

**INTERVIEW OF DR. CHAUNCEY HOFFMAN, M.D.**

By Mildred Allen Beik

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Geistown, PA

CH: Dr. Chauncey Hoffman (1906-1994)

MB: Millie Beik

**Beginning of Tape 1 (July 11, 1989)**

CH: We would be sent out on assignments. At that time no one had money.

MB: Yeah, depression times too

CH: We traveled by straight car, we weren't allowed on elevated, our directions were all on straight car. At that time things weren't really rough, nobody had any money well and no one had any money, I can tell you that much. So rush was riding almost county cornered across the street from Cook County Hospital. So I ended up on 14- 16<sup>th</sup> West Adams Street at that was not far from the medical college. Then one summer I interned with a lot of the doctors at the Presbyterian and so on, living up at Highland Park Illinois, Lake Forest that was a really nice place at that time, in fact they had a special train that those people up there would ride into work in Chicago in the morning that was a special train they had up there, you had to have a special ticket for that. So the doctors up there had a hospital, they saw people up there at the Highland Park. I spent one summer there, one summer I stayed on upcentral service in Chicago. And my vacations I stayed in school and did sabbatical. As soon as you come back from one confinement you live in another one.

Now today I pick some of the doctors who don't even get a chance to deliver a baby.

MB: It's just the special ones, yeah!

CH: that was excellent training, we go out, we have an assistant, my assistant, we maybe have an assistant every other run, in order to be the thrift man you would have the experience and the approval of the outfit, I mean the patient department. So that's the way that operated, and it really turned out well, I delivered babies in worst situations in basements where they had floors that were boards apart, water would be underneath there and everything like that.

MB: People were still not in the habit of going to the hospital a month after their baby was born.

CH: No at that time, see hospitals could not make too much money either, but if you got into any trouble if there was any trouble, Presbyterian would admit them, but you had to call in, in order to do that when you went out on a call, why you would meet the chief the fellow who was a chief, first statement he give you an examination, and then he call back a relay the situation to the doctor that was at the desk, that was one doctor, so you had to call back every half hour. If it was progressing alright, you didn't need to call him back every half hour, most of the time you had to use your own nickels see and nickels were scarce at the time, they don't tell you about that. Whenever you take care of each one, then you go back to base you have another one they send you out on another one. It wouldn't be your assistant but a different fella sees because you were the chief at the time and it worked out well

MB: Good training I guess

CH: It surprising too many doctors don't have common sense, I seen the assistant who should of known better try to shave a lady's dairy air with mineral oil. You had in our kit we had mineral oil to put on, to give them an enema and then he shave them, then he used tincture green soap for lather, this brown a little like mineral oil you know at that time. I never liked to sit over somebody and watch them how to do this, they're supposed to know how to do this, this particular, I saw his name in one of my circulars not too long ago he was from Wisconsin this boy

This lady was saying" you're hurting me, you're hurting me", so he kept going after I heard this 3 or 4 times I go into the room, and he was trying to shave her and of course he was hurting her.

I could see there was no lather; I asked him "What was he using?"

He picked up the mineral oil body and I said you can't shave with mineral oil. Of course I don't believe in balling people out in front of everybody that's a personal experience, and I told him to use this, that's just the kind of things you do. We set up a kitchen table, because they had a kitchen table, we raised the legs like this on a couple of catalogs or whatever we had, and that would make a draining board. And we used newspapers, they were always instructed, these people were instructed to have a 4 month supply of newspapers and plenty of hot water. We would roll up the newspapers like this and tie them together. And then we put one this, one that way, we put one just under the buttocks, and had this one this way and it made a draining board, see I tell you you'd be surprised what you can do, and we never had an infection.

MB: Remarkable.

CH: I have to laugh a lot of wisdom, today, they are doing caesarean infections, today the amount of infections are around 34%. I believe around here. At that time, infections was anywhere from 2 and a half to 1%. They complained then that the reason they had that many, because their patients diet was inadequate. Now they're talking about diets again, I could cut the expenses in general medicine, I could cut the expenses in half very easy. And I proved that case.

I don't sound good and you might not think that but it's not always the expensive things that do the trick. And that's how that went

MB: So did you come back right after graduating

CH: Well I graduated in rush out the corner system, so I graduated, When was the Johnstown Flood?

MB: 1936

CH: What month?

MB: Summer

CH: No. I believe it was March

MB: Oh, I don't know

CH: It was summer because me and my wife were on the first bus that came to Cleveland from Johnstown. As we got off the changing bus in Cleveland. I saw Johnstown on the newspaper, "Johnstown flood returned"

"We're going to see that". So we got on the first bus to Johnson on the day of the flood

And that's that

And a feller at the bus station he come out with thick boots on into mud and they didn't have any other passengers to go through to Bedford. And of course I had three months free. Most people graduated in June, I graduated in March. You didn't get a MD degree from rush until you finished a successful Internship. And that a good idea because you have to be a good intern. If you don't, you don't get your degree see. And that's a good thing, the trouble today is these people go through school and study so on they get their MD degree at the end of the school year without their internship and they come out with a busted head. You understand what I mean? Students with big heads, think they know everything. But um, I got on the service at winter hospital, Dr. Or saw me and said "Why don't you come down and get on the service?"

So I did I went down there and I was on service for about 3 months, that was without any pay, and that's okay, in fact not many internships you got paid, you didn't get any pay, I selected Uniontown because I didn't know where I was going to practice. In fact some of the doctor friends of mine wanted me to stay in Illinois, but I thought golly the way things are I'd better going near home. And that's how I got to Windber. Anyhow I ended going to Uniontown, I did real good at Uniontown, I had a real good offer down at Uniontown down by the [Monongahela] River on Port Elizabeth, that paid \$8,000 a year and I was elected to go down there, a lot of doctors weren't making a \$150 a month and the only reason they paid that much was because it was 12 miles of dirt road to get in there and the wives didn't want to stay there. See so that's that, so I come back, in fact old man Willie, you remember old man Willie he calls me from long distance and tells me "We got something good for you over here"

And he wanted me to come over for the weekend. I tell him I can't I'm on surgical service and I can't, in the first place the reason you had to be a good intern the hospital had to agree the superintendent of the hospital had to agree had to write every two months a report on your progress on what you did, and you had to write a report back to rush, to me that's an ideal situation, so you have to be a good intern, you can't be smart, you can't be sophisticated, you have to be responsible. So I told him I couldn't come I'm on surgical service, I couldn't after the end of the third quarter come back and you know I thought doctors were honest, but you know their bunch of dam liars.

MB: Explain that, what do you know about it?

CH: Well you know their ego-sophisticated, they think they have power, well I have to tell you a little about this now, they asked me if I had any offers of there and I did, I had three offers, this one I told him about that was the best offer, and I needed money, I owned money, I borrowed money for school, everybody needed money too, he asked what was I going to do?

I told him the best offer I had was \$8,000 a year, a place to live, heart, coal and everything furnished, and that was marvelous, and he said the way you're sitting you'll be doing twice that much here, well I didn't it was that much money in the whole country. So I went back to my surgical supervisor back at Uniontown, Dr. Allocer, he said Chance Are you sure that's true? I get that if you could not trust Dr. Willie, I don't know who you can trust. Well I found out different, you don't trust anybody. So I gave that place up, and the by the time I gave that place up, it was given to someone else a newer feller they thought was good. So I come back here to work at Wynn brook, well uh, so they said we don't have a salary set up yet, they gave me big spiel of this and so on, you'll have to ride with some sort of salary until we get this fixed up. So they paid me 41.18 a month, and this was the truth. I did all the delivers I did the X ray work, I helped Dr. Gordy do the x ray work and he paid me 41.67 cent, so I made \$500 a year for each one.

MB: Oh, wait to make it an even amount

CH: Well yeah, my recall is missing up, I was so busy I build up to confinement there, I started there in 1937, and by then. When I went back in July 1937 to see things were going to go. Well I had to see The Philadelphia offices, it was a coal company office that was the lingo. Come back next week, and that went on for 6 to 8 weeks, went all the way to July, so we had to ride on the salary. So that's how that \$41.61 that would be \$500 for each one, and at the Wynn brook hospital I had to pay my own insurance, Dr. Gordy paid me \$41.67 a month so that made \$1,000 that's what that came out to.

MB: Oh, Okay!

CH: So I'm doing all this work, doing all these delivers all that kind of stuff. I'm working, so I built the confinement work up people from Bedford and Buford Counties, I made calls everywhere. In 1942 I delivered 383 female babies in Wynn brook hospital, and they still paid me 41.18 a month and of course in the meantime I think it was in April when Dr. Gordy died. So I said well I need to go, so went to the Chief Wig (?), Dr. George, and he said you'll have to learn some different situations here.

The Company comes up, then you'll understand why I don't do doctors, they come up with the salary of \$2,000 a year, no place to live, I had to do everything in the hospital that was pathology, pediatrics, general medicine except surgery, for \$2,000 a year, And I thought well that money couldn't pay my food, and of course I couldn't do it, and wouldn't take that Job the idea was it that if you don't keep that feller working then at every minute of the day why he'll be out here doing this, you see that was the reason they put me on \$2,000, and put me on all this work, the best way to beat somebody is don't call see, so I wouldn't take the job and they tell me that if I didn't take this job you can't stay in this town either without our support

MB: That frankly, they said that?

CH: Oh, old man Willie said that straight up! I didn't say anything, under my breath I said "Well we've see."

CH: So what happened was then the war came on in 1941, I'm still doing my work. So I quit in August 1942. And of course I wasn't supposed to be in town for a year because I didn't have their support, and I said well you're working with the Dutchmen now, So I was gone day and night, I gave the people service and treatment, there were three things I said I said I was never going to mistreat anybody, never lie to anybody and I am never going to overcharge anybody. And you can asked them

MB: Oh, I know your very good reputation among widows and minors

CH: If you can ask anybody and they tell you different, their lying

MB: Oh, you have a very good reputation, I would be surprised if anyone challenged it

CH: All I can say to this day, I was able to stay and of course, I had 5 women in labor the last day, and Old man Willie called the night supervisor at the time at 11:30 at night, and said "After 12:00 you don't call Dr. Hoffman anymore. You can't believe those kinds of things

MB: Well I can.

CH: So anyway I had all the right in the world to take those women to a mental hospital If I have so drive, and then of course I be in trouble cause they make me trouble. I had already fixed up my hospitalization and so on, and I could deliver them to Johnstown at the memorial hospital and Raymond hospital that was near the [mendinghale] place, so I started sticking my patients there, and I still did delivery's at home, and there's nothing wrong with delivers at the home, I never had an infection at home, I never had any trouble I did all kinds of things at home.

In the first place the patient had the baby, these doctors that think they're so freaking sophisticated that they're the ones who control everything, they got another thought coming. I just heard two weeks ago, this 13 year old to this midwell(?).

The doctor told her you have to see a gynecologist, so they saw an internal medicine man, and he tells her she has to see a gynecologist. She got an assist in the ovary, so they got her in the hospital, so they were going to take out an ovary

The trouble today is doctors don't take a history. History is the most important thing in medicine, because what do you know about a patient if they don't tell you what wrong with them how they fell, I mean that the whole thing, So they open her up and they said she has a ruptured appendance it was walled off, and these specialist who think they're so smart they need to go for a walk, and you can see what I mean, and then they wonder why there are so many lawsuits. Doctors brought it on themselves, that's the whole story.

MB: So much specialization

CH: That's right specialization and no care. I just heard that last week, from my daughter, the a doctor was in town and he had this women scheduled for a hysterectomy, and when she comes in and he's been treating her for years, and he says What did you come in for ? She said you have to give me a hysterectomy, little did she know that he had to have her admitted to a hospital in order to have a necessary operation. If you don't know what the hell you're going to do with a patient who going to have a major operation you'd better go for a walk. I don't know how you fell about it, and they wonder why there are so many lawsuits, I say to doctor, that if it takes a long time to get a history you better take the history. I don't know how you feel about it, I can my idea of what happened, we had a fella named Dr. Hatcher, he charged great big fees he did unnecessary operations all that kind of stuff, they knew I saw a lot of patients, so I was the king of the law, all these fellows want referrals, because I'm the guy who's going to refer patients, it comes back to money, that's what happened. So anyway Dr. Hatcher had got himself into trouble he still went out and did some general practice in the city. So what happened was, he saw me in the office, he and another surgeon would playing cards in the doctors room. I see him every morning down there and I didn't have time to talk to everybody I was busy. So Dr. Hatch says to me "Chancy who do you refer your surgical patients too?" I said I believe in free choice, if they have a surgeon I'd tell them to see that person, if they didn't have a surgeon I would start to name some. So Hatch he asked me because that was his money.

So what happens was this lady comes in with from rio's (?) corner she used to live out in central city road, she had 6 or seven children. Her husband worked in the steel mill, oh and by the way the steel mill during the war wasn't a steel mill for those workers it was a goldmine for those workers, Because they got paid, it was nobody's business, and they used to come in and wanted sleeping pills so they could sleep from 11:30 at night to 6:00 am in the morning. And they had a flood down there, and a lot of those workers would have drowned if their buddies wouldn't have waked them up. I mean that's what Union does, that's that right either, well anyway this lady comes in she had [enhimphem] in her gallbladder; she was 39 years of age she wasn't a desirable patient. She had a car; her husband had a specialized Jeep and worked in the steel mill, and they made as much money more money than the average individual. She had to have emergency surgery; she was running a septic temperature, well you know I call Dr. Hatch and I say Miss Wetzal is here, she's 38 and has an inflected gallbladder that's cancerous gall bladder with full pus, you know that worse than a ruptured appendix when it ruptures. So anyway what happened is I told him about it and I said you do it I went to BlueCross and BlueShield pays, Bethel had the best medical VR around here, that's the reason we had so many doctors in Johnstown because we had more money. So yes he do it, so I thought if he does it, that's what he promised me.

So I usually go in and see, if I send a patient to the hospital I send Ms. Grove in, she smothered him. One time after I got the call yesterday I thought about her.

So I went out to see her, they lived out in 35 then and county cornered from the store and I made a diagnosis of "superior mesenteric thrombosis," you know that's a pretty sharp diagnosis, you don't get these things sitting on your end not thinking about it, you get from thinking. So I call Dr. Barefoot at the Hospital. I say I'm with Ms. Grove she's 84, I think she died, did she die?

MB: Yes she did

CH: She died, Barefoot goes back to the dinner table, he was at dinner, he was taken away by the telephone, he goes back and listens, I tell him I'm sending you Ms. grove, I think she is 84, and I say she's got a superior mesenteric thrombosis, of the superior mesenteric dietary. And that's the artery up here, that the back of the stomach. So he goes back to the doctors table, that's where the other doctors are. So he says "Listen to this Bullshit, Dr. Chauncey Hoffman is sending a patient with a diagnosis of superior mesentery artery thrombosis" That's a diagnosis you don't make unless you're on the inside. Anyway that's what she had, I send her to Bethel; this is what goes on in surgery. I call doctor Hatch she's here 38, she's got [enhimphem] in her gallbladder and she needs emergency surgery, I said well you do it on the Bethel plan. I didn't go in to her, usually I go in whenever I refer you or someone else, I went to see how my doctor was treating my patient. Which they didn't treat my patient bad. If I had any complaints the best thing to do was to speak to my doctor. Because I'm interested in my patient, I didn't send her in to get google eyes and die. So I didn't go in to see her I was too busy, I could of gone in but I didn't. 6 to 8 weeks later she comes into my office. So I'm asking you to be the judge, did I do wrong?

So she comes in she has this BlueCross bill paid, BlueShield bill paid, and she has an extra hundred dollar bill from Dr. Hatch. And she is mad as a hornet "What's this one", you heard me talking on the telephone, and he said he would do it, but why did he send me this bill for \$100. That's an extra money thing, that's been going on the entire time and I can't buy it. So anyway what happened is I said "give me those invoices and bill, I'll go down there every day I see them in their everyday playing cards, they're not working. If they were working they wouldn't have to do that. So I go in and I said "Dr. Hatch, Ms. Wetzel was in yesterday she bought these invoices in. Two of them are paid BlueCross and BlueShield, and she says she owes you a bill for \$100. You promised that you would do it for BlueCross and BlueShield. He said "Well Chancy it took me an hour to do that, no one would do that for what BlueCross and BlueShield paid."

I said "That's not the idea, I don't give a dam if it took you six hours to do it, it's what you promised me, and I tore the check up, I tore the check in two, I said here's your god dam check and I told her not to pay it."

MB: Well I think you were standing up for her, weren't you?

CH: Well why should he rob my patient, I mean, I done surgery, I did hemorrhoids when I first started for a dollar and a half and I got good results. That was in 1937 so I know something about selling that shit.

MB: When did you retire? Or are you retired?

CH: I retired the last day of 1975

MB: So you practiced until then?

CH: Yeah

MB: You had your office down in Wynn brook near one of those churches.

CH: Yeah, right across from the Greek Catholic Church, right at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> street.

MB: I knew I used to walk behind there when I was a little girl

CH: I used to make calls to Beaverdale and Central city, I had a big practice in Bedford County, Boswell. I went everywhere any hour of the night.

MB: Were you affiliated with the hospital at all after leaving

CH: Well they said I couldn't stay in this town without their support, that was in 1943, well old man Willie he had Ms. Vine, you remember Ms. Vine she was an superintendent at the hospital, she had beautiful; platinum hair, she was an old lady and he had Ms. Vine every morning go through the newspaper and see who from Wynnbrook this area was in the Johnstown hospital. See that's what she do, she give him the report, and of course some of them , they weren't my patients, their having an itchy rear end cause old man Willie says, "That God dam Hoffman is sending everybody to Johnstown" see that's interfering with their pocketbook.

MB: What did they do with this list of names?

CH: Well they said "That son of a bitch is sending everybody to Johnstown", so I kept on, I'm not mad at anybody, one night in 1950, I send a patient up to Wynnbrook hospital to be delivered, it was her sixth baby and her husband was a Plummer, and he worked everyone outside of Johnstown, and they lived out RD1 Windber and she didn't have anybody to take her to Johnstown. So she wanted to go to Wynnbrook, and I said "that's all right". I sat down and I referred her to Wynnbrook. Dr. George Reiny would be on service that night, in the evening he had office hours from 7 to 8. Here's the place to get Chancy. George gets the telephone and he say "we've got you referral here Ms. Reagan. So we got the deliver and I gave all the prenatal calls I could and by the way I never charged for prenatal calls. So you meet competition where it is. George says "Johnson why don't you come up and deliver, we want you to deliver all your patients up here. Because he wants to get my surgery, this is just something on the inside. So I went back in, that's how I started to deliver then. Day after that 1943, there was never that many babies delivered in the Wynnbrook Hospital and there were 4 or 5 of us delivering the hospital at that time. And they never dated 383 babies in one year. But I was doing good, I didn't take all my patients there, I had a lot of my patients get to Johnstown, that's where I was delivering most of them. But I did, I did referral for surgery, and we got along good. I'll tell you another thing too. The fella, and these are doctors for you, now that's this fellow was still young Dr. Sherman, he circumcises one of my male babies, now that's my patient.

Can you imagine someone cutting the end of a penis and getting by with it, why that suit wouldn't be worth a half million dollars. Isn't that right, that's certifications, some of these super certified doctors have, you see what I mean? Those are the kind of situations that would often occur.

MB: You seem to be very independent, did you come from a big family?



CH: Yes, my father was a farmer; I had seven brothers and two sisters. My father sued the Berwind-White, now you wondered about the coal business.

MB: Yes, was that your father? I did come across a lawsuit

CH: Yes, my father sued the Berwind-White, you see up until that time the Berwind-White could do anything they wanted to. There were three lawsuits and they were the three biggest lawsuits in Cambria County. Because this was Cambria County, where the farm was in, so one was declared a mistrial and the other one was similar the company people, couldn't testify they were all on vacations in Colorado, California, and Florida and all that kind of stuff. And the reason for that was to make my father Sam Hoffman spend all his money, so that he couldn't carry on these lawsuits. I remember when the company man came up to my father, the two of them sat at the kitchen in the farmhouse, and he said, "If you don't \$5,000 for the place and relieve us from all damages, why will we seek it and it won't be worth 50 cent. And my father he never said anything. All he said that whole afternoon, I was just 6 or 8, and my father said "You're not through with Sam Hoffman yet" So what he did he got a lawyer from Pittsburgh, R.K.W Macready, and then he summons Oliver Wakefield's men officers, you know the big deal as their witnesses, so they had to be there. We were the first ones to get to Berwind-White. And then you can imagine we got all types of tickets, my family was arrested, I was arrested. That's the way the company worked

MB: Now this Lawsuit came to a climax in 1920?

CH: Well I think it was 1920

MB: Now did your family never sell them the mineral rights? Was there damage done to the land?

CH: Well the mineral rights were sold on condition, if it interfered with the top surface of water, then they couldn't even take a tenth out. So they took the water, we had a 50 anchor sugar camp, so the sugar trees all died, cause they took the water. We had no water; we had to pump water in. Eventually my father won, I still don't know how he would ever pay that much money. But he never griped about it and he won. Now let's talk about something else.

Berwind-White owns all this land; you know how much people would tell you. They don't own it by conviction, they own it by default. After my father won the lawsuit, the company's lawyer Percy Allen Rhoads one could beat him. He had everything, he had a carnation in his lapel, and he was number one, but when he lost the lawsuits and lost this one, he was whipped, he was no good after that. What they did, the company right away they had the pin mill for him, do you remember the pin mill down here on route 56 where they had the skating rink, do you remember that?

MB: I've heard people talk about it

CH: Well that was the old [Bumguardnier] place

MB: Oh, I know the [Bumguardnier]

CH: That was Harry Hager's farm there, Hager own it, the last time My father won in march, Hager took him over in June for his damages. Then up at the crossroads, Berkley, took him over in Sept, He wins the case, so they couldn't win anymore they had to buy these farms, so what they tried to do they sent fellas around from this real estate company from the state of Indiana, they wanted so many acres in this ad, they come to my father and so on they wanted to buy these farms in this big scheme. But my father, his good friend one of them, Bob Luther, he lived out here in, part of the cemetery was his farm, so they got Bob Luther to go around and say that "If they want to buy these farms they'll get them," but he was trying to buy those farms for the Berwind-White. So the reason they did that were buy for the Berwind-White, they couldn't buy it for a little bit of money, they had to pay them so all these farms out in south forth, and [porte] all his farms out here they bought those farms they owned them by default so to speak.

They brought what they farmed, they owned it by default, but Bob Luther, he dead now for long time now, I treated both he and his wife. If he had goes out to visit them, those farmers eventually found out what he was doing, and he had gone out to see, those were mean fellas, they would have killed him. And some of his children are still living. I enjoyed a good relationship with him, that's what happens. They used to have these coal cars running all over the scale like this, they had their own rail man he read of the number of the car, the amount of coal on their maybe it be half the amount recorded, it would be noted as 200 pounds, and it would be 1,100 pounds, that the way they did.

MB: That's one of the things about that 1922 strike, do you remember that strike?

CH: I remember I had some friends that was killed in that strike.

MB: Oh really, well tell me what do you remember about that strike?

CH: Well you see, they had a strike a lot of these fellas who were working in the woods and they weren't getting much pay. They went to these scabs, strike breakers, so these fellas they were striking see they get in all kinds of fights.

MB: You must of been pretty young? You were about 16 I guess? ,

CH: No, I was older than 16

CH: I was older than the average when I went to High school, I didn't go to High school when I was supposed to, because it was reported that newer girls in the locker room smoked, and I'm glad they didn't.

MB: That's interesting your parents sound like interesting people.

CH: So of course we were always a sort. We didn't like the firm Berwind-White control of the electric company, we didn't have lights on the farm until after I graduated from medical school.

MB: Was there retaliation?

CH: They wouldn't give him lights, he could of forced them the public utilities at this time, my father wouldn't want to brother with that. I think they let the lights in about 1936.

MB: Did any of your other brother's or sister's become doctors?

CH: My youngest brother is a doctor down in York Pa. He's doing real well, I think he made more money than I did he was younger too, he was in the war.

MB: Where were you in the age group of the family? Where you in the middle?

CH: I was the 5<sup>th</sup> child

MB: Did your grandparents come from Germany?

CH: My great-grandmother on my father's side came from Germany, my great-grandfather came over from Somerset County with his father, when he was 1 year old and located in the middle of the field in hemlock and built his own house. He built it with punching floors, what does punching floors mean? I think it's taking the first of the log and cut it off this way and that makes it flat, this part would be flat see. And this would be flat here and this would round, and they would drill holes here, and put wooden pegs into the ground into the clay, listen eh people don't know how to save money. You go down the old road, why are those houses built up on the hill there? They had thousands and thousands of acres because they didn't want to destroy any farmland, that's the way these places are built like that.

That's how people use to save; people don't know how to save; now you might be for free choice for this, or prochoice, I hear these arguments for prochoice, and prolife, women have prochoice, they shouldn't get pregnant, it's only this liberal business that's what to do that, it's the parents thought. What do you think?

MB: Well I think that's complicated; there are a lot of people who would like to someone who was raped have a child.

CH: I can understand a lot of those kind of things, when I saw a lot of them, but really they have pro-choice, and if the colored people want to do anything, 51% of the color babies are born out of wedlock, if they want to pull themselves up by the bootstraps, it's the parents that shouldn't have those girls getting pregnant. Illegitimate at the taxpayers' expense. Isn't that right now?

MB: Well yeah, I'm interested in what you think, I like to hear your views

CH: When your mother was young the parents controlled their children, see now the parents aren't interested in controlling their children.

MB: Well it's hard to control your children; society is different than it was then, in a lot of ways.

CH: Yeah, well some aren't interested and it makes it harder for the rest of them

MB: Now their talking about, I just heard this morning a 3 month old fetus, they can abort them and keep them alive. And they turn out, but most of them turn out but most of them don't turn in full complement of anything, and it's going to cost the state maybe thousands of dollars to bring that child up towards livable. Is that right?

MB: Yeah, if the babies still alive

CH: You probably know the [Flaliers], you know the [Flaliers] women? [Flaliers], she had a child that was born Ann, without a for frame that's a back high frame., I delivered the child The mother was so embarrassed with it, she never went out of the house, I treated the child and I told them there was nothing I could do here, there's no use in running up expenses, and if there is any time you want me to see the child, I'll see the child. And the child lived to be 10 years old. And I don't think my bill should have been \$100, and I just make a call.

So we had a Hindu doctor here in Johnston that treated one child, same kind of child for six months, and what do you think she sent the bill in at BlueCross for \$48,000 and she only had the child for 6 months. So there's a lot of inequity.

MB: obviously you had empathy for those people; I mean who could afford that.

CH: It's not that I think I'm right all the time, I mean who is right?

MB: Yeah, a lot of complicated things, there sure is money involved in all of these things

CH: So Miss Salier gets pregnant one time, she didn't want a baby, so I go down she was bleeding I knew she was miscarrying, I put my insolence in to sterilize her, above my office, I live above my office, I go down and make the call, my diagnosis is right, I take her up in my car, I take her in a room, I did a DMC (?), I did it on what the BlueCross paid, blue cross and BlueShield weren't the doctors. A doctor shouldn't do that in his office, they wouldn't pay the bill, because of what I done. So I sit down I composed a letter after a couple of days, and I told them I was real glad to see that they didn't pay the bill. But I didn't know what I would say about my fellow doctors and fellow colleagues and so on, and what they were doing, If this bill isn't paid it's going to cost you less than 500,000, Jesus I got the check in 3 days, they knew I could bust up anything BlueCross and BlueShield

MB: What about Miners and Lung diseases? Tell me what you know about that and accidents

CH: In Wynnbrook, the miners were treated good, they rented houses, I think the rent was \$8 a month, and everybody had their light on at night on the porches, after the big strike, they had to pay higher rent and lights, they didn't realize what they were getting into

MB: Was it hard to get doctors to diagnose lung diseases

CH: I used to do pathology; [pneumoconiosis] they got Black lung from the senator from West Virginia he coined the phrase Black Lung.

### **End of Tape 1**

### **Beginning of Tape 2 (July 11, 1989)**

MB: So someone in the original family had the farm until 7 years ago

CH: That was our house for about 100 years now, my Grandfather came over and build that house.

Now how in the world do these people make enough money without hard work build their places and have a law suit, that cause a lot of money, only by saving, only by saving, people, I don't know how to save money today, I don't know whether you think so?

MB: Well you right, of course your right?

CH: So those are the kinds of things that happened.

MB: Well also your father must have been very in you too, a very independent minded because of the way your lives went, first of all your lawsuit against the company which many of people wouldn't of done.

CH: Well he had to, they took the water, the farm was no good without water, we put our own water system in. we pump it in, a farm was no god without water,

MB: That's really fascinating

CH: But I still can see a few people who still have animosity.

MB: Really? But you have a lot of people who admire you, was your family one of the ones who rented land to the farmers?

CH: Yeah

MB: Would you like to tell me anything you want to add?

CH: That was when my father gave them a place, the sugar camp died because the water was taken away, so we had stumps there it was on the hillside, so it made it an ideal place to meet. And of course he didn't charge anything to have a meeting, and we were already in a bad situation messing with the Berwind-White, so that was the best of a "beat you up take two"

MB: Did your family have any feelings about people from eastern central Europe come over with different languages

CH: Nope we had a lot of good friends, we would always treated them good, they used to come to the farm we show them hay, they used to a lot of cows, in which they milked, they had a lot of boarders, Pete can tell you about that I delivered a lot of babies for those women in the year 40 and 45 and so on, I told them not to go to the outside toilets. They had to go up in the winter time, I make a check on them the next day, and I would see a women coming out the outside bathroom in her bare feet, and I just yelled at her the day before.

MB: But oddly the people born in this country did not feel the same way about those people. You were good about it, but didn't a lot of people not like them?

CH: They had an animosity, well they were called Hunkies, the same way with a Negro, color fellas alright; if a colored fella does something, the first thing comes to mind 'he's just a damn nigger.' But all those houses out there used to be filled with people from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, not as many from Czechoslovakia or Poland, a lot of people from Poland

MB: Do you remember anything of the Ku Klux Klan? I remember reading newspaper headlines from the 1920s, the Klan was very active in this part. Do you remember anything about that?

CH: Yeah, I remember that over there above Windber, they used to burn crosses, the down fall of the KKK was one Sunday they rented a passenger train to go up to Portage and they had a big demonstration, and that was the downfall of the KKK, because a couple of fellas was killed on that deal and Portage, people were Catholics most of them, I think Catholics were irritated by the Clan?.

MB: Yes, foreigners and Catholics which were often the same, I knew they were at the area, I just don't know what went on in Windber. Some of the newspapers say they were around. Do you have any idea who was in it was it a local thing?

CH: Well lots of them were local and lots of them were from Johnstown and so on.

MB: Okay, I just wondered about that. Is your wife from this area too?

CH: No she's from Mississippi

Mrs. Hoffman: I'm from Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, three southern states.

MB: Where did you meet?

Mrs. Hoffman: Alabama

MB: Oh, while you both were in school?

Mrs. Hoffman: No I wasn't in school, I had a brother in school. I used to go over. I used to live in Pulaski where the Klan began. And my father was transfer to Mississippi when I was a teenager, so I'm originally from Alabama.

MB: so how long have you been married?

Mrs. Hoffman: It'll be 55 years, this year this December

MB: Congratulations, that's a long time

CH: But the Klu Klux has lost their punch, there's always radicals and groups like that, Senator Berger he was a big Klu Kluxer, he's made his way

Mrs. Hoffman: they also had demonstrations in the south and we would always run in the house, and they had us scared to death.

CH: Now going back [pneumoconiosis – Black Lung], those houses in Windber, those houses look good, Windber got all those buildings because [pneumoconiosis], all of that is because of benefits. My neighbor over here he never made as much money as he did in 1958 when mines went down.

MB: Yeah in the 1950s throughout the entire decade, we left in '56

Mrs. Hoffman: You might say 50s and 60s everyone was packing up.

MB: was there anything else you can tell me about Windber?

CH: A lot of these people who had borders, saved their money and made money and returned to Europe.

MB: Do you remember a lot of people doing that?

CH: Yes, there are still [pneumoconiosis] checks and social security checks and miners pensions going all going around in Europe. That somebody else is cashing, the people are dead but somebody else is chasing the checks.

MB: I guess some of them didn't bring their wives and children

CH: I just saw one of my friends the other day with five million dollars' worth of checks, government checks that's not taxed. The reason if the government checks that a check is over a year old, it's just a notification, if it's a year old, then up until now they can cash it, but the reason they never got them cashed was because they always be good, but a lot of them got caught.

MB: Oh, didn't realize that.

Mrs. Hoffman: I know one or two friends especially a lady, she used to go out and pick potatoes, for these farmers, and the money she would make she would send over to over to Whitman, and a couple houses out in Greensburg she lived on 10th street, and now she's still living there, she

must be about 80, and when the potatoes didn't work well, when she was working on it [Mopson] at the greenhouse would send money over to her company.

MB: Did you ever get paid with goods

CH: You mean potatoes?

MB: Yeah, did miners ever try to pay you in things other than money.

CH: Well I had a lot of people that always wanted to eat with me, and I had people always giving me something, but too much wasn't good, the reason was most of it would go to waste. And if you get obligated to people things change. Isn't that right?

Mrs. Hoffman: We had our own garden and vegetables

CH: I used to be farmer.

MB: So is there anything else you would like to add?

CH: No, I think that's about it.

MB: Okay, I'll just turn this off.

**End of Tape 2**

**End of the Interview**