

LYMAN LESUER

Interviewer: David Neal

Interviewed on: February 7, 2003

Interviewer: Let's start with giving your full name and spell it.

Lyman LeSuer: Lyman LeSuer.

Interviewer: And your first name?

Lyman LeSuer: Lyman's my first name.

Interviewer: How old are you and what is your birth date?

Lyman LeSuer: I was born in 1916 on September 20th, and what else do you want to know?

Interviewer: That would make you...83?

Lyman LeSuer: 86.

Interviewer: Where all have you lived in Franklin Township?

Lyman LeSuer: All my life.

Interviewer: Just right here?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, a couple years is all. I lived down on the hill.

Interviewer: What hill? Where else did you live at in the Township?

Lyman LeSuer: Oh, just down on top of the hill down here.

Interviewer: On the same road here, on Fry Road?

Lyman LeSuer: On Fry Road, just cross the crossroad.

Interviewer: Is that where you were born?

Lyman LeSuer: Where I got married and lived there.

Interviewer: Then you moved here and that's it?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, I bought the place here across the creek. My Dad's place is here.

Interviewer: So you lived in the Township all your life?

Lyman LeSuer: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you tell me what your home was like in your early years? How did you heat?

Lyman LeSuer: My folks heated with wood and coal.

Interviewer: You had a wood and coal stove? Where was that at?

Lyman LeSuer: Where was what?

Interviewer: The wood and coal stove, where was that kept at in the house?

Lyman LeSuer: Oh, in the living room and dining room. This didn't used to be a kitchen. It used to be a wood shed.

Interviewer: So, did you just have the one wood stove for the whole house or one in the kitchen?

Lyman LeSuer: It was a cook stove.

Interviewer: Was that a wood and coal stove, also?

Lyman LeSuer: Mostly wood, yeah.

Interviewer: When did you get inside water?

Lyman LeSuer: That was a long time ago. My dad put a Gould pump in...down in the cellar. But I don't know what year.

Interviewer: So, you pumped water in from the well into the cellar?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah.

Interviewer: At least you didn't have to go outside. What about hot water? When did you get a hot water tank?

Lyman LeSuer: I don't know.

Interviewer: How about electricity?

Lyman LeSuer: I can remember when I was just a little shaver, Rusterholtz wired the house. I remember that. I remember that when they got it wired, Walter, my brother, he wanted to turn the lights on first! That's true. But I don't remember what year.

Interviewer: You were pretty small at the time?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah, about five or six.

Interviewer: That's pretty early. What about an inside toilet, plumbing?

Lyman LeSuer: Didn't have one for a lot of years. Dad (Leonard "Lennie" LeSuer) put it in.

Interviewer: Do you remember when you got a telephone?

Lyman LeSuer: My dad had a telephone. Had two dry cell batteries in it. Used to be...two long, and two short...crank it.

Interviewer: How old were you when you got the telephone?

Lyman LeSuer: (Shaking head no)

Interviewer: Do you remember who in the neighborhood had the first electric and telephone?

Interviewer: No, not really.

Interviewer: How about radios?

Lyman LeSuer: Didn't have such things back then.

Interviewer: Do you remember anyone who had a radio?

Lyman LeSuer: No, (shaking head).

Interviewer: What about television?

Lyman LeSuer: There was one over across the creek. Couldn't get much on it.

Interviewer: When was that?

Lyman LeSuer: I don't know, 1950 (?), I think.

Interviewer: Was there anyone around that had a TV first that you used to visit and watch?

Lyman LeSuer: No, not that I know of.

Interviewer: What about the first electric washing machine and refrigerator?

Lyman LeSuer: My dad had a refrigerator, but I don't know what year it was.

Interviewer: That was when you were a kid?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah. It was electric.

Interviewer: Who do you remember had the first car or truck?

Lyman LeSuer: My dad had a Model T Ford.

Interviewer: Do you remember what year?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about your siblings?

Lyman LeSuer: There were seven of us. Mildred, Walter, Evelyn, Violet, Norman and myself.

Interviewer: Who was the oldest and youngest?

Lyman LeSuer: Mildred (He had one more sister, Mabel). That's right, Mabel.

Interviewer: Do you remember what were their last names once they got married?

Lyman LeSuer: Mabel married a Swift (Layton Swift). My oldest sister married a Loucks. Evelyn married McCombs (Reginald McCombs). Violet married Gould (Bernard).

Interviewer: Whom else were you related to in the township? Aunts, Uncles?

Lyman LeSuer: Ernie LeSuer lived down here. Ernie LeSuer and Elmer LeSuer.

Interviewer: Those were your uncles?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah.

Interviewer: They lived down the same road, down the road here?

Lyman LeSuer: Just a couple houses down there, that big house.

Interviewer: Let's talk about your parents. What were their names?

Lyman LeSuer: Leonard Lancet LeSuer was my dad. Martha Hewitt LeSuer was my mother.

Interviewer: Hewitt was her maiden name?

Lyman LeSuer: Hewitt, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you know around when they were born?

Lyman LeSuer: I don't know, he was born in 15 (?) and he died in 50 (?). [Leonard was born in 1879, according to the 1880 Census]

Interviewer: Did they live here?

Lyman LeSuer: My mother, before she was married, she lived in Branchville. My dad, I think my dad lived here a long time.

Interviewer: Do you remember your Grandparents?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, I guess I better say I don't. I was pretty young.

Interviewer: In your earliest memories, who were your friends growing up?

Lyman LeSuer: Howard Dunton was one of them. The Eaton boys, we'd play together. The Harned's, the girls.

Interviewer: What were their first names?

Lyman LeSuer: The girls were Marian, Eleanor, Charlotte and Dianne, the Harned girls.

Interviewer: What about the Eaton boys?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, I lived up here on the hill for a year or two. We were kids. We just played together.

Interviewer: You don't remember their names?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Who were your parents' friends?

Lyman LeSuer: No, not really.

Interviewer: What is your fondest childhood memory?

Lyman LeSuer: I don't know.

Interviewer: You don't remember any good times when you were a kid? What kind of stuff did you like to do when you were a kid?

Lyman LeSuer: Just played most of the time.

Interviewer: Where did you play, out in the woods?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah, out in the woods.

Interviewer: Did you do any hunting?

Lyman LeSuer: Not back then. No. We had a coonhound.

Interviewer: Do you remember a fondest Christmas gift or memory?

Lyman LeSuer: I don't know.

Interviewer: What was Christmas like at your house when you were a kid?

Lyman LeSuer: All the family would get together. We had a Christmas tree. That's about it.

Interviewer: Where did you get the tree?

Lyman LeSuer: Back in the woods.

Interviewer: Who did you marry?

Lyman LeSuer: A Hayes. Doris Hayes was her name.

Interviewer: How did you two meet?

Lyman LeSuer: We met at a social picnic.

Interviewer: A social picnic, where?

Lyman LeSuer: Oh, over there on Silverthorn Road.

Interviewer: Was it a church picnic?

Lyman LeSuer: I guess it was, then.

Interviewer: On Silverthorn Road?

Lyman LeSuer: That's where we met, but she lived in Wesleyville.

Interviewer: Where did you get married at?

Lyman LeSuer: Wesleyville.

Interviewer: Did you go on a Honeymoon?

Lyman LeSuer: Went to Niagara Falls.

Interviewer: Where did you live when you were first married?

Lyman LeSuer: Lived down here on top of the hill.

Interviewer: Here on Fry Road?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah, then I bought this place across the creek. In '40, I think it was.

Interviewer: You want to go through your children's names and when they were born.

Lyman LeSuer: My children? Wendell, Dentsil and Nevearin. Nevearin was born in '50; Wendell was born in '38 I think, Dentsil was born in '41.

Interviewer: Where did you go to school at?

Lyman LeSuer: Right down here on Townline. This road used to be Townline.

Interviewer: The school was on this road?

Lyman LeSuer: Down here about two houses, on the right.

Interviewer: What other schools do you remember being around?

Lyman LeSuer: I went here all eight grades. Then I went to high school in Edinboro.

Interviewer: Do remember any other schools around the Township?

Lyman LeSuer: Foy School.

Interviewer: Where was that at?

Lyman LeSuer: Over here on Silverthorn.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of your teachers in school?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah. Agnes Francis was my first teacher. I was just a little fella. Delbert Hayes was my second one. Margaret and Don Porter were my teachers and Don (?) Swift.

Interviewer: You said you went to High School in Edinboro. Did you graduate there?

Lyman LeSuer: No. I didn't graduate.

Interviewer: What was your highest grade?

Lyman LeSuer: Sophomore.

Interviewer: Why did you stop then?

Lyman LeSuer: It was pretty hard to go to school back then. You had to walk or you don't go, that's all.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of your classmates from grade school?

Lyman LeSuer: Can't remember their names.

Interviewer: Do you remember who your best friend was back then?

Lyman LeSuer: They were all my friends!

Interviewer: Any of your school friends still alive?

Lyman LeSuer: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Did you guys farm when you were growing up?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah.

Interviewer: What kind of crops did you grow?

Lyman LeSuer: Oats and corn.

Interviewer: What kind of equipment did you have for farming?

Lyman LeSuer: Not much.

Interviewer: Give me some examples.

Lyman LeSuer: At first it was just horses. Cultivator, plow, at the beginning and finally a small tractor.

Interviewer: Do you remember when that was?

Lyman LeSuer: My dad was still farming. I can't say.

Interviewer: That was when you were still a kid?

Lyman LeSuer: About eighteen or nineteen.

Interviewer: Do you remember who had the first tractor around here?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, I think Leeson Fellows had a Fordson and Glen Harned. And Guy Hayes had an International.

Interviewer: What about threshers and planters?

Lyman LeSuer: You mean what we planted with?

Interviewer: Do you remember who got the first threshers and planters and your neighbors planted with?

Lyman LeSuer: No, I don't. It was too long ago.

Interviewer: Did your neighbors share equipment?

Lyman LeSuer: Not very much. All we had was horses. Neighbors trade off and fill silos and then fill another one.

Interviewer: Corn silos?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah.

Interviewer: What kind of animals did you have on the farm?

Lyman LeSuer: Holsteins and Jerseys.

Interviewer: How many?

Lyman LeSuer: Oh, about fifteen.

Interviewer: You dairy farmed too?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you do your own butchering?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah. In the fall, we butchered a cow and a pig.

Interviewer: How many pigs did you have?

Lyman LeSuer: Oh, about two.

Interviewer: How about chickens?

Lyman LeSuer: About fifty.

Interviewer: How did you preserve the meat that you butchered?

Lyman LeSuer: My Dad used to put it in a brine and then he'd take it out. Some kind of preservatives he injected in the hams.

Interviewer: Did you do a lot of canning?

Lyman LeSuer: My Mother canned everything. She canned the meat and she canned sausage. She took the sausage and put it in big jars and heated it in the oven a little bit. And put it upstairs in the house where it was cold. Never heated the upstairs.

Interviewer: You kept your canning in the attic?

Lyman LeSuer: No, we kept it down the cellar.

Interviewer: Did you have a big garden?

Lyman LeSuer: My Dad had strawberries.

Interviewer: Did they make strawberry jam?

Lyman LeSuer: I guess so.

Interviewer: I'm going to go through some different businesses in the Township and tell me if you remember any of them. Blacksmiths?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Sawmills?

Lyman LeSuer: Taylor had one, a portable one.

Interviewer: Where was he at?

Lyman LeSuer: He lived over on 98. He died. I remember him sawing wood across the road. Taylor...I can't think of his first name.

Interviewer: What about Cheese factories?

Lyman LeSuer: Ivoray had a Cheese factory. My Dad used to separate the milk and take the cream over there on Ivoray.

Interviewer: Ivoray? Where was that at?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, I don't know for sure.

Interviewer: Do you remember any other Cheese factories in the Township?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: How about mechanics?

Lyman LeSuer: Most of them did their own work, until they got the one in Edinboro at Walkers.

Interviewer: Where was he at?

Lyman LeSuer: Right in Edinboro.

Interviewer: Merchants? What stores did you go to?

Lyman LeSuer: There was Zindel's.

Interviewer: Where was Zindel's at?

Lyman LeSuer: In Edinboro. Walkers had a Buick garage and it was the next place downtown.

Interviewer: Right on the main block there. Do remember any stone quarries around here?

Lyman LeSuer: Stone quarries? (shaking head no)

Interviewer: Where did you go to buy oil and gas?

Lyman LeSuer: They used to deliver it right here.

Interviewer: Who delivered it?

Lyman LeSuer: There was a big fella who had a place in McKean, but I can't think of his name.

Interviewer: Do you remember any wagon makers?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Do you remember any shoemakers?

Lyman LeSuer: There used to be but I can't tell you the name.

Interviewer: Do you remember where they were at?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Who were the Doctors or Dentists around here?

Lyman LeSuer: Boyd Ghering was one and Harold Ghering was another one.

Interviewer: Where were they at?

Lyman LeSuer: In Edinboro.

Interviewer: How about Feed Mills or Grist Mills?

Lyman LeSuer: Zortman had a feed mill.

Interviewer: Where was that at?

Lyman LeSuer: Other side of town.

Interviewer: Center?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah. There was Keystone mill down by the dam where water is coming out of the Lake.

Interviewer: Where's the dam at?

Lyman LeSuer: Guess you could say going out of town. South.

Interviewer: On 98?

Lyman LeSuer: Not on 98. It's been so long ago.

Interviewer: Do you remember any makers of leather goods or tinkers?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Any horse or cattle dealers?

Lyman LeSuer: Wayne Harrison in McKean. He butchers and bought pigs, horses and cows. Goldschmidt (Max) over here, he dealt with horses and cows near 99. That's the only two I can think of.

Interviewer: Do you remember the prices of anything when you were younger?

Lyman LeSuer: Not really.

Interviewer: You don't remember the prices of anything when you were younger? Of flour? Or bread?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: How about candy?

Lyman LeSuer: My Dad had to take milk out to McLane. Crandall (Lynn Crandall owned a store at McLane)) He always bought a pound of candy for Mother. Ten cents a pound.

Interviewer: What about farm and land values? How much was your place when you bought it in '40?

Lyman LeSuer: Across the creek here, I bought that place. I think I gave \$1400 for it. Three or four cows, a horse, eleven pigs.

Interviewer: How many acres?

Lyman LeSuer: Thirty.

Interviewer: Do you remember what house values were like?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: How much was furniture?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: What kind of jobs did you have through the years?

Lyman LeSuer: Carpentry and farming.

Interviewer: Where did you do your carpentry at?

Lyman LeSuer: Over at the neighbors, in Edinboro, McKean, wherever they wanted the job done.

Interviewer: That and farming. What kind of pay did you get for carpentry?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, I started out at ten cents an hour when I worked for my Dad. I think I worked up to \$2.50 an hour.

Interviewer: Now, when you started out at ten cents an hour, how old were you?

Lyman LeSuer: About fourteen, fifteen, it was to help my Dad.

Interviewer: What kind of a workday did you have?

Lyman LeSuer: About eight hours.

Interviewer: How did you get to work?

Lyman LeSuer: My Dad had a pickup truck.

Interviewer: He had a pickup as well as a model T?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah, he did. I think he sold that Model T and bought the truck.

Interviewer: What kind of truck was it?

Lyman LeSuer: I think it was a Ford, I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Do you remember any Civil War or WWI veterans that lived in the Township?

Lyman LeSuer: None that lived here, no.

Interviewer: Do you remember what churches there were in the Township?

Lyman LeSuer: Franklin Center.

Interviewer: Franklin Center Church-the Methodist Church?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah.

Interviewer: Any other ones?

Lyman LeSuer: There used to be one at McLane, I think.

Interviewer: Did you go to the Franklin Center Church?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you know who the pastor was?

Lyman LeSuer: God, no.

Interviewer: You mentioned a Church Social. What kind of things did they do there?

Lyman LeSuer: They used to have them. The women would take a box with food in it. They had a raffle...or sell it...? Whoever had the bigger one, ...that's who they sat with to eat it?

Interviewer: That's how you met your wife. Isn't it?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah, that was pretty good!

Interviewer: Do you remember any other school or church gatherings?

Lyman LeSuer: Not really.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything about government or politics when you were younger?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Do you remember who any of the Road Supervisors were?

Lyman LeSuer: Only one I remember is Leeson Fellows down there where...?

Interviewer: When was that?

Lyman LeSuer: God, he's been dead fifty years.

Interviewer: That's when you were a little kid?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah.

Interviewer: What were the roads like back then?

Lyman LeSuer: Terrible! This road here, a lot of times...they traveled it a little bit with horses and dump wagons. But, (shaking his head) you might just as well forget it in the winter.

Interviewer: Just dirt and ruts?

Lyman LeSuer: Oh, sometimes you had to pull a car through. Glen Harned, he used to go to Market (12th Street Market) every week. More than once, I pulled him through on this road to his place.

Interviewer: What did you pull him with?

Lyman LeSuer: Horses.

Interviewer: Where was Market at?

Lyman LeSuer: It was Central Market, in Erie. There was another Market, but I can't think what the name of it is.

Interviewer: How did you get around? Did you have a sleigh, too?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah, horses and sleigh.

Interviewer: And you had automobiles, too?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, we didn't use them much, then. We had to jack them up.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of the Assessors, Constables or School Directors, Justices, any of those people?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Do you know anyone in the Township who went on to higher political office?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Do you remember previous names of Township roads? Any of the roads change names?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, this one here changed from Townline to Fry.

Interviewer: Do you remember when that changed?

Lyman LeSuer: No. It ain't been too many years ago, probably twenty years.

Interviewer: Do you remember why it changed?

Lyman LeSuer: No. There was a Minnie Fry that lived here on the other side of Old State. Whether they got her name and called it Fry, or what it was, I don't know.

Interviewer: Do you remember any other roads in the Township that changed names?

Lyman LeSuer: None that changed names, no.

Interviewer: Do you remember any natural disasters? Any really severe storms?

Lyman LeSuer: We had a tornado. The Hatch farm barn burnt. I was working with my Dad up on the other side of Edinboro.

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Lyman LeSuer: Probably sixteen, seventeen.

Interviewer: Did you see the tornado?

Lyman LeSuer: Yeah, it went right through here. Moved that house I was working on. It moved it two inches on its foundation. Then it took twenty trees down, back here. The Hatch barn burnt. Hell, that was a major one.

Interviewer: Any other natural disasters like that? Particularly bad winters?

Lyman LeSuer: In '44, we had a doozy.

Interviewer: Now, how did you plow? How did you guys get the roads cleared?

Lyman LeSuer: Well, this road was closed. I don't just remember what date it was...1944, the last day or day before, something like that. They got 4 foot of snow that night. It blocked the road. It was March before we ever got through. We took the milk and stuff either to Edinboro or McLane by sleigh and horses.

Interviewer: How did they finally clear the roads?

Lyman LeSuer: A bunch of us worked on it. And all they had was a 10-10 crawler. And they couldn't push much, the snow was so deep. It took us three days to get from Old State to Crane Road. And then they couldn't get through it. That was something else!

Interviewer: Do you remember people of different ethnic backgrounds? People coming from the "Old Country"?

Lyman LeSuer: People came here, but I don't know if they came from the "Old Country" or not.

Interviewer: Any immigrants come here?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Do you remember any diseases?

Lyman LeSuer: They used to have mumps, chicken pox, typhoid fever. There was another one that was a killer.

Interviewer: Scarlet fever?

Lyman LeSuer: Scarlet fever.

Interviewer: Do you remember anyone getting that?

Lyman LeSuer: Harris' up here on the corner. Two of them died. I didn't know who. That was before my time.

Interviewer: Was that during the Flu epidemic?

Lyman LeSuer: I don't remember what year. That was a good many years ago.

Interviewer: Was that when you were a kid?

Lyman LeSuer: No, I wasn't even around.

Interviewer: What other things do you remember people dying from?

Lyman LeSuer: Back then, I don't know. There weren't too many people.

Interviewer: Where were people were buried at around here?

Lyman LeSuer: McLane Cemetery, Mill Village Cemetery, Edinboro Cemetery.

Interviewer: Any of those here in the Township?

Lyman LeSuer: No.

Interviewer: Is there anything we didn't hit on that you'd like to bring out?

Lyman LeSuer: No, I guess not.

Interviewer: Well, thanks for your time.

Lyman LeSuer: I guess I didn't answer very good questions.

Interviewer: Oh, you did fine.