

Waseca County Historical Society
Waseca, Minnesota

Transcription of Oral History Interview

Oral History Participant: Roy C. Myers

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Interviewer: Sheila Morris

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See agreement form for further details

Sheila: My name's Sheila Morris, I am co-director of the Waseca County Historical Society. Today is February, I'm sorry, today is January 30, 2007 and I am at the home of Roy Myers. Roy would you tell me your name, your full name and your birth date.

Roy: My full name is Roy Clifford Myers and I was born January 26, 1913 and that was at 720 North State Street in Waseca.

Sheila: Is that right? Were you born in the house?

Roy: The house that I was born in has been torn down and a duplex is in place of it.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: And I lived there until I was eleven years old and then we moved.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: One block, one house north to 722 North State Street. I lived there until, until I got married which was, I don't know, quite a while ago.

Sheila: Roy tell me your address now.

Roy: It's 723 3rd Street Northeast.

Sheila: I remember in a conversation that we had before that you said you've lived in Waseca all your 94 years, but you have lived on the same block. That's just about true, isn't it?

Roy: Well pretty close.

Sheila: Yeah.

Roy: Well I've lived on 117 7th Avenue Northeast, which is around the corner from where I was born and where I live now.

Sheila: Okay, on the south side of the block?

Roy: And now on the north side of the block.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: The south side is where I live now.

Sheila: Yeah.

Roy: And then after I got married I moved a block away to 603, in a duplex on 3rd Street Northeast.

Sheila: Okay, and Roy what were your parent's names?

Roy: My dad was Harry G. Myers and he ran the telephone company for years. And my mother was Persis Palmer Myers. She came from north of Wisconsin and was a secretary when she met my dad here.

Sheila: Okay. Were they married in Waseca?

Roy: Well I wasn't around so. I believe so, yeah.

Sheila: Okay. And are you the oldest? I don't know that. Are you the oldest?

Roy: I'm the youngest

Sheila: You're the youngest?

Roy: I'm the youngest of the family.

Sheila: Can you name like--

Roy: I had a brother Glen who was yodels. He was two years older and a sister, Mariann, who was two years younger than I.

Sheila: Okay. Ad I believe Glen eventually became mayor of Owatonna.

Roy: Glen, after he graduated from college got some jobs and ended up with - in Owatonna where he worked for a company and became a controller. And then he also was mayor for three or four terms in Owatonna.

Sheila: And where did you go to school?

Roy: I went to school at Carlton, both my brother and I. He was two years ahead of me.

Sheila: Carlton College in Northfield?

Roy: Yeah, in Northfield. Yeah. And I graduated from there in 1934.

Sheila: Which elementary school here in Waseca did you go to?

Roy: I went to Oak Groves School which isn't anymore. There's a skating rink now where it used to be.

Sheila: That's right.

Roy: And then in seventh grade, our seventh grade class was the first class to move into the old high school on Elm Avenue.

Sheila: Okay, which is- -

Roy: We were the first class to be in there.

Sheila: Okay, and you graduated from that high school.

Roy: I graduated from there in 1930.

Sheila: And when you went to Carlton what was your major? What did you study?

Roy: The girls. Botany was my basic interest.

Sheila: Really?

Roy: I had in mind to get a good grade there and then go on to the University of Montana, but that didn't work out so. Other than that, boy, I had four good years. I remember the fist couple of years how homesick I was for coming back in Waseca so. I was close and I used to hitch hike. Back in the old days you could hitch hike faster than you could drive it because all the salesmen that you rode with were fast drivers. My brother, I said, was two years ahead of me.

Sheila: Okay. I bet you were probably able to hitch with classmates back to Waseca.

Roy: Excuse me?

Sheila: Did you hitch with classmates who were coming home to Waseca?

Roy: Well most of the time I came home alone.

Sheila: Oh, did ya?

Roy: But my folks would always end up taking me back and they were one of the few who had cars. There weren't a lot cars around in the early days. Of course, in the 30s there were more.

Sheila: Well today we're going to talk about, mainly about your experiences as a Boy Scout because Waseca County, and the city of Waseca has a very famous Troop 85 and we know that the Boy Scouts of America were incorporated in the United

States in 1910 and Waseca County got their Boy Scout troop in about 1915. That's a little bit before – you were still a little guy when that was started, but do you remember your first Boy Scout meeting?

Roy: Excuse me. Well you had to be twelve, of course, to join and I remember going with my brother to a couple of meetings before I was old enough. The meetings were held at Oak Groves School. Now it's down there in Oak Groves Park. And then, when I was twelve I went in scared to death, of course, but with my brother's help I'd already learned all the tests that you had to get through; the Tenderfoot and some of the Second Class and First Class scouts honors were rather simple for me. I joined one week and the next week I got my Tenderfoot pin. In another three to four weeks I got my Second Class pin. But it took longer to get the First Class because there were more things to do and more complicated.

Sheila: Okay, and who was your Scout Master that first year?

Roy: Bob Hodgson.

Sheila: Mr. Hodgson?

Roy: Henry Hodgson, Bob.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: And he was not the first in Waseca, but he was mine at that time.

Sheila: It's recorded that Reverend George Stowe was the first Scout Master and Helmer Martinson was his assistant and there were twenty-seven boys in that first- -

Roy: Who was the assistant?

Sheila: Helmer or Gelmer Martinson?

Roy: Oh yeah, I don't know- -

Sheila: It was before- -

Roy: I know George, Reverend George Stowe. He wasn't active in Scouts when I was there, but I knew he was there ahead of time.

Sheila: Yeah, he had to resign in 1921. Also there was Judge Send was a chairman of the troop committee and it said that they met in the basement of the old Methodist church when they were first organizing- -

Roy: I don't remember that.

Sheila: That's before you?

Roy: That wouldn't surprise me of course because they met wherever they could find room.

Sheila: Well it also said that Hodgson took over after Reverend Stowe in 1921 and it was said until they could find someone permanent, but I know Mr. Hodgson was there for years and years and years. I think right up until the 60s.

Roy: He was a great one.

Sheila: And then Mr. Peterson, Herman Peterson joined the troop as an assistant Scout Master.

Roy: Herman Peterson was a friend of the Hodgson a family friend and he was there when I joined and he was the go to guy. I mean he was the pep guy. He kept everything going and you know, the kids working and things like that. He was a great provider and he had a grocery store in Waseca and on one of the tests you had to pass a judging and you passed it by Herman Peterson in his store and he'd bring different things out of the store and you had to judge how many were in

there and you had to have a good percentage, at least seventy-five percent to pass that test, but of course when he came with cans that one was pretty simple.

Sheila: I've scanned in a lot of photographs of the scouting activities and I noticed that any picture of Herman at camp, he was always wearing a white shirt and very often a tie too.

Roy: Oh, he always wore a white shirt, nothing else. He always did and at camp he was (word not clear) the go-to guy and if we needed something he'd go get it and he was really a great guy. Kept us going all the time.

Sheila: And later on Mr. E. A. Everett joined the crew and brought some of his business experience and he was a pretty enthusiastic trea- -

Roy: Well, are you still recording?

Sheila: Yes, go ahead.

Roy: E. A. Everett was a man that – he believed in getting things done and he was a big help and he contributed a lot of financial help. And that was a great man for it.

Sheila: I heard that he used to allow the scouts to come on his property because he had so many different kinds of trees and bushes.

Roy: That was at his home and a lot of passed a lot of nature study tests right there and he had a daughter Connie, who was very interested in Boy Scouts also and she helped a lot. E. A. Everett, the EACO Mill that he had, Everett Aughenbaugh Company was EACO and we ended up having our Boy Scouts meetings there in the- -

Sheila: At the mill offices?

Roy: In the hold office after it was dissolved and E. A. Everett had a couple of sayings. One of them was, "Do it. Do it right and do it right now." Another saying he had was, and he had signs up, showing all them, "Results, not excuses." He was great for the kind of stuff.

Sheila: So these were signs that he would have in his offices for his employees too?

Roy: Excuse me?

Sheila: Would he have these as signs in his offices for the employees?

Roy: No, I wasn't in there before. I don't know. I never was in his office

Sheila: But these are things that he told the Boy Scouts?

Roy: He had them there for the Boy Scouts.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: Well, I know my mother worked in his office when she first came to Waseca.

Sheila: Really?

Roy: That was how she got here and then met my dad.

Sheila: Then there is a Mr. Farrell, who worked at the First National Bank.

Roy: J. E. Farrell, Ed Farrell. He was the treasurer of the troop and he never missed a meeting. He was at every single meeting. E. A. Everett would be at a few, but not very many meetings he'd be to. He provided (word not clear). We had display cases that went around and each troop had its own case. Each patrol, and you had the job as the patrol leader to take care of the case and make it mean something. He was a great organizer and he, E. A. Everett, he got things done and he was good at it.

Sheila: And then there was Parson Brandon?

Roy: Reverend Brandon. He was the Episcopal minister and he lived in the house right

next to it which is now torn down and a different house is there now. That's the house that the Grace Lutheran, the church, the Grace Lutheran Church was in.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: That was Episcopal. And if you go there, into the church, in the old sanctuary and you look at the windows, and there are names of various people that worked at the mill, at the flour mill because most of the people who worked there were Episcopal.

Sheila: Is that right?

Roy: Yup.

Sheila: Okay

Roy: You didn't know that did you?

Sheila: I didn't know that.

Roy: Yeah. Well like the Wards and then the Watson's and people like that's names are on the bottom of the window that they donated these fancy color glass windows.

Sheila: They donated towards the windows?

Roy: Toward the Episcopal church.

Sheila: Mhmm. Okay.

Roy: Eric Sholstrand had built that Episcopal church, which is now Grace. He was a contractor.

Sheila: And he was in, he lived in Waseca?

Roy: He lived and worked in Waseca.

Sheila: Yeah.

Roy: He belonged, I think he belonged to the church. I'm not sure.

Sheila: Okay. Eric Sholstrand.

Roy: Yeah.

Sheila: Um, in 19, let's see, 1924 Mr. Hodgson described the growth of Troop 84. It was a city wide project. So for three years they were recruiting and trying to get all the boys involved in Boy Scouts. Um, do you remember that? I know you were still, that's before. Let's see, you were still not twelve yet. Do you remember?

Roy: Well I think his troop was unique and I remember. I wasn't a member yet, but because I wasn't old enough, but we were going to, the Waseca troop wanted to go to Minneapolis to participate in what they called a Wallakazoo. It was a thing that you had contests in knot tying the first day and anything, any of the tests you had, firebelly.

Sheila: And was this troops from all over Minnesota that were coming?

Roy: No, this was strictly a Minneapolis deal, but we wanted to go up to be in it.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: Well like I said, I wasn't old enough, but I remember going up there and sitting in the balcony with my, well with my dad probably drove a load of kids up. I don't know. But anyway, they wrote us back, Minneapolis. Whoever was in charge, they wrote us back and said we'd love to have you, but you can't come. You have to have permission of the National Council. Well at that time Waseca didn't even know we belonged to a National Council. Waseca was sort of going on its own. So that's first when they found out that we belonged to an area, I guess they called it. We were under the control of Albert Lea. We had to get permission from them. Well actually we had to get permission, Albert Lea had to get permission

from New York. And we got to walk there because we didn't know we belonged to other people. Anyway, we went up there and all the troops were dressed in Boy Scouts uniforms except Waseca. Waseca's uniform was a white shirt, a red neckerchief, and a pair of black pants, dark blue or black pants because they couldn't, Waseca felt, Hodgson felt kids can't afford buying their Scout clothes so that was the official Waseca dress. We went up like that and as I remember, as I said, I wasn't participating. I think we won every event except fire and friction and at that time, I don't know, a few knew how to do it, but that wasn't much of a deal around Waseca.

Sheila: Well they eventually got uniforms though. Did they get sponsors or something?

Roy: Well we were finally accepted and found out we had to pay dues someplace else. We hadn't been paying and all that kind of stuff.

Sheila: Yeah.

Roy: So that's how it came. Like we were supposed to have permission to go to Scout camp. We didn't have permission. He just, Hodgson just sent us to Scout camp. And we had, oh we had well over a hundred in one troop. We didn't know you couldn't have that many, but we did.

Sheila: Well yes. In 1924 you had 103 boys registered.

Roy: Yeah.

Sheila: That was a lot. It seems like your leaders gave you a sense of, a lot of pride early on.

Roy: Well I was, I was sixteen. You're a Boy Scout, act like one and do what you're supposed to do. And then I know at first a couple of the kids I knew joined because maybe by (words unclear) Scouts, I could get a job in the summertime out at the state farm where Hodgson did the farming run by the state.

Sheila: And did you do that? Did you work out at the experiment station, at the state farm?

Roy: Well, I'll tell you the way it looked to me. The leaders that did go to scouting were the ones he hired out there. You really didn't have to ask for it. If you did a good job, "hey you want to work on the farm this summer?" You know. So yeah.

Sheila: Yeah, you did that. I think I have a picture of you working.

Roy: Well I was—

Sheila: You're

Roy: I worked about all through high school and even, I think, through college. Well I know I did through college.

Sheila: Yeah.

Roy: Of course that was during the Depression and there weren't many jobs, you know.

Sheila: So it was you. It wasn't your brother Glen.

Roy: Well he did, he worked too.

Sheila: Did he?

Roy: Yeah, he worked out there too.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: In fact, he got to be the boss one year.

Sheila: Well I'm going to, I'll show you this picture then on our next session because I'm pretty sure it's you.

Roy: Well we always worked with our shirt off. They would try to get a good tan.

Anybody that blistered was a sissy and I blistered.

Sheila: Well they didn't dare try to call you a sissy though did they?

Roy: Um..

Sheila: Go ahead.

Roy: Then when we'd go to Scout Camp, the fellas that worked for the farm were the head leaders. Usually at Scout camp you got elected by the kid because they were older and they'd been through the ropes. And then later on at Scout Camp, I even was one of the head monkeys. I slept with the bigshots; Hodgson, Peterson. Then we'd go around and inspect and do all those kind of things.

Sheila: Yeah. Now I know that, from these, there's a couple of Scouting albums at the museum that I've leafed through and you went to a lot of different places, Lake Sakatah. You went to Cedar Lake or Cedar Point on Lake Francis. There was a place called Mazaska.

Roy: Mazaska

Sheila: You remember that one?

Roy: I think also- -

Sheila: Do you remember- - Do you remember that wet camp in 1931 at Mazaska when everybody got so wet?

Roy: Yeah, well that way it rained everyday and when we'd break up camp we used to take all the stuff out to the state farm and it dried out.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: All the tents. They owned all the tents.

Sheila: Okay. Well there's a story about how fast the water rose. I think were they out on an island or they're out on an islet and they had to pass the younger boys, the shorter boys, and those that couldn't swim, you know, person to person and make sure that they didn't get- -

Roy: Well that was at, I think that was at Cedar Lake. I think.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: I remember Cedar Lake. I believe.

Sheila: Well then there, oh. The next year, 1932, at Cedar Island it was a pretty wet camp and they talked about the mud and the impassable roads. And how you guys broke camp, but you had to put it back because the cars couldn't get out there.

Roy: We backpacked it out.

Sheila: Yeah. So you had to go back in after carrying all that stuff out. That was a pretty hard camp, wasn't it?

Roy: Yeah, we had. That was a tough one. Well, then we were at (words unclear 24:04) at Waterville. We camped there.

Sheila: Do you have any memorable stories from those camping? Do you remember?

Roy: Well, a lot of them.

Sheila: I know you guys played a lot of tricks on each other too.

Roy: We had a lot of them.

Sheila: Was there a snake one year? Do you remember?

Roy: Well I remember one time, Pat Wood. When we swam we always went to the part that was the deepest, you know to swim. Well I remember Pat Wood. We were all out on the boat and he jumped in. He didn't realize he was in deep water and he couldn't swim. He was going to learn how to swim and my brother jumped in. He

was the guy in charge of the boat that day and he jumped in and pulled him out. Otherwise he'd drowned.

Sheila: Oh my gosh.

Roy: He just, he didn't realize it was deep. But we had, oh we had so many stories. It was huge amount. And I remember one time we were at Waterville, at Sakatah, down at the end of the camp that, the land that Ed Irving ended up buying after he moved in (word unclear 25:27) years later. We always went on overnight camps someplace and it always ended up something would happen at the camp. I remember this one in Waterville and my dad came out and I was not one of the leaders yet. I was, I was a patrol leader and we, my dad came out and he was talking about the crazy woman that had gotten out someplace from St. Peter and they were trying to find her and she was in this neighborhood. And I believed it because my dad said it, not knowing that it was all a fake. Well, anyway, that night we were going to Horseshoe Lake, which was probably a mile away across country. And we all went over there in the afternoon and we set up our places to sleep and everything. Scared to death, of course, at the camp fire where Hodgson kept talking about the crazy woman, who was out gone and during the night I was to go on shift to watch for the crazy woman at 2:30. That was my time to. Whoever was on duty was to wake me up. Then I was to go on duty with one other fella. I was laying there, scared to death it was going to be my time to watch and about that time, Hodgson woke everybody up and it looked like a storm was coming and at 2:30, before my turn to do that I had to, we all packed up and walked back in the dark. Back to Scout Camp so we wouldn't be in the storm.

Sheila: Yeah.

Roy: The good Lord was looking after me on that one because I was, I was scared to be the lookout.

Sheila: Well are there any other camping stories you want to share.

Roy: Well I could tell you lots of them, but...

Sheila: How about the cooking? Who, did you ever cook?

Roy: Well I never did the cooking for the camp. We always hired, always hired a camp cook. It was Eddie Hogan. Well I remember one camp cook. Eddie was going to be the cook, but he had a problem. Sometimes he would buy (word unclear 27:50) too much. Not at the camp, but beforehand. One time, this was one of the camps in Waterville and Eddie couldn't be found sober so they'd rather call of camp. Woody Mitchell, that's Harem Mitchell, he was one of the older guys and I think he was the first Eagle Scout in Waseca, but anyway, he was one of the first. He said "I'll do the cooking," so he was the head cook for the whole camp and we never ate better. But that's...

Sheila: What did you eat in those days? Did you, were there hot dogs? Did you make hamburgers?

Roy: Well we had hot dogs and we had goulash, a lot of goulash and macaroni and cheese and always eggs. See who could flip a fryer without breaking the yolk. That kind of stuff. A lot of pancakes.

Sheila: Did you catch...

Roy: We ate well.

Sheila: Did you catch fish?

Roy: What?

Sheila: Did you catch fish?

Roy: No. No, nobody, you didn't have time to go fishing.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: You were too busy with activities. First thing, of course, in the morning, we were early in, getting out in the nude or something in the brisk fall mornings doing exercises, and then some of them were foolish enough to jump in the lake, but not me.

Sheila: Okay and then pancakes.

Roy: Always pancakes.

Sheila: Yeah.

Roy: We ate well. We really did. We can't complain (not sure about this line 29:35).

Sheila: Were there races as far as your other, some of your other activities?

Roy: Were there what?

Sheila: Races?

Roy: Races? Oh yeah, but it was always this tent against this tent and you know, always competition so you work harder. And you'd all have a major project like building a bridge or something like that.

Sheila: Yeah. Do you think that your scouting experience helped you to be a good team member, leader in life?

Roy: Oh no question about it. I remember one morning for inspection, and this is when I was one of the leaders. We went around inspecting each kid. He had to have his bed made and everything else and of course your bed was, you made your own bed. You cut the willow trees and logs and make your own bed.

Sheila: Is that right?

Roy: And we went around and went places when there was inspection and they were all lined up in front of the forest when we came and my, one of my questions was, "Have your bowels moved today?" We came to this guy, Lawrence Mauring (spelling?), his dad worked at Sate Farm. It came to him and he says, "No, but I can move if you want me to." Of course that got a big chuckle and from then on it was "Go if you can Spaulding (spelling?)."

Sheila: Go if you can Spaulding (spelling?). Well I understand that Ruth Kozan came to, she was with one of the camps. One of the moms or wives that came out to help with the food and she brought her accordion along. Do you remember that? Were you at any of those?

Roy: I don't remember that one.

Sheila: Okay, that's in Mr. Hodgson's...

Roy: That's probably after me. I don't know.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: I don't remember that.

Sheila: What about the New Year, New Years Day hikes? Do you remember those?

Roy: Oh we always went on a New Years Day hike.

Sheila: Okay. Was that the main troop or was that an Aquilla Club activity?

Roy: No, no. That was the main troop. That was the main troop and there'd be anywhere from 10 to 30 kids hike and one of the favorite places to hike to was the big tree. The big tree is east of Otisco. Straight east, along the river and if you go out there

today the trunk of the big tree is still there. I remember one year we went out there and the top had fallen off of it about, oh maybe, 15 feet high. Yeah, about 15 feet high and the top blew so you could walk up the top, the part that blew down and could walk up that and get into the stuff that was still there.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: Which is 15 feet up. Well I remember three kids went up in there and the guys, after they had gotten up there, the guys on the ground had a snow ball fight. Three ganged up and wouldn't let them down.

Sheila: So that was your favorite place to go hiking? Out by the big tree?

Roy: Yeah and then we would go play shiny on the ice.

Sheila: Skinny?

Roy: Shiny.

Sheila: Shiny?

Roy: Which is hockey with sticks and a tin can for a puck.

Sheila: Yup. That's what he described here. So it's kind of the...

Roy: That's just a dog food can.

Sheila: Okay. That was kind of an early hockey game.

Roy: That was a hockey game, yeah. There was hockey then. That's how we played it.

Sheila: Well, Leon Sexton, it was said here in Hodgson's writing, never forgave his patrol leader for dragging him out when it was eighteen below on New Years Day.

Roy: Well, we went out... It was way below zero one year I went out there. Now, you always went out as a group, but when you came home you always... The older, bigger fellas would head out and head off and the younger fellas would... Well the younger fellas would be tired out and left behind. They played too much hockey.

Sheila: And who was Skipper Iversen?

Roy: Who was what?

Sheila: Skipper Iversen?

Roy: Oh, that would be Iner (spelling?-34:26).

Sheila: Iner.

Roy: It was, he was county attorney.

Sheila: Yup. Iner Iversen.

Roy: Well wait a minute. It was, that would be his older brother. Iner's older brother.

Sheila: What was his given name? Do you know?

Roy: I don't remember.

Sheila: No? Okay. Well Hodgson wrote that Skipper Iversen decided to skip the hike one stormy New Years Day, but the boys came in and hauled him out of bed, put his pants on, and took him along.

Roy: Well, that'd probably be, well... even before my time, I think that was the Lorenz (spelling?-35:04) twins. They were, they were, they were the, sort of the leaders.

Sheila: Do you remember um... Do you remember going out to New Ulm, to see, with E.A. Everett, to see the monument out there?

Roy: No. That'd be before me.

Sheila: Okay. There was something built out there for that Indian uprising of 1862. That

was before you?

Roy: That was before me.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: That was the group before me.

Sheila: There are pictures in those albums I mentioned before about, I see E.A. Everett and some Boy Scouts and I think they're out at Lake Shetek. There are one or two monuments where, where his grandmother... his step-grandmother had been killed in 1862 at the uprising.

Roy: By the Indians probably. Everett, E.A. Everett also led, he was quite a bird enthusiast.

Sheila: Birds. Yes.

Roy: Birds. And he took a bunch of the older fellas, before my time, some of the older fellas. The Rens twins, I know, and probably Woody Mitchel and they went up north, banding birds. The kind that nests, nests in the trees, big nests. And they were talking about at the Wamo (word?-36:38), when they go in to get the bird, which was, it wasn't desirable.

Sheila: Mhmm. He had quite a collection of birds that had been taxidermy.

Roy: Oh, very big. And he ended up giving everything to New Richland High School.

Sheila: That's right.

Roy: Because Waseca didn't appreciate him.

Sheila: Yup. And we borrowed those back for our exhibit of the Everett family in 2002.

Roy: And he also had a lot of athletic equipment that he donated to Waseca, through the Boy Scouts, and then also gave them all that stuff. I remember there was a side-horse, several springboards. That kind of stuff, that he gave.

Sheila: When you were camping did you have mascots? Did the different tents have mascots? Do you remember anything about that?

Roy: Mascots?

Sheila: Mascots.

Roy: No. Not really.

Sheila: No. A pig, or a dog, or an armadillo? Or maybe they were just symbols that were used, not the actual...

Roy: No. I don't think so.

Sheila: And then did you, did you go on trips outside of Waseca county? Did you go to Washington for that Jamboree?

Roy: No.

Sheila: You didn't go to that?

Roy: Maybe some of the kids did on their own, but never as a troop sponsored. That was pretty expensive back in those days.

Sheila: Yes. Tell me about, tell me about the Aquilla Club.

Roy: Well, the Aquilla Club was a club made up of only Eagle Scouts and we ended up well over one hundred. I don't know. Over one hundred and thirty. Something like that.

Sheila: Do you remember the year that you became an Eagle Scout?

Roy: Well I was the thirteenth member. I remember that.

Sheila: Were you really? You were the thirteenth Aquilla Club member?

Roy: I was. Actually there were originally, let's see, originally eleven members, I think.

And I could name most of them I think. I think Bob Anderson was the first Eagle.

Sheila: That's right. That's right.

Roy: And Woody Mitchell and Ralph and Ronald Rens and Bob Lyn, Gene Graham, my brother..

Sheila: Glen.

Roy: Glen, and Wynnemer. Irvin I think it was. I think he was number twelve.

Sheila: Okay. And you had to pass about twenty-one merit badges in order to become...

Roy: You had to have twenty-one. Some required.

Sheila: How many merit badges would you do every year as a Boy Scout?

Roy: Well that depends on your ambition.

Sheila: Okay. So you could...

Roy: And a lot on your parents.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: If your parents were in the back of you pushing you. But I was...that first year that they had, after the formation of the Aquilla Club, the first year Walt Engle, Bob Graham, and myself, Walt was number twelve, I was thirteen, and Bob Graham was fourteen, we were initiated into it the first year out at the state farm.

Sheila: It's written here that Mr. Hodgson said how the troop committee wanted the Eagle test to be difficult so that the attainment of Eagle Scout status was meaningful.

Roy: It was.

Sheila: It was meaningful then.

Roy: It was.

Sheila: Mhmm. And it made, they said it made it very attractive for the boys to want to be an Eagle Scout.

Roy: It was, yeah. In my case, me and my brother both, we had our parents in back of us pushing us, but some of the others who didn't have parents, there was three of them, that didn't have...they weren't living with parents that did it on their own. And I think four or five of those ahead of us even ended up with doctorate degrees.

Sheila: There were... there was a new Eagle Scout every year.

Roy: Every year they had one.

Sheila: And at least... and you would have the annual Court of Honor. Would that be on the day after Christmas? Was that when the Court...

Roy: Well that was when we had the banquet.

Sheila: The banquet?

Roy: Yeah, we had the Aquilla banquet.

Sheila: When was the Court of Honor?

Roy: The Court of Honor was usually in January or February, around the birth of Boy Scouts. I think it was in February.

Sheila: Oh, February.

Roy: I think it was February fifteenth, or fifth.

Sheila: February. Well it...Hodgson notes that in, by 1967 there were 114 Eagle Scouts or Aquilla Club members. Does that sound right to you?

Roy: Oh yeah. That'd be alright, yeah. But they got a few after Hank went even. You know.

Sheila: In the fall of 1928, Troop 85 had 12 scouts. That's what you were just telling me and some of the boys shot more ducks than they could readily eat so they arranged to have a banquet to use those extra ducks.

Roy: Well that's the first banquet. We ate wild ducks and Mrs. Hodgson cooked them out at her house, I know. My brother was there. I wasn't.

Sheila: Okay. And was it held at the Masonic Temple?

Roy: Well that year it was at Hodgson's house.

Sheila: Okay. The first one.

Roy: At Hodgson's house. Out at the state farm.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: And, I don't remember when it was. I think it was there too, the first. I don't know. That was like maybe in September or October and then the first regular meeting was the one where I was initiated, but I'm not sure. Maybe that was a year later. I don't know.

Sheila: And then they decided to have their annual banquet on the day after Christmas.

Roy: 26th.

Sheila: Because a lot of the young men were home anyway.

Roy: Everyone was home then, yeah.

Sheila: Yeah. And then usually for many years it was held at the Aughenbaugh House or the Masonic Temple.

Roy: And the historical house, yes.

Sheila: Uh huh.

Roy: And otherwise we'd have it at various churches or something like that and pay the women. And Connie Everett used to donate five hundred dollars a year.

Sheila: For the food?

Roy: To the troop and then that was used to pay the people that served our meal.

Sheila: Okay. The date isn't noticed, but do you remember the one Aquilla Club Christmas banquet where, let's see, Herman had failed to get an Eagle Scout at that banquet that year and they were going to have an initiation, but there was no Eagle Scouts so they were going to penalize Herman. Do you remember that?

Roy: They made beans.

Sheila: They ate, yeah. They were going to make him eat beans in the basement, but they were...they held a trial first and Martin Senn and some of the other boys were the prosecution. Let's see. They were the prosecution and Martin Senn was the head of the defense. Were you there?

Roy: Yes.

Sheila: Do you remember the oratory?

Roy: I think that was held that time at the Congo church, but I'm not sure.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: But it was someplace in a church.

Sheila: I'm sorry at which church? The Congregational Church?

Roy: Oh yeah.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: Well, speaking of Larry Gallagher. He was a lawyer here in town and so on. Christmas Day I spent all afternoon at his folk's house helping him. The only thing he hadn't passed to become an Eagle was to make fire by friction and Mrs.

Gallagher. Mrs. Henry or, this is...not Henry Gallagher. I don't remember his younger brother and he was on the State Supreme Court and everything and at his house up there.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: And she was cooking turkey in the oven and we were using telephone poles, cedar telephone poles, as your fire by friction.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: And she baked this board in the turkey in the oven to get it warm and everything.

Sheila: And dry it out.

Roy: And dry it out. He finally got fire by friction going and he had it in his hands like this. You use slices of rope. You slice it. He had that going and he walked up in the kitchen. He says look I got fire going and he was blowing it like this. He'd have burnt his hand. I remember hitting his hands and dropping it on the floor and stepping on it so he wouldn't burn his hands. It didn't burn the floor either. But the whole family was so excited.

Sheila: Frank Gallagher is who you're thinking of.

Roy: Frank Gallagher.

Sheila: That's great.

Roy: I remember the Gallaghers wanted to pay me for helping him.

Sheila: Did you ever march in a parade as a Boy Scout?

Roy: Oh, always.

Sheila: Many times.

Roy: Always.

Sheila: Were you in the drum and bugle corp?

Roy: What?

Sheila: Did they have a drum and bugle corp?

Roy: Oh yeah. I wasn't in that though.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: No. Me and music don't get along. No, but they had a real good one and a fellow by the name of Boggs, who was a professional drummer, was the leader of it. He wasn't a Boy Scout, but he was the leader of it.

Sheila: Yeah. Okay. What year did you become a leader yourself?

Roy: Oh, I have no idea. Three or four years after I joined.

Sheila: And after you were in the Aquilla Club?

Roy: Oh no, no, no. Long before that. That I was...if I was a leader?

Sheila: Yeah.

Roy: A troop leader in the Scouts?

Sheila: Yup, after...

Roy: Oh, no. You go through assistant patrol leader and patrol leader and all that.

Sheila: Yeah.

Roy: Two or three years after I joined or something like that.

Sheila: Okay.

Roy: And my patrol always was the wolf patrol because I liked wolves. We called it the wolf patrol.

Sheila: Um, do you remember during World War II when there were so many of the Boy Scouts who were serving in the armed services? Did you serve in the army too?

Roy: There were a lot of them, but I couldn't...I couldn't begin to name them.

Sheila: No. Did you serve in the army too?

Roy: No.

Sheila: No, but there were many overseas and they wrote their letters home to Bob Hodgson or Herman.

Roy: At that time, yeah.

Sheila: And they started to collect the letters and Bob would put them together in, just to a long Christmas letter. He would get them published so that he could send the collection back out...

Roy: To all the boys. Yeah, yeah.

Sheila: To individuals so they could keep track of each other.

Roy: I've got some of those in the basement.

Sheila: Mhmm, and we have some of those at the museum.

Roy: I'm sure you have some there.

Sheila: But after he started doing it on his own then Don and Bumps Brown offered to print them.

Roy: Yeah.

Sheila: Type set them and print them and then...

Roy: Yeah. Don Brown was good on that kind of stuff.

Sheila: Yeah. Well that was quite, that was quite an effort because I know that was really important to them during the war to get news from home.

Roy: Because it spread all over, but I think you had enough loyalty to the Eagle Scouts and to the Aquilla Club that you did it automatically because you're loyal to the club.

Sheila: Mhmm.

Roy: See, the Waseca Aquilla Club when it was started was spelt...Aquilla was spelt with two l's. We got notified by the area after they found out about us that we spelt Aquilla wrong and Bob Hodgson said well nobody can knock the l out of us.

Sheila: And John Byron. You remember John Byron?

Roy: Yup.

Sheila: He lives in Florida now and he's also...

Roy: I'm glad he ran the computer.

Sheila: You bet. And he told me that story so there's another way that Waseca County Boy Scouts remain unique.

Roy: John Byron and my son were sort of buddy-buddy as they grew up.

Sheila: They were friends.

Roy: They put the, their...actually they used one of my hunting boats, into Watkins Lake and I picked them up over by Warsaw. They went by my hunting boat over by that Cray Creek and everything over to Warsaw.

Sheila: I think we're probably coming to the end of the Boy Scout era. Do you have any stories about when you were the troop leader? You know, after Hodgson and Peterson were gone.

Roy: Well.

Sheila: How did you feel like?

Roy: I don't know if you want to print this or not, but there was one kid. I was trying to

run the troop similar to the way Hodgson was and I had it going pretty well. I had about the same number of kids coming. See Hodgson's feeling was, you get the football player in the Boy Scouts as one of the leaders, you got everybody coming. Well see those days are gone now because we didn't have television and that. Some didn't even have a radio, you know. So those advantages are gone. But one of the first rude awakenings I had as a leader...I had one little kid about a foot shorter than everybody else. Good looking, he was a good looking kid. And, in fact he just died over the last couple of years. And he was always acting out, misbehaving, hitting somebody. And one time we were trying to do something, he was misbehaving and I grabbed him by the nap of the neck and took him into the kitchen there (words unclear-53:15). And I said to him, his name, "What in the hell is the matter with you? You're acting up all the time." He was sitting on my lap. He was that small and he put his arm around my neck and just started crying.

Sheila: Oh my gosh.

Roy: He says, "I don't have a dad to help me." I mean what a...well he and I had quite talk and he turned out to be one of the best kids. My voice is giving out.

Sheila: Okay. So all he needed was that connection.

Roy: What's that?

Sheila: All he needed was that connection.

Roy: Yeah. Well he turned out to be one of the best kids I had after that and I favored him a little bit, trying to help him.

Sheila: Sure.

Roy: So that's permissible, isn't it?

Sheila: You bet. Okay Red we're going to wrap it up for today.

END.