

Leonard Lee [Tape 2]

The meat market was built by Frank Nelson after the old building burned. The refrigeration part is very interesting in that old building. There was the nice front with a glass door you could open and shut. There was a big walk-in door on the side of the cooler. The ceiling was made out of slats with a small space between them. The cooling works in this way: They physically take a block of ice and push it up through a door and put it into that compartment, usually many blocks of ice. That's the way it was done for over 50 years, at least.

There was a good size building just south of this, between there and the Mill Pond which was the ice house. They usually got the ice from the Mill Pond, but that particular winter there was not enough ice. So, we went to North Lake and cut ice with a saw and loaded it on some sleighs and hauled it to the ice house. There was always a space, perhaps a foot wide, all the way around that ice that was filled with sawdust. So, he had ice clear through the summer.

Wade Hampton bought the meat market. He wanted it in the building where he was, which was a grocery next to the hardware store. The whole thing was put in there. He put in an electric cold maker. It's still there today. The building was probably built before 1850. It's not definite, but it was probably operated first by a Mr. Miller. There was an addition put on the back. The inside of the store is the same as it was when I was a little kid. A number of years back they poured a new foundation around the whole building, but they couldn't reach the middle. There are beams that go clear across to support it. When we moved that cooler over, they wanted some extra support for that. We cut a hole through the floor and put some cement blocks on the ground. From there it was blocked up to floor level at where the cooler was because that was a lot of extra weight. Same thing could be done now with the whole store.

Loren Townsend lived east of Breedsville. Everyone called him Mr. Moody. They had three daughters buried in six week's time with diphtheria. Mr. Breed himself is supposed to be buried under the first pine tree in the Breedsville Cemetery. Anyway, I don't remember Mr. and Mrs. Townsend when they were younger. Grover Page said he was always old even in the school days. Pa was in business and he tried to spread his patronage around to the various grocery

stores. Moody Townsend was one of them. Mr. Moody would literally sit all summer long on the little bench out in front of the store. I heard his say to some little child who came along to buy a penny's worth of candy, "It's not worth the wear on the bottom of my shoes for a penny's worth of candy." At the same time he's saying that, he goes in and gets the candy. He got so old that he couldn't walk from his house down to the store. She would pull him in a little tin wagon down to the store. Eventually, of course, they sold the store.

Mr. Landstrom, who lived north of Breedsville in the red brick house and had the two daughters; one was Gerda and one was Olga. Grover Page married Gerda. They moved into their house in 1913. They were from out in the country, about a mile and a half. They had two children, Alice, Ruth. The owner before Grover was Mort Dodd. He was a mailman. He would carry the mail on his back. Sometimes he would use a pushcart. He also raised chickens. I told you about my Auntie Carrie who was the managing tycoon. Well, my two older brothers were out and they liked to throw stones. Mort had a beautiful Plymouth Rock rooster. My brother Bill threw the rock that hit the rooster in the head. Everyone in the neighborhood gathered around. Auntie Carrie said, "Willie, you've got to go see Mr. Dodd and tell him you threw a stone it happened to hit the rooster in the head." He finally agreed to go and the rooster jumped up. The front roof of the Dodd house had gone bad and there was only 2 X 4's sticking out. When Grover Page got it he put on the beautiful front porch, shortly after 1913.

The church that's here now was dedicated in 1951. The old one burned in 1950. The cornerstone on that one said 1877. Another church was built on Howard Street that was hit by a tornado. There's no sign of it left. That was to be a Methodist Church and was in the process of, construction when it was struck. Where the Methodist Parsonage once was there is now nothing. Also, there was a place marked the Methodist Society. These items were both taken from the 1873 plat map of Breedsville.

A Mr. Doan moved onto Fourth Street and he and his wife lived there quite a number of years. They're passed away now. The house, I'm told, is falling down. Someone bought that or a parcel of property close to it and said, "We've got a right to have a road." So, the village had to build a good gravel road that became Fourth Street. It was never used. There may be some

remains of the house left.

As I indicated before, there was a family on the north side of town by the name of Landstrom. They had four children. Gerda married Grover Page. Another daughter married William Frude. If you follow the history of Breedsville, you'll find this name coming up time and again.

He was one of the influential men. He built a building that was a Supplies for Farmers, seeds, feeds, all the small things. I was pretty small when this was in business. I remember one specific incident November 11, 1918. I was eleven years old. The men of the town built an effigy of Kaiser Bill in front of that store and stuffed him with straw. That evening they had a big bon fire. They hung a wire across the top and took Kaiser Bill and roasted him. My Dad had a shop as I've mentioned. Some young men wanted something to make a lot of noise with. They borrowed Pa's two anvils. They took one anvil and set it on a corner, took some black powder and put it on heavy. Then they took the second anvil, which was about 150 pounds, and put it face down on top of the first one. They also borrowed 3/8" ironing rod from Pa and heated it in the fire in the middle of the square. Then they touched that black powder. Can you imagine a 150-pound anvil going up about 50 feet? It was a very powerful blast. They did that many times. At a later date the farmer supply building burned. No one knows how. Bill Frude was in Chicago at the time. Bill was a lot of things including a salesman for real estate. He would sell a lot from this region to people from Chicago. So he was away in Chicago at the time of the fire. At about 11:00 that night the fire was still going and he came. It burned for a long time after. That was a big loss for Bill and for the Village.

Bill had another building intended for big machinery supplies. The foundation is still there. He sold the Case tractor and all apparatus that went with it. I remember he had a huge Case tractor brought in by flat car. That tractor could pull through anything, except the lugs were flat steel and were to be bolted on by the dealer who received it. They hadn't been bolted on and the weather was wet. The tractor just stood and the wheels went around and around. They hauled it into "Frude's Shed", as everyone called it. There was a huge door in the back of the shed as well as the front. The back faced east and the front face west onto Railroad Street.

Bill was an enterprising young man and when I was small and there was no electricity yet he

would sell these electric plants. They would generate the electricity and charge the 16 cells making up 32 volts. So, he had electric lights in his building, not 110 volts like today, but 32. That unit was on a concrete piece about three feet high so the customers could see it. I can't tell you much about the rest of the equipment, but there was a lot of it in there. Later Frude sold the building to his brother-in-law, Grover Page, and stopped being a Case dealer. Grover operated that for a long time with small supplies for farmers.

Oliver Hosier lived in Fennville. Mark Hutchison was the money man of Fennville. Ollie was an engineer and Mark was the financier. Fennville had a generator that made electricity for that region. In Lawrence, they also had a generator making the 110V/220 just like we use here now.

Ollie and Mark got together and built an electric line from Fennville to Lawrence through Breedsville. May 15, 1925 at 10:00 A.M. is when the electricity was turned on in Breedsville.

H.W. Rhodenbough lived in the house that had the first electricity in Breedsville. He was the town druggist. According to Clair Leedy, (married to Belle Page, Grover's sister), who lived north of Breedsville, this house and the one across the street were built when he was 7, about 1907. Mr Rhodenbaugh added on to the original structure.

Rhodenbough had only one child, named Neil. He was about the same age as my brother William. Frude's shed burned. The mess had to be cleaned up. There was the remains of one of those old fashioned gasoline engines, probably two or three horse. It had the big fly wheel on the side. It was ruined in the fire. For part of Neil's pay for cleaning up the ruins of Bill Frude's shed, he got the old engine. It was no good for anything, every part was sealed solid with heat. Neil re-conditioned it. I think he brought it down to my dad's shop and he and Neil poured new babbitt bearings. Neil got a generator from, I presume, a Model T, and hooked it up to the engine. He then ran the wires from there up to the living room. So, he had electric lights, and I believe that he was the first in town to have electric lights. If you wanted lights you had to go down and crank that engine and start it. You didn't want it running all night, so you'd shut it off when you were through. Neil wired a switch so it could be shut off from upstairs. The initial explosion would brighten the lights, then it would slow down and the lights would dim. This was about 1919.

Another later owner of Frude's shed was Ollie Hosier. He moved from Fennville to Breedsville and bought that building. There was a small room on the south side just as you came in the front door. That was the office. Ollie enclosed a large portion of the building on the south side and made a beautiful residence. I remember the construction. My brother and I were small, and we decided to build a building. Ours was to be a lot smaller, of course, so wouldn't take as long.

Ernie Hosier was an electrician in a different way. He was a pole climber. He did that for a long while and then was injured on the job. Then he did other work. Now he's living in Kalamazoo. That's the son of O. J. Hosier. Then there's Ruth Seeley. She's a pretty lively spring lady yet. I talked to her this morning to get a little more information. She lives over east of Bangor. Then there's James Hosier. He lives straight south of Breedsville, a mile and a quarter on the right hand side. They moved from Fennville to Breedsville about 1928. Ruth dated it by the fact that it was just before the crash of 1929. I spoke about the big generator in Fennville for making electricity. I was in the blacksmith welding shop in Fennville 1935 to 1939. That generator had been rewired and used as an electric motor for a feed mill. That was owned by one of the Hutchinsons. I'm not going into all the intervals of an electric motor, but among other things there are contact brushes that push in with a light spring against the generator. They have to be held in place. That was in a little sheath cast right into this main casting of the generator motor. Even though they're soft, and this is hard cast iron, over a period of a long time it got warm. I personally went over to that feed mill with my arc welder. I wired it into their equipment and I built up the sides of those slots where those big carbon brushes worked up and down. I personally did those brush holders over.

Back to O.J. Hosier. You'd think he built that line while he lived in Fennville and he did. Everybody from then on wanted electricity. I'm talking about people who are not on the line. We got it shortly after 1925. The farmers in general, wanted it. You couldn't do it unless the line runs into the main line. Ollie Hosier built many of the short lines. He built many large lines at a great distance from here. The shed, as we called it, was half a residence and half was a working area. That was his headquarters for all of this electric line building. Some of the laborers who worked on this line and also on the small lines that Hosier built. One was his brother, Owen Hosier, one was

Bill Thomas, Basil Robbins and my brother Leroy Lee. The interesting thing is how they dug the holes. The holes were big enough for a large pole and they went down 9 feet. They had two men work on a hole. One worked a round nosed shovel that was perfectly straight. He'd go around the edges. The other man had something like a round nosed shovel, only a different tip. He would go down and pick up the dirt that was broke loose and bring it up. They went down nine feet like that.

I must not forget the pole over the top of the pole. As I said, after the main line was put through, there were many smaller concerns who put in lines. These were eventually incorporated into Consumers Power or Michigan Electric. There was one line in the process of being built generally southeast of Breedsville. It was going north and south covering quite a lot of area. At the same time, Ollie Hosier was building a line east and west. One line has got to go over the other because they've got to be completely separate. They didn't agree on who was going to pay the extra expense. So, one day my brother and the rest of the workers were told. "Don't come to work in the morning. Come to work at 6 O'clock." So at 6 O'clock they came to work and assembled everything on their vehicles. Just before dark, they started moving. Between dark and morning two things took place. They planted the disputed posts, they put it in, they strung the wires across and they turned on the current. I have no idea who was building the line north and south, but he had to buy and put in separately and distinct an extra high pole to go over the top of Ollie Hosier's electric line. Ollie Hosier was in many things and he was successful in almost everything. Remember we're talking about this building that we originally called Bill Frude's shed. Along came the depression and everything went wrong. Ollie Hosier was not going to be stopped just because things were bad. One fall, there was no price for cabbages. You could almost give them away, not quite. He bought tons of cabbages. He stored them in the basement of the canning factory. Over a period of time, fall, winter and early spring, you had to take the leaves off the outside or the whole cabbage would go bad. He and his crew would go down and remove those outer leaves and discard them. They'd be at the other side of this big basement. A few weeks later he'd have to go over the same thing. In the spring they'd taken off so many layers, there was no cabbages left. Ollie was an enterprising man, but that was one thing that didn't work out very good financially. He probably had all he wanted to eat.

During the depression, they wanted to establish as many things as possible to make for prosperity. One of them was to be a farmer's market at Breedsville. Not a little one, but a big one. Oliver

Hosier again was the head of this. He made commitments for land, that if he was successful, he would buy it for a given price. Option to buy. There was probably a couple acres of my folks' that he had the option to buy, and much more area. The canning factory was on the south side of Main Street by the railroad tracks. He got it all drawn up so that the federal government accepted it as a worthwhile project for the government to invest in. This was not to pay money to the individual. This was to be an enterprise. This would make labor for people and bring farmers in from all directions. Arrangements were made with the railroad to put in a special siding for the farmer's market. The government said no. That was all. So, nothing happened. But, I'm not through with Ollie Hosier and his shed. That was his residence, his working spot. Ollie was in the well drilling business. I think first he was into buying oil rights. In other words, you sign this contract and if we find oil on your place, you'll be rich, and so on. I think that Ollie Hosier went out and sold these options. But, I do know that he went into the oil well drilling business. When you drill an oil well, you have a casing 12 inches in diameter and you just keep on going down for 1,200 feet, or thereabouts. He put down many wells. The one who drilled the well was not doing it on his own. He was contracted to drill the well. Of course, the one who contracted his supervised it. They checked every move. I don't know that he drilled any of the huge number of wells in Bloomingdale which were as close as 30-40 feet from one well to the next. That was before the law was changed.

You can't do that anymore. I think he drilled many of the wells on the Pepper farm northeast of here. There were five of them on one farm that were producing wells and I think they still are. There are some wells straight north of Grand Junction. I think he drilled one or more of those. Of course, he found some dry wells. He wasn't the only one drilling wells though here. You're not always lucky when you drill a well. There's one just west of North Lake that he started drilling. There's always something going wrong on machinery. The actual bit that cuts into the soil or rock has to be very powerful. Also, you had tools to pull those out because you had to keep pulling them out in order to get the sand out. If something wasn't perfect, he would bring it down to my Dad's blacksmith shop and we would re-build it. For instance, the hooks or clamps that you use to catch hold of things that got away. This one time he had about \$600 worth of equipment and he was about 600 ft. down and it broke loose. He brought it to my Dad and said, "Now, Fred, I want you to make a clamp just like this." So pa made it. He came down time and again to build or remodel the clamps. Finally, he said it can't be done. There's a well 600 ft deep. So he then built some special tools to put on the end of the regular driving equipment so he could bypass and leave

this \$600 worth of tools right down in the ground. He never could reach them again. He passed it up and went down and successfully reached the oil bearing sand, only there was no oil there. But that wasn't his responsibility. He was to go down to the oil bearing sand.

Hosier had three children. One of them was Ruth. I'll read this poem by my mother.

"There's a roly polly doggy comes to see me every day
Of all the cutie doggies I know, she's the cutest in every way.
She cannot do a single trick, but she has a pretty little way.
Her eyes are so expressive; you can guess what she would say.
You could not call her handsome, for her body is long and fat.
And her little short legs seem nothing --,
and her tail you can hardly see that.
But you should see her wriggle and wriggle
and when she stops at the kitchen sink
From the tip of her tail to her little red nose,
of jelly she makes you think.
Her little master and mistress live just across the way, (That's Ruth Hosier)
Though she comes quite often, I'll not coax her to stay.
Away from her little playmates
for it is fun to see the merry rollicking --
brother and sister and little Peppy.
So, here's to the cutest little dog in town,
Yo-ho for little Peppy.
Dogs may come and dogs may go, but little Peppy for me.
Peppy is my little valentine, Ruthie.

My Mother had literally hundreds of poems. This next one was very good.

Hosier's Drunken Ducks

What ails my funny little ducks, as they wobble and reel and fall.
They roll their eyes and look so strange. Some cannot stand at all.

My little ducks are drunk as lords, for beneath the mulberry tree,
They feasted themselves the live long day. Now they're as drunk as drunk can be.
Lift each little fellow gently and put him in his bed.
Bright and early in the morning he'll have a level head.
Then straight away in the morning to the mulberry tree they'll make a desperate rush
And gorge themselves all day long again. No advice they'll take from us.

As I said before, Ollie Hosier's residence was approximately across the street from us. I was born in a house on 18 River Street. In 1904, although I didn't come along until 1907, it had a big porch along three sides of the main house. There was a hitching post for tying horses on. There's a sidewalk that went almost the full length of River Street. That was there before the folks bought the place in 1905. There was no sidewalk on the main street. The rules were at that time, if you as a property owner would pay half of the cost, the village will pay other half. So from the corner for the length of their lot which was quite a ways, Pa paid the half and the village paid the other half. But that's not where we'd be using it most. We'd be going towards town, towards the shop, the church, the school, etc. But Pa said I'll do my share of the village. That went down to Railroad street. The front part of our house was built first with the gables. The big wide porch isn't there now, nor was it there when it was first built. There's a little trap door over in the west room. There's a dirt hole under the house. That's a good old fashioned Michigan cellar. The other half of the house was built later, at what date we don't know. But that was before we owned it. I guess that the house was built around 1865 or perhaps a little earlier. The house to the left was Andy Gaynor's house. They lived just south of us at the end of River Street on the west side. There was a little building behind our house and to the right that was a granary. We never used it as a granary. It was just a granary. It was built with various compartments and was part of our lot. Eventually my older brother Leroy got married and wanted a place to live. He took that building as a starting place. The granny had one fairly large door in front where a person could go in and out with their grain. My folks gave Leroy and his wife, Laura that piece of property. It went quite a bit west and south. Leroy finished it up so they could move in. He added on to the front and has made a nice house out of it. He put another addition on the back side. He put a complete basement underneath. He dug it all out by hand. In that basement he had an exceedingly well equipped woodworking shop. Of course, there was electricity so he could do that. He worked for

Bangor Electronics for quite a while. He was asked to build cabinets etc. for other people for the cost of materials plus a fee. He did a lot of hand carving.

Before the granary became a house, my folks had planted cherry trees to the south. Cherry trees seemed to work well in that sand. When we were kids growing up, if we wanted something we made it. We didn't think of buying anything. If we wanted a boat, Pa and we boys made it. When I speak of "we boys", there was my older brother who was 10 years older than me. He didn't quite fit in when we were playing together being 10 years apart. That was Leroy. Dick and I were three years apart and had a lot in common. I have a paddle here that we made. Pa did the designing and we helped with it. The boat was twelve feet long and two and a half feet wide. It was made out of one foot wide boards. It was well fastened together in the front. We brought the back of the boat together with a clamp. The clamp went up to about five feet. We used it this week to hold a drawer together to glue it. We had the boat laid out just the way we wanted it and one of the boards split right down the side. We were disgusted. Pa said don't worry about it. We came back a couple of days later and Pa had taken a piece of sheet iron and put in over that break, probably a foot wide. Then he put a huge number of wood screws through the sheet iron and through the side of the boat. So it was just as good. So we went ahead and finished the boat. We used that boat many times on North Lake and so on. Our first trip down the river was very interesting. Of course, there were always logs in the way. You'd go down a little ways and lift the boat over the log. Then we came back, but you know it's harder to go upstream than down. On North Lake there's a beautiful swimming spot on the Dobson farm. The Dobson farm is just to the right of the road if you went straight north. There was a legal road that went straight through to the lake. You could drive right down to it. It's not a legal road now. We would walk down there through the bushes and have picnics. Many times we had our Sunday School picnics there, including all ages. Time passed and Dobson's got a son-in-law. He said, "We might as well make a little money on that." So they fenced it off so we couldn't go through there. We boys went down with our boat and said we wanted to go swimming. They said we had to pay ten cents to get in. We weren't going to pay ten cents. We'd been going in and out of there forever. This was the spring after we had built the boat. We'll just row around and swim when we want to. Now, any rowboat is built on one principle. The water soaks in and the boards swell and in swelling they seal up all the leaks. We shoved it in the water without soaking it first and we got out there about ten feet and down it

went. We pulled it back to shore, drove a stake into the ground, put a padlock on our chain. We let it soak for a few days. After it soaked it didn't leak anymore and we used it many times that summer. Dobson's were religious people although they weren't the same denomination as we were.

[end of tape 2]