

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Smith, Ovid Sept. 30, 1981
Interviewed by Hila Bross

Tape: 023

This is Hila Bross with the Clinton County Historical Society. The date is Wednesday, Sept 30, 1981. We are in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Smith in Ovid. We're going to interview Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Now Mr. Smith we're ready to start our interview. Mr. Smith what is the name of this particular part of Ovid?

It has always been called [?] addition.

How do you spell that name?

[?]

Was this addition added to Ovid at a later date here or has?

This has always been here.

This is always been here.

As long as I've been here .

And the complete northeast corner of Ovid.

Northeast corner yes.

I've noticed that Meridian road is just one block west of us.

Yes

That means if we ran the time were right according to nature that we are sitting in Eastern standard time now and the rest of Ovid and the rest of Clinton county would be in Central standard time. If things were as they ought to be is that right?

Well, as far as I know about time I guess probably that what would happen. We've had two times here in the past we've called sun and snow time.

When did you have sun time and snow time?

I was in school.

I see

A long time ago.

I recall something like that back during World War I. Is that about the time you're thinking of?

I don't know. It has been a good many years. It would be about that time or a little before. .

Mr. Smith may I call you Harold?

Sure

Well Harold where were you born?

Jackson Michigan

Had your parents lived there very long?

About 9 years.

Where did they come from?

Ovid

Oh they had lived in Ovid before they went to Jackson.

This is where they originated from Ovid, Michigan, in this vicinity.

Well then your grandparents lived in Ovid is that right?

Right, my grandparents lived two miles north of here.

Three miles north of here that would be, can you name the road that runs east and west.

The old farm was right on the Meridian road. Right east of the colony.

Oh yes

If you know where the colony is.

It is probably near Colony road then and Meridian road.

Come east on Colony and go east to the end of the road and there is the farm.

Did you go to school here in Ovid then?

Oh yes

Or did you go to school in Jackson?

I went to school here. Started school in 1900.

I have heard that you used to work for the American Express company.

Yes

When did you start working for them?

1926

Now that was connected with the Grand Trunk railroad in some way wasn't it?

Not at that time.

But I mean weren't there offices at the railroad stations?

No

Oh there weren't?

No we had separate offices of the express at that time.

What did the American Express company do?

They handled all kinds of parcels, livestock, everything.

Do we have anything now that would be comparable to it?

No there is nothing any more. Express is all forgot about.

What was the difference between an express and freight?

Well express is what they called I.T.L. shipment or car loads .

Did they travel by freight train?

Oh yes they traveled by the freight.

Now the American Express they sent there things by the passenger trains, didn't they?

That's right

In what the bagage cars?

They call it the express cars.

Oh they had a separate car for the express?

Yea I think so.

Now the name of the company was changed at one time and what did they change it to?

The railroad sold out there interest and they formed the railway express agency.

They called it the railway express agency

They were separate from the railroad.

But then were your offices connected to the railroad station?

No

Oh they weren't

Well some of them did. St. Johns had their office at the depot.

Yes I remember.

But I had separate office.

Did they give pretty good service?

Oh we thought we did. We shipped a lot of stuff out of there.

For instance what would you ship?

During the gladiolas season there were around 150 hampers a day.

For heavens sake now what was the name of the companies that raised these.

Vaughn seed

The Vaughn Seed company.

They're still here of course that is back there in the 1920's 6, 7, 8. Along in there.

At about 100

150 hampers, banana hampers

Hampers

Cut flowers to Chicago.

Were they the flowers that you sent? Or the bulbs?

Just the flowers

You sent flowers.

Yes

And they were sold what at a market then?

Well I suppose they went to Chicago.

Maybe florist

They distributed them down there.

Well isn't that interesting.

Yes

Did they also ship glad bulbs?

Oh yes. In fact I've shipped garden seed from here down into Florida by express. They had a frost down in Florida that killed their crops down there and they had to have seed right now didn't have airplanes to carry it down so they went by express. I had about thirty bags. 100 pounds to the bag. Garden seed and bean seed.

Isn't that interesting. What else did you ship from Ovid? That would be different from other communities?

Well we shipped everything. I shipped livestock

You shipped live stock?

Well like calves.

I would think they would go by freight.

No a majority of them did, but they would send these shipments to a certain place and then I handled a lot of dogs, mules.

Dogs and cats I would suppose.

[tape ends here]