut heaven. It didn't cost too much, so we saw that his brother shot him in the back. Frank got up to do it, the pictures was crooked and so he got up on his chair to do it and they killed Jesse James. So on the way back home, when we arrived back in Payne Borough, where the drugstore was, there was a judge there waiting to see me. He had some important business and wanted to see me inside. He said where were you? I said up there. He said, did you ask your mother, did you say where you were going? I said no. When we got home he used the razor strap on me.

MB: The old method.

SW: About that time, I'd say I was about 12 years old.

MB: I guess the razor strap was a popular thing.

SW: The newspapers I had them all over Scalp, Payne Borough, go up to the top of Scalp Hill there was a toll gate. We used to take a short cut and go up over on top eight ball, down across

the street corner, deliver papers over across 37, take a short cut go down below Payne Borough, go up over the hill and back to old 30 Eureka, that's where my folks lived.

MB: You had to walk all that.

SW: Most of those houses were double houses and they were good sized houses. We had number 7. Altogether there were 9 children and out of those 9 my youngest brother Charles died there and then my brother Thomas was killed in the mine. He went in the mine when he was 12/13 years old and he was killed about the second day. Coal fell on him and killed him.

MB: Did your other brothers go in the mine, too?

SW: Before Andrew died he was pushing, I think 1st August 1943.

MM: She asked, did any of your other brothers go into the mine? John went in.

SW: That's one of my brothers in the mine, he was a good miner. My father, too. They both worked in the mine, used those jackhammers like you see these construction workers. Right now they would go to work in the dark and they'd come home and it'd be dark and they'd be soiled up to the knees. Soiled all over, terrible. They had tracks from the mine to the tippie and they would dump the coal there. They'd wash and dump the coal.

MB: I remember that when I was a kid.

SW: They'd bring the coal out in a car and they'd weigh it and dump it. Well, that's the big problem. That's why the miners went on strike. They weren't being paid by the weight. I actually watched this happen in my life. I went down to deliver a paper to the weigh master there, he would start reading the paper and boom, boom, boom, boom, boom all the time he was reading and then suddenly he's start writing something.

MB: So people didn't feel like they were getting the fair price for their coal that they had- I see. They didn't have any check?

SW: They'd check when they mined 100 cars of coal. Not every day, but there were miles of rail road cars all owned by the coal mining company. That took a lot of labor.

MB: Yeah, it was a different town than it is now. I guess all those people who were here come and go.

SW: There was a store there. Big stores on 13th, 15th Street, but the best store outside that was where lived and they used to get a carload of potatoes, a carload of dynamite, powder, macaroni

MB: I guess the miners had to buy their own powder, then didn't they?

SW: Oh yes.

MB: They kept it at home, that was dangerous, wasn't it?

SW: They kept it in the cellars and shanties, some had a shanty. I'll tell you, then the mines started adding outside on the mine property they also had a dynamite building. It was well protected, security.

MB: I guess there must have been accidents. Those charges of powder would go off sometimes. Goodness.

SW: Lightning would set it off.

MB: Well, there must have been a lot of accidents in those early days. Did your father belong to like a insurance society or one of these fraternal orders because they didn't have anything in those days.

SW: When they built this hospital they had a policy of, I think it cost \$8 and some cents. That was the insurance on them. That was always taken off their pay. If you worked at the liquor store and if you paid your bill, they knocked \$2 or something to pay for the food or something like that.

MB: But your father belong, like they have all of these fraternal orders and one of the main purposes was to have insurance.

SW: He belonged to one of them and they had real large badges back in those days – about this long and that wide- and of course they had to wear those for funerals. When there'd be a funeral they always had the band.

MB: Do you remember the different bands in town? I guess there were lots of different ones. Did each ethnic group have one?

SW: At that time, there was only 1 band in town. My brother John belonged to it.

MB: What band was that, Mr. Washko?

SW: The Slavish band. That was it for many years.

MB: Do you remember Sokols, too? I guess there were here.

SW: They were here.

MB: Was that in the 20s, about.

SW: Around there.

MB: What did they do exactly?

SW: Well, like others, they had meetings and they had celebrations on certain days. Also on Declaration Day, 4th of July.

MB: You told me last time that you remember hearing all of these stories, Civil War stories when you were growing up.

SW: Oh, yes.

MB: Can you tell me anything about that? Remembering those things.

SW: The Civil War stories we got mostly in school.

MB: I see, that's what you got in school. Well, of course, there weren't the other wars then. Did anything change in the town during World War I? A lot of the immigrants had come from the countries that the United States was at war with. Do you remember anything about that? Conflict or anything like that?

SW: We didn't have much struggle here. They had, of course, what German people were in town, they had them being scrutinized.

MM: It was not too terrific. Not like they did with the Japanese in World War II. The big thing here was the flu epidemic that came through.

SW: Oh, yes, we had that flu epidemic. That was very bad. People died like flies. When that broke out, the order came out of the Washington people that the people had to spray their throats with 1% solution of tincture of iodine and we'd sell it with an atomizer. That's when we started selling iodine. Vials of iodine for 15 or 25 cents and atomizers for 50 cents to a \$1, dollar and a half to \$2. We had to reorder the atomizers from Boston and they came in fast.

MM: Wasn't the town closed?

SW: Yes, it was closed. Nobody come in, nobody go out.

MB: Did they have the state police or something.

SW: No, not that. Just the town.

MB: I guess that must have been terrible

MM: Terrible.

MB: I've heard some stories about whole families just dying.

SW: Friends would be talking on the street corner and then die during the night. They all carried masks, wool masks.

MB: There never was any other epidemic quite like that one, was there? That was the main one?

SW: No, that's the only one.

MB: Goodness. Do you have any comments- since you knew so many of these people and doctors, like Dr. Shank. Do you want to say anything about him?

MM: They were personal friends, close personal friends.

MB: Dr. Shank. He was pretty important. He was on the school board I guess.

MM: Oh, he was very active in the community.

MB: He was a doctor for a long time.

SW: Dr. Shank was on the school board and he was also the school doctor and they always had a school dentist.

MM: They were very active. All those men. Did a lot.

MB: They had to be in those days.

SW: I said to you that he was one of the doctors that bought the drugstore from Mr. Chrissman. And then I was working for Mr. Householder and I met Mr. Householder in 1907 when I went to Pittsburgh at the drugstore that I was working. Taylor and Company down where the drugstore used to be. There was, they hired a man from Portage to operate it. Anyway, while I was gone Dr. Shank advertised the store for sale and a man by the name of Clancy Sheaffer came and he bought half and Dr. Shank had the other half. I've talked about Dr. Shank.

MM: That was the Sheaffer that had the drugstore.

MB: He's the one who died?

SW: Mr. Sheaffer was killed and Dr. Shank and I took over, but before that Sheaffer Drug Company was formed Mr. Sheaffer came in, he had half and I had a quarter and so did Dr. Shank. Dr. Shank was my partner until 1937 and then I even bought him out. So I had that until 1956. In the meantime I've had one of the old boys, run the one that I started when my brother Andrew was killed in 1943.

MM: He died of a heart attack. He wasn't killed.

SW: That's how, he died of a heart attack. Anyway, I had to have a pharmacist, so I had a secretary named Mary Cresswell. Well, of course, she knew her brother, of course he worked for me, but wanted to go somewhere else, so he worked at the drugstore that malfunctioned, so he left town, he went somewhere. I heard he went to Lancaster and he worked down there for People's Drugstore and from there he went to Chambersburg and he decided to leave Chambersburg and open up a new store somewhere and they hired him to operate that store. Well let's just say that that wasn't a success. So they fired, left him go. And he got a job with

People's Drugstore and he was working in Williamsport, PA. So his sister suggested, well, he has a job up there, but he isn't doing so well and at that time they had one baby, a son, Melvin Jr. so she said would you like to bring him back? Well I said, let's try him. So, I brought him back, but then we had to pay for the haulage of his things and we also rented a house for him and he had the job and before he left it seems he bought an automobile and he owed-

MM: They're not interested in that. I know but they don't need that. He came here, that's all.

MB: Yeah.

MM: I know businesses paid today, for moving, it's no big deal but-

SW: Well, as time went on, things were very good so I started in and out of the hospital so I said that I would retire. I was 65. So I did retire.

MB: But you still keep in touch and so forth.

SW: And I had him as a partner and then he bought the rest of the store in 1956. So I stayed there until the last day of 1959 because I was my own agent and I was making too much commission and I shared it with 2 or 3 of my employees because they have to take care of it when I wouldn't be there. So I thought I better quit, so I did. I come home and started to work on the attic. Did everything, from the top down.

MM: One of these things that's hard to adjust to. Retirement.

MB: Of course. I don't know very much. I've just read or heard something about the politics and the elections in the community. Maybe you have some knowledge if you'd like to say anything about that.

SW: I'll tell you-

MB: Of if you want to stop, that's fine, too.

SW: This was a Republican town at that time. Berwind White controlled all that, too.

MM: Controlled all of that until after the 1940s.

MB: Sometime after Roosevelt was in.

MM: I'd say in the 1940s it started and as Berwind White started to pull out of town.

MB: So now?

MM: It's Democrat. Now the town, the community is Democrat again. Only one precinct left that's a Republican majority and I don't think that it's so overwhelming that. It's been the same mayor for years and years and years. Our first Democratic mayor was mayor Clement. Matt Clement was our first Democratic burgess. He was burgess.

MB: Burgess?

MM: Remember back then it was Democratic Burgess mayor. He's the father of the present.

SW: The fellas were –

MB: Well a lot of people probably couldn't even vote because they weren't citizens or they took years to become.

MM: They didn't push voting the way they do now.

SW: For years it was bring in your tax receipts. Before they'd let you vote.

MM: Now I think voting is much different.

MB: It's different.

MM: It's much better than it used to be then. I think it was true everywhere.

MB: Well, is there anything else, Mr. Washko – if you wanted to tell somebody about Windber or the history or drug businesses? Anything that you want to add?

MM: That covers it.

SW: That covers it.

MM: That's just about it.

MB: Ok.

SW: Is it still on?

MB: Oh yeah, we've got something.

SW: The reason I was successful as a pharmacist in Windber I shared my life with the community. The community is good to me and I also shared my life with my employees. That's why I was successful. That's it.

MM: You have to do that. Well, that's it then.

End of Tape 2 Side A

End of the Interview (September 29, 1984)