

OSBORNE: They were on Main Street, Alliance. This is May 17, 1976. I am talking with Mr. Robert Bell who has been associated with Hinds Smith's Hardware for over half

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Street is going to come from the

## REMINISCENCES

OF

ROBERT BELL

*Bell, Robert J.*

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manager  
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of Colorado.

Interview by  
N. Yost Osborne  
May 17, 1976

OSBORNE: Now that's May 17, 1976. How old were you at that time, your wife?

BELL: This would go back perhaps to 1922, to 23. And I spent a year in the service. My stepfather was a physician. He had moved from Toledo taking over Dr. Waite's practice at Deerfield, Ohio. Dr. J. J. Waite. And he done a country practice back in the days when the roads were unpaved, many times in the spring of the year and late fall, after rainy seasons

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OSBORNE: This morning I am on Main Street, Alliance. This  
is May 17, 1976 and I am talking with Mr. Robert Bell who  
has been associated with Lindesmith's Hardware for over half  
a century on Main Street. I want to talk with him on his  
observations, reminiscences, and this business, and on Main  
Street in general. Let's start off; first, where did you  
come from, are you a native Alliance person?

BELL: My home town is Toledo, Ohio. I left as a teenager  
and went West, going to Colorado. Worked for a while at the  
State Highway Department doing Engineering work on the high-  
way and later on meeting up with a friend who is in the  
State Rangers. After talking with him I decided to go to  
Denver and enlist in the police force in the State of Colorado.

OSBORNE: Now this would be roughly about what time, year  
wise?

OSBORNE: I guess that's that we call the good old days

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horse and buggy through. That you would sometimes have to  
unhitch your horse and ride to your patient's farm, where-



ever it might be, on horseback. And maybe after the mud had dried up get someone to tow your buggy in for you. In the winter time we had a cutter and made calls in the cutter. Always kept two horses and that was the era in which you needed a doctor whether it was daytime, night time, Sunday, or a holiday and he was available.

OSBORNE: And he didn't say, "Take an aspirin."

BELL: He didn't say, "Take an aspirin, and I'll see you at the Emergency Ward." And as far as income goes at that time, a physician would make a call to your home, it could be two or three mile away or even four. He might visit the patient, he prescribed all the medication needed, and the fee was usually \$2.00 or \$3.00. If you made a call to his office, at that time the medicine would be available, the examination along with it, the nominal fee was \$1.00. And obstetric case paid the handsome sum of \$15.00.

OSBORNE: I guess that's what we call the good old days then.

BELL: It certainly was. Yes. And then with passing time a friend called at the home, a Mr. Hopkins who owned and operated Alliance Brass and Bronze, and asked for me and he said, "This is Mr. Lindesmith of Alliance, Ohio. I'm one a stranger to you; but," he said, "I've heard about you." And he said, "when you're in Alliance would you be kind enough to stop in and have a talk with me. There is some-



thing important I'd like to talk over with you." So, a few days later I had to be in Alliance, came in to the store and I introduced myself. He gave me an interview for several hours and prevailed upon me to try out the hardware business. And I had normally decided after coming back at the end of the year possibly going back west again and going to Alaska. So I altered these plans and decided to remain on and take this position and moved into Alliance and started work at the store. And at that time we opened at 6:30 in the morning and worked till 6:00 at night putting in a full day.

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: And we seemed to make out on our source of income at the time. Well, with passing years the business grew. We added sporting goods to our line of merchandise, several major lines of paints like Sherwin Williams and Dutch Boy, made by National Lead Company. We added bicycles and wheel goods to it, expanded our luggage department, went deeper into builders hardware. Then they added with passing time power lawnmowers and various types of electrical appliances to the store. And with lesser demand for horse equipment, with passing time, at one time we employed four full time harness makers, we gradually came to a point where we had one left and he done much of his work as repairing luggage, leather goods rather than working on harness. The work harness and bridles and saddles we once carried, the stock it was finally

depleted. It was not refurbished or bought again.

OSBORNE: Well now this would be about what time, roughly?

BELL: This would go back probably, the change of time would go back probably 20 or 25 years ago.

OSBORNE: About the end of World War II.

BELL: Yes. That this change took place. At the time when I first came to Alliance we had a National Guard Unit. It was horse drawn. It was a battery and we used to supply their curry combs or rivets or buckles and harness and all the things that they needed. And with the event of the war when we ended in 1941 the battery was activated and was shipped out to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where it was mechanized. And the horse drawn equipment was done away with. With the passing years and war years there's quite a change with business when the new plants sprung up in the town making war time equipment. At one time we had the Taylorcraft Company here who made parts for some of the major aircraft companies. At one time they employed 1000 to 1200 people. And when the war terminated of course there were no call for Army aircraft and they were back to civilian production of small aircraft again. We find then that with materials available that new industries came into existence. New retail stores began to spring up all over the country. With passing years the large discount stores that was originally

unknown previously to the war occupied a good many new buildings, outside of various cities like Canton, Akron, and this Alliance. And with their coming the business on Main Street began noticing a slight decline in business. Which would only be normal.

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: And this ever expansion and increasing in numbers, many towns and Alliance was not unlike others we find that the big stuff that we once carried was no longer needed. Business slowly deteriorated to a market and due to the deep inroads that these cut rate stores had made on retail.

OSBORNE: Well now I want to interrupt there for just a moment. Just the other day my wife wanted to get something, she'd been with some friends over at Canton. This was a hardware item, couldn't find it and the friend said, "Well you should try Lindesmith's. They'll always have it." And I think that ought to be your trademark, you know. And I've heard this time and again. People go to these discount outlets and they are frustrated, they can't find it and some one always says, "Have you tried Lindesmiths? They'll carry it." So I think that's a plus mark for you and your inventory.

BELL: Well, we have found that our existence or survival as a retail store is dependant upon rendering a personal service to the customer. Having knowledge of what you have, how it is used, that you can recommend it to your customer,



what you might need it for performing a job, showing it to them showing them perhaps how it is put together. And this is service that many stores in bigger cities do not render.

OSBORNE: Right.

OSBORNE: Right.

BELL: Where many stores you have to wait till 10:00 or

BELL: They have many articles of merchandise available

but you have to seek it out yourself. There is no, very

OSBORNE: Now you're open at 8:00, is that right?

few, charge accounts with many, you pay cash for it. There

is no delivery, there is no personal contact, that we have

had for years, that the little stores on Main Street had.

OSBORNE: Oh boy.

This service has been rendered for the public over the years.

We have had many families, two and three generations that

have dealt in the store and many have stayed with us. Many

OSBORNE: That's right.

of the younger generation have shopped in many places unlike

father or grandpa, they go many places to buy what they need.

And yesteryear a family found a local drugstore that they

liked to do business with, local hardware, whatever it might

be, and a family bought anything and everything that they

might need and they would come there first to see if the

article wasn't available to them. And then if it wasn't

they might look elsewhere. But it was an extreme loyalty

OSBORNE: Right. I noticed the other day I was in and a man to the hometown merchants at this time. And I notice that

was buying seed and I was just standing there and overheard shopping procedures have varied a great deal in recent years.

And through the many years we have been able to exist having

buy seed here." And it was just an interesting passing com-  
ment like that.

other stores are not open even. And if there is a mechanic,

painter or a carpenter needs a tool or equipment that we are here at 8:00 in the morning to get it for him.

and some of them, even their children....

OSBORNE: Right.

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: Where many stores you have to wait till 10:00 or 11:00 to get into them.

OSBORNE: Now you're open at 8:00, is that right?

have a sixth sense on inventory, or you must have a vast

BELL: 8:00 every morning, yes.

inventory of items.

OSBORNE: Oh boy.

BELL: One must have a certain intuition about what your

BELL: Which is unusual.

the buyer may like himself but if he feels that there is

OSBORNE: That's right.

a market for it as a shrewd operator he will buy it if he

BELL: We keep open several nights a week, like Monday and

Friday night, other nights we close at 5:00. And we go

out of our way in many instances to pick up merchandise

we don't have in stock by making a long distance phone call

and expediting it to the customer. Whereas many of the larg-

er independent stores do not render this service.

on the shelf at all times. This is the same one learns

OSBORNE: Right. I noticed the other day I was in and a man

was buying seed and I was just standing there and overheard

him say, "I remember 45 years ago my mother used to come and

buy seed here." And it was just an interesting passing com-

ment like that.

And we find also, that we take great pride in our

show windows.

BELL: Well, this is a factor, we have enough of such people that have been loyal to the store and are still coming here and some of them, even their children....

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: Are still patronizing our store.

OSBORNE: Yes. But I think in addition to that though you have a sixth sense on inventory, or you must have a vast inventory of items.

BELL: One must have a certain intuition about what your general public might possibly like. It isn't always what the buyer may like himself but if he feels that there is a market for it as a shrewd operator he will buy it if he feels that there is an outlet for it. To often many store buyers may select something that appeals to them and not having their finger tips on the public thought. And there are seasons to, not to over buy and yet try to have sufficient stock to carry you through the season. What you have is not obsolete the following year. To have fresh merchandise on the shelf at all times. This is the same one learns through long years of operation.

OSBORNE: Well, I think you're fortunate you didn't try to modernize the front of the store there like a lot of places and come up with that.

BELL: And we find also, that we take great pride in our show windows.



OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: We have a type window that was used many years ago in fact there is three of them that we keep all decorated, with a great variety of seasonable merchandise in them. And we find that many sales are consumated through the prospective customer viewing them in the window, coming in and looking at it and making a decision perhaps to buy it. Had it not been in the window he may have never been in the store.

OSBORNE: Of course you know in education circles today this is called the "in thing." It is called "media." It's the visual audio approach. Of course you've anticipated this by many many years and found that it has paid off.

BELL: Well back in yesteryear many stores kept merchandise in drawers to keep them dust free and if the customer comes in and asks for a certain thing they would go to that drawer, open it up, take it out, allow the customer to look at it and make a decision whether he wanted it or not. Today sales appeal is made on having as much merchandise as possible out and priced and if he feels he has need of it a sale is consumated.

OSBORNE: Well, I think you're fortunate you didn't try to modernize the front of the store there like a lot of places have because this is a unique feature with your display.

BELL: Many stores did change some years ago and we find that with passing time they decided that they have made an

error in what they have done. is purchases they vary from

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: We anticipated that this would probably take place and in many cases it has. And we find our show window a large drawing card. The fact is many seasonal things we even put outside the window. A customer going by might see a power lawn mower, a garden plow or a tool and he can pick it up and look at it. And he is not bothered with anybody interrupting him and if he decides that he is more than interested then he can come in and see what we have in stock. What other plows might be available. We've carried many many things like rakes, hoes, shovels, wheelbarrows. The fact is dung forks for farm use, drain tile spades, scoop shovels, a wide line of fertilizers, Scotts grass seed and weed killers, insecticides, fungicides. And in today's world we find that many people take great pride in their lawns and spend many dollars in maintaining and creating a lovely lawn. And this has been a great boom for the retailer who had an ample stock. And we also have a city trade and a farm trade. And we find in many instances we carry, for example, a large stock of extension ladders, the aluminum and wooden ladders for various uses for painting barns, houses doing interior work and exterior.

OSBORNE: Well now, that's interesting. You've mentioned a farm trade. I thought that would have long since evaporated.

BELL: No, well the farmer, his purchases they vary from what they used to in yesteryear. Where he may have come in from yesteryear for a gallon of oil, rivets, buckles, curry combs and brushes for his stock. This same man will be in perhaps to buy paint for his barn or for his house. He may need some spouting for the out buildings which we carry, a very extensive stock of the aluminum and galvanized steel spouting. And a farmer has to be a jack of all trades, an electrician, a painter, a maintenance man. And we find that he is a very good source of income for the retailer - if you have what the man needs, and when he needs it. And we try to anticipate this by having them for them. We still have a mixed trade. And in recent years since the war the youth of today makes far distant trips around the world the far parts of the country and back. In his father and grandfather's day we went and made a trip to California, but it was a conversation piece a year or two later about this trip. Today one thinks nothing of packing a case and taking off, it can be for Japan or Australia or far parts of the world. And it seems to be very common place. And we have found that through carrying an extensive stock of trunks and hand luggage, that people know that we have a good reputation on a good quality of Airway luggage, Startrack luggage. We have supplied them with their travel needs. Both of small leather goods and the larger leather goods. For many years we've had the Alliance Band Boosters, a civic organization,

who were pioneers in this area.



wherever a family has a boy or a girl who has played in the band, this child upon graduation is presented with a lovely piece of Starflight luggage which came from Lindesmiths's Hardware. The Band Boosters raise their own funds; it doesn't come out of school funds and make a purchase. They have a dance or a dinner party and the children enjoy it a great deal and they appreciate the luggage that they have received. And in many instances we find that they make additional purchases building up a set of luggage so when they go on to college they will be prepared for it.

OSBORNE: Well now to go back a bit, you started here about what time, 1922? 1923?

BELL: Around that time, I've been here, I've been here I'd say as near as I could tell you, about 52 years. It will soon be my 53rd year this fall.

OSBORNE: My goodness.

BELL: At the time I never anticipated remaining here. I had thought of maybe spending a brief period of time and then going on to other fields. I had a friend, I'd spent a year in the state police in Colorado and I had a friend that was going on to Alaska. And he had asked me to join him. And after becoming engrossed in hardware retail business I then changed my mind, never went back, remained here in Alliance. This was the home of my grandparents and great grandparents who were pioneers in this area.

OSBORNE: Well now, let's have their names now. Let's get this background.

BELL: I had, for example, a grandfather, James Hiltabidle and an uncle Orlando Hiltabidle who was a Civil War veteran. After the Civil War was over with, Mount Union College was putting up a new building and both grandpa and the uncle were stone and brick masons.

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

BELL: And they worked, I believe, it was on the old Miller Hall.

OSBORNE: Miller Hall, yes.

BELL: And then this uncle later on when he found a little money, bought a farm outside of Lima. Some 112 acres, raised his family. He used to walk in every day, lay brick, work 10 to 12 hours a day and run a 112 acre farm and raise a family. At that time a mason would lay up to 1000 to 1200 bricks in a days work. I've been told by contractors today that the average is about 400 bricks a day.

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: And if we feel that we've got a hard days work today I wonder what grandpa felt like at the end of his work day.

OSBORNE: Well, I'm sure he was ready to relax on that. Well

now, what change-wise, what do you notice in Main Street? When you came in - I recall in the early 30's when I came to college here coming down on a Saturday night; and it seemed like a county fair, you know, with all the activities.

BELL: Well, with the farm workers work pretty well under way that Saturday night was his shopping night when he, his wife and perhaps his family would come in, in horse and buggy or car. Some of them had a horse and buggy. It was parked or tied down to the feed mill. Or if he had a car he might park on Main Street. The wife would get out and do her shopping in the various stores: the husband would meet perhaps with farm acquaintances. They would have lengthy discussions on the street about the weather and how the crops were doing. And all and all we would be open until 10:00 on Saturday night and busy every minute of that particular day. This passing time seems to change a great deal, that store hours are different, that many stores do not even open until 10:00 or even noon time, keeping open in the evenings. And this was done with the thought in mind that perhaps the wife, the husband and children could go shopping together in the evenings. To make a decision when all the family was present. This is quite radical departure from the old style of merchandising. And so we of the older stores have went along with it, keeping open several nights in the evening. If anybody should need something in our line then we are here to serve them. Also we have many customers appreciate the fact



that we do open early in the morning. That they don't have to wait until a late hour in the day, if they are in need of something. There was many appliances that we used then that we thought was modern in yesteryear but when we look back at them today and see the many changes and departures from the old style to the new style. That's rather humorous or laughable to see what we thought was something out of this world at that time.

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: There are some things that basically remain the same. It probably was a good design to make in those years. And down through the years many things have remained identical as they was 40 or 50 years ago. The only change that I've noticed is the high cost of production and the prevailing wage scales in shops and taxes and so forth that the price could be four or five times higher than it was back in those days.

OSBORNE: Well now, do you think that today, Lindesmith is probably the oldest existing buisness on Main Street?

BELL: I would say in continuous service, the store was started, to the best of my recollections about 90 some years ago. Mr. Lindesmith as a young man lived in Hanover; his father had a harness shop there. And he decided that perhaps he might do better coming into a larger area of population.

And against his friends and acquaintances advice to do so, he decided to come to Alliance. He rented a very small wooden structure frame building on Main Street which was a dirt road at the time and wooden board walks. He paid the large sum of \$25 a month rent. And he, at the time when he arrived in Alliance, he had approximately \$75 - that was all his resources. After paying a months rent he had a sign made and hung out in front William S. Lindesmith, Harnesses Made and Repaired. And his reputations for his honest dealings over the passing time was recognized and many farmers felt that by coming, even some of them made trips from southern Ohio, even from over in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, to buy the Lindesmith harness because he was noted for putting nothing but the best of leather and workmanship in the making of his harness. And his prices were not exorbitant and they felt that this man they could depend upon. His word was his bond. And so often today people say one thing and mean another.

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: We've noticed this in the world today especially the diplomatic world and the world of politics.

OSBORNE: So often.

BELL: Things are unpredictable and undependable. Where this man through his lifetime was honored and respected as

a law abiding citizen, always had a helping hand and advice for anybody. He had time no matter how busy he was to stop and have a friendly chat with them. Give them advice that they had asked for and do whatever he could. Render whatever service he could. And with his advance in years his son, Stuart, came into the business and eventually took over the operation and the control of it. Then from time to time we've had different people to come and go into the store as his employees. Some went on to other fields, some were students and went back to college to take up a profession, some had never went to college. Took up perhaps a trade in the shop, some went to farming. But as passing years we've had many employees that have come and have left for different reasons.

OSBORNE: Now what, when, he started out with harness and leather work. When did he get into the hardware, when did he branch out? Do you know?

BELL: Well, his son seen if one was to expand and have a greater source of income that you could not make a large income off of merely manufacturing harness and repairing harness. That was a livelihood but one could never build up any reserves, financial reserves to expand the business in so doing. And the first additive to the business as I recall was hand luggage, such as suitcases, traveling bags. And looking back at what we sold then and what is made today; today one must have name brand, he must have extensive lines of



colors and sizes to please everybody. In those days a case was either genuine leather or it was imitation; it was either black or it was brown, and that was it. And no question was asked whether it was advertised in the paper, television and radio which didn't exist at that time. But it was sold on the reputation on the store handling it. If Mr. Lindesmith advised his customer that that was a good suitcase, it was durable and it would do what they expected it to do, his word was good enough. And then with passing time we had many people that asked for, wanted to know if we didn't have paints so we added the National Lead Company's Dutch Boy brand of paints to our store stock. And in passing time enlarged the quantity and the business grew into a place to what we now today have perhaps, the largest stock of paints in the city of Alliance.

OSBORNE: I didn't realize that, that you had that extensive....

BELL: We have in our stockroom which is perhaps 100 feet long and shelf after shelf of Dutch Boy paints, enamels and varnishes, thinners and what not, which the average customer don't see. Our store being an old fashioned building is rather narrow, three stories high with a basement. And unlike a newer modern building we can't put everything out in full view on the first floor.

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: But we do carry tremendous stock involving \$12,000 to

\$15,000 worth of paint. And likewise a very extensive stock of hand luggage. And some of the very popular name brands that are sold nationally over the United States. The fact is several years ago we computed figures and we sold over \$28,000 worth of attache cases, trunks, hand luggage, bill-fords and keycases, brief cases and allied merchandise.

OSBORNE: Well now when you came here over fifty years ago, what per cent was still leather harness and what percent was hardware by that time?

BELL: Well I would say at the time perhaps two thirds of our business was more or less with saddles, bridles, harness for work and harness for carriage horses, horse blankets and blanket sheets and, oh, things a farmer buys. Like lanterns for in the barn and hay forks and allied merchandise, that was used more or less on the farm. And then around 1910 to 1911 the Lindesmith family had conserved on their funds, they had prospered and they bought a lot where the old building is standing or is located. And they contracted with the late Mr. Scott who is a father of Walter Scott who is a retired building contractor to put up a three story brick building. And after several years of construction work the building was finished and the new quarters were occupied by the harness shop and, now we had ample room to enlarge. We had showcases built and wall shelving. They could go into housewares, adding extensive lines of pots and pans and cooking utensils,

Electrical appliances were coming more and more into the demand such as toasters, waffle irons and electric smoothing irons for the household use, electric portable heaters which we added as we found demand for, and built up other lines. We also added several other lines of paint and we had the most complete line of paints and enamels than any store in the city of Alliance. And then we found that many people were building homes, needed builders hardware, locksets for the doors, hardware for the windows, varnishes and enamels for their floors and woodwork and their walls. And the house has to be spouted, so we put a very large line of spouting: so they, the contractor or the man who might do the work himself in his spare time could come in here and it would be available to him. Then we find that the raise in income and more surplus money and family circles, that more gifts were bought for various occasions, anniversaries, birthdays, weddings. And many, especially women who had such an occasion rising would come downtown and shop the stores to pick out perhaps a toaster or an iron or maybe a set of cookware, whatever they thought, a clock for in the kitchen or living room which might make a presentable wanted gift for in the home for the newlyweds. And we find that to this day gift merchandis is quite an item. We have enduring lasting gifts. There is many things that we carry and anyone could use in their home such as a various line of clothes hampers that a bride could use in their new home. We have, as I stated,

Hardware and over the years it has grown extensively until it



many electrical appliances - hand mixers, electric can openers - the thing goes on endlessly. Any woman would be proud to possess one of these things and have need for it in her home.

OSBORNE: So the original Mr. Lindesmith would be quite surprised if he could walk into your store today.

BELL: Yes, he would. There have been many changes since the decease of the founder William S. Lindesmith. And of course his son being a younger man used to make trips several times a year to New York City visiting the importers in New York, buying unusual merchandise that you did not find on the markets that were available back in Ohio. Importers that had merchandise from all over the world, from the far East, European, and Asiatic countries. And he took great pride in having the unusual thing whether it be glass and stem ware from Ireland or Czechoslovakia; dishware or silverware or whatever it might be. He had something unusual that the average store didn't have. And unfortunately we have found since his death that we don't have the time for one of us to make these trips that he made for them years going down to New York City. We depend upon what is available to us through the jobbers here in the state of Ohio.

OSBORNE: Now I noticed you list this as a Sentry Hardware Store. Do you want to explain what this association is.

BELL: Well this association is a branch out of the Worthington Hardware and over the years it has grown extensively until it

is coast to coast. We have distributors in California; they're hardware jobbers that are Sentry dealers. And in the state of Ohio the Worthington Hardware whom we have dealt with I would say 80 to 85 years we've done business with are the parent of the Sentry group here in the state of Ohio. We became a member of them perhaps back 12 or 15 years ago.

OSBORNE: Now would you say this is a sort of a cooperative grouping of independant hardware merchants, is this what it is?

BELL: Yes, in otherwords they will take and contract with large firms to produce whether it's wheelbarrow, a garbage can or a lawn mower. To produce so many thousand units at a much lower figure than we as independant dealers could ever hope to find or to supply. And it supplies us with a Sentry piece of merchandise that we can compete successfully with even large chain stores, in this operation. It makes us far more competitive.

OSBORNE: Yes. You were mentioning about Mr. Lindesmith buying from suppliers from New York and I thought maybe this, maybe took up some of the slack of that through this outlet.

BELL: We have found, too, that many items that were once in demand with changing times cease to exist. Now why we do not know but for example, I'll cite, many years ago we bought a extensive line of ladies silk umbrellas. A gorgeous display of umbrellas, some of them hand painted with beautiful handles

to them. Of course I attribute the lack of demand for these greatly to the increase of automobiles on the highway.

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: That people park near their store if it's raining, actually, they don't need an umbrella. It's a few steps to the store and back again. Where it used to be that many a person walked from their home downtown and if it looked like rain my lady would bring a nice parasol with her. And things like this kind of vanished along with many other things; of course with the new modern things that have supplemented the stores income and taken their place.

OSBORNE: Well now, you mentioned earlier you were going to go to Alliance and got called into for an interview by Mr. Lindesmith, did you ever get to Alliance? Or to Alaska I mean?

BELL: I never got to Alaska; however, Mr. Lindesmith was fortunate enough that he made several trips in his time - that's W. Stuart Lindesmith.

OSBORNE: Yes.

BELL: In his time taking his family with him. The fact is when the new Alaskan highway was opened up he purchased a new car bought an extra set of new tires and took along emergency supplies and made the trip over the new Alaskan highway and back again. And the trip was not an unusual trip;



the whole family enjoyed it a great deal. Sometime in the future, if my health remains, I may sometime get to see this land that I once planned to make in the past bygone years.

OSBORNE: So with the fifty plus year interruption maybe you'll make it. Instead of going west as Horace Greely used to say you'll go to the northwest on that.

BELL: I found the year that I had spent in Colorado though had great rewards. I met a new type people: ranchers, mountaineers and homesteaders. The country was rather a rugged country at the time. State highways at that time were like the third grade road here in Ohio. They didn't have to have speed traps because no one could travel over the mountain road at a high rate of speed. The State Police automotive transportation in the winter was a lot of times snow shoes.... We had a Harley Davidson Motorcycle with side car like they used in World War I. We had a Ford touring car. And many of our trips took us to far remote regions back into the mountains to homesteads. During that period of time the country was dry. Prohibition existed: there were moonshiners that we had to raid stills.

OSBORNE: Oh yes.

BELL: And so forth.

OSBORNE: Well that would be a real exciting experience to a change of life....

BELL: Some of our trips were on horseback because you couldn't get over mountain roads on motorcycles. I've managed to keep

here over fifty years in your business and you still look  
OSBORNE: Sure.

BELL: With motorcycle with a side car. And it was quite a rewarding experience during the year that I spent there.

OSBORNE: That would be. What do you think is the biggest change on Main Street as you think back real quickly over fifty years.

BELL: Well, I would say with the passing time I feel that even though we had new stores like on our Route 62 south of town with a new highway added it makes Alliance more available and accessible to tourists from out of town and travelers. And with the new viaduct that has been created, opening up Main Street to Patterson and a direct route to Sebring and to Youngstown when this is completed. Many people have tried to predict that the Main Streets of down town and town like Alliance and other towns are a has-been. We merchants down here feel otherwise. We feel that there is a need for the stores existing; the cut rate stores where ever they're at and the new stores plus the older stores of down town Alliance. We have many bargains to offer the same as they have to attract people here. We have merchandise of all kinds that they do not find and can not find in these new modern stores. We feel that we are a needed part of the community.

OSBORNE: Well apparently some of that optimism or exuberance that you picked up in Colorado you've managed to keep here over fifty years in your business and you still look forward with as much keenness as you were as a young man starting out.

BELL: I think that there are great potentials in the world today for people if they are perhaps willing to recognize and secure proper education. Great new fields are opening in the horizon today.....



ALLIANCE BAND BOOSTERS.....	Bell 12
ALLIANCE BRASS AND BRONZE.....	Bell 2
GRADUATION GIFT OF LUGGAGE.....	Bell 12
HILTABIDLE, JAMES; ORLANDO.....	Bell 13
HOPKINS, MR.....	Bell 2
LINDESMITH, MR.....	Bell 15
MAIN STREET.....	Bell 14, Bell 25
MILLER HALL (MUC).....	Bell 13
NATIONAL GUARD.....	Bell 4
SENTRY HARDWARE STORE.....	Bell 21
TAYLORCRAFT COMPANY.....	Bell 4
WAITE, DR.....	Bell 1