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CRIST: This is Lyle Crist at the home of Mr. Jake Flickenger of 413 W. Elm Street in Alliance and I am going to talk to Mr. Flickenger with regard to some of his recollection of

industry and government. REMINISCENCES as part of the Oral History Project. You OF Alliance, were you

born here in Alliance JAKE FLICKENGER

FLICKENGER: I was Flickenger, Jacob A., Jr. 150 E. Cambridge.

ERRATA: The name of Jake Flickenger should read; Jake Flickinger.

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557/4 employed

alliance?

FLICKENGER: No, but I worked at the Morgan Engineering Company, at the structural works.

Interview by
Lyle M. Crist
January 7, 1977

CRIST: And would you talk a little bit about the nature of your work when you both at Morgans and when you first affiliated at American Steel.

FLICKENGER: Well at the Morgan Engineering Company they was hiring pretty many people at the time. They was repairing locomotives down there. And I got a job down there that is

working six nights a week, twelve hours a night. And from there I went to the American Steel Foundry in 1910. And in the meantime in between I worked up above in the machine shop

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REMINISCENCES



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CRIST: This is Lyle Crist at the home of Mr. Jake Flickenger of 413 W. Ely Street in Alliance and I am going to talk to Mr. Flickenger with regard to some of his recollection of industry and govennence in Alliance as part of the Oral History Project. Would you first of all indicate, were you born here in Alliance?

FLICKENGER: I was born here in Alliance at 750 E. Cambridge.

CRIST: And when did you first become part of the employees at the American Steel Foundries?

FLICKENGER: The American Steel Foundry I was first employed there at 1925.

CRIST: Was this your first industrial work here in Alliance?

FLICKENGER: No, previous to that time I worked at the Morgan Engineering Company, at the structrual works.

CRIST: And would you talk a little bit about the nature of your work when you both at Morgans and when you first affiliated at American Steel.

FLICKENGER: Well at the Morgan Engineering Company they was hiring pretty many people at the time. They was repairing locomotives down there. And I got a job down there that is working six nights a week, twelve hours a night. And from there I went to the American Steel Foundry in 1925. And in the meantime in between I worked up above in the machine shop

for a while before I went to the American Steel.

CRIST: And then at American Steel. buy groceries. And when

FLICKENGER: At the American Steel I had forty years of service there.

CRIST: Would you indicate the range of your service. All that you did.

FLICKENGER: Well I started in as a laborer which you do at the plant. From there I was promoted to core maker which I held until I took the job as supervisor in the core room.

CRIST: Do you recall about how many employees there were at the American Steel at that time?

FLICKENGER: Roughly at that time, I would say there was in the neighborhood of about 750 to 800 possibly when I first started there.

CRIST: Did you have any training in any way other than just your own ability to do the job?

FLICKENGER: I worked as a core maker for quite a number of years before I was promoted to supervisor.

CRIST: Let's go back to the time when you first worked with Morgan Engineering. Do you recall what the wages were then?

FLICKENGER: I served time on the machinist trade for 19¢ an hour, at that time.

CRIST: Was that enough to buy groceries then?

FLICKENGER: At that time it would buy groceries. And when I moved to the American Steel Foundry I started out for 39¢ an hour.

CRIST: The industry in Alliance has grown in a number of ways, in the time span we're discussing. Go back to the time that you were either at Morgans, or first at American Steel, were these the major plants in Alliance?

FLICKENGER: The American Steel, the Morgan Engineering Company and the Alliance Machine plus the Machine Steel Casting and of course we had the McCaskey Plant and previous to that the Reeves Brothers were in town, too.

CRIST: Well, now, elaborate on that a little bit, the Reeves Brothers.

FLICKENGER: The Reeves Brothers they were in the manufacturing of oil tanks for railroad cars, and they later moved to Alabama from Alliance.

CRIST: But they were here when you were first working with American Steel.

FLICKENGER: Well, they were here previous to that time. I no more than got out of high school and I got a job as a rivet heater down there for a short time.

CRIST: Then you've had, have you had other plants in town that you worked for?

FLICKENGER: Well, I've worked at the pipe organ works. I did electrical work on the consoles. I wired up the consoles for the pipe organs.

CRIST: Now was that before you went with Morgans?

FLICKENGER: It was before I went to Morgans. Again that was 21¢ an hour, I threatened to quit and I got 22¢ an hour. Then I found out I could get the job in the structural shop that paid me little more money and I decided then that I wanted to learn the machinist trade.

CRIST: Now was this Hillgreen Lane that you are referring to?

FLICKENGER: Hillgreen Lane.

CRIST: And where were they located at that time?

FLICKENGER: They were located at Market and Mechanic.

CRIST: And your recollection, your work there, the number, the work force there was considerably smaller of course.

FLICKENGER: I imagine we had in the neighborhood of about 20, 25 employees at that time.

CRIST: When, where was the Reeves Brothers? Where was that plant located.?

FLICKENGER: The Reeves Brothers is, were located on Rush, where the present B&W Plant is.

CRIST: But B&W was not in town at that time?

CRIST: The work at the plants of course would be in union-

FLICKENGER: At that time B&W was not in town.

CRIST: Could you summarize a little bit something about the unionization at the plant?

CRIST: Could you, take one of the phases of work at American Steel and just recall the nature of the work. I know it's very clear to you what you did, but just to describe, for example, core making before you moved up to supervisory work. Just what was involved, what you did.

FLICKENGER: Well in core making you had sands that you worked with. You had pattern boxes or core boxes whatever you want to call them. And you put sand in them and you use an air rammer, a hand rammer. You had to know how to veraud them and nail them and one thing and another previous to the time to go into the oven to be baked. The cores will be baked then in the oven and then they are inserted in molds in the foundry.

CRIST: Is this operation still being carried on?

FLICKENGER: Yes, it's still being carried on.

CRIST: There's been no different approach to it. No taking over machines that formerly was hand operation?

FLICKENGER: Yes, they've done considerable of that. They've come into a process that they call shell cores. They put the sand in the box and it bakes the cores right in the machine and they come right out of the core box baked. We had machines there, we used to hand ram all draw bar cores and there are some other cores that we hand rammed that are now made by blowers, core blowers, machines.

CRIST: The work at the plants of course would lead to unionization, the question of labor force working together and various issues. Could you summerize a little bit something about the unionization at the plant.

FLICKENGER: Well I'm sure it was in 1941 that we organized the American Steel Foundry plants. I happened to be one of the men that helped organize the plant and I was financial secretary of the union for ten years and I took the treasurer's job for two years. And I've seen a lot of changes after the Union got in through their grievance procedures. I will say this, that a lot of men came through us officers saying they had a grievance; they would read one paragraph in the contract and they would turn the page over and they found out that they didn't have a grievance. And as a union officer we tried to explain that to them, and settle it that way.

CRIST: Did you see the role here as in a sense you were a bit of a mediator yourself is that....

FLICKENGER: Well I think a union officer has to be just as fair as he possible can and go according to the contract.

CRIST: Then you became a part of the supervisory staff in the 1940's. Would you....

FLICKENGER: 1955.

CRIST: 1955, would you, how many men did you have in your, to supervise in the nature of the work.

FLICKENGER: Well they was breaking me in as a foreman and I had two days and the night foreman got sick and they put me on nights to run the department and I had 32 men under me on nights. Now I ran what we called the reclaim department in the core room at the same time. Of course later on, they put another man on nights with me. And then the gentleman that was

sick got back and I went back on daylight and I worked pretty much straight daylight then as a supervisor.

CRIST: Then your association with American Steel you say was a total of 40 years?

FLICKENGER: 40 years.

CRIST: When then did you retire?

FLICKENGER: I retired then in 1967. Of course we had some years in there during the Depression that we didn't get any work and so they really didn't count that I don't think.

CRIST: Well now that raised a question in my mind. Did the, was the plant open all the time during the Depression years?

FLICKENGER: During the Depression they might call us in, maybe I got, well I did get three days in a month not on my occupation on another job like repairing something or we was doing some repair work or something like that. They'd give you about three days a month.

CRIST: Do you recall any situations during the Depression years, either of your own circumstance or someone else you knew. Just to get an idea of how desperate things were.

FLICKENGER: Well at that time, the American Steel Foundry done an awful nice thing; they got groceries in for the employees that worked at the plant who didn't have the finances to buy their groceries. They could go down there and get some groceries. And also coal, if they needed some coal, they would furnish the coal.

FLICKENGER: We was helping in the 20's at that time and maybe a little before.

CRIST: Was this a plant store?

FLICKENGER: That was an operation put on by the plant. Of course, as the work picked up then they held so much out of your wages every two weeks.

CRIST: During those years did you work in any other places?
The Depression Years.

FLICKENGER: Yeah, I did a little work. I knew quite a few of the farmers and I used to go out and help thrash and fill silos and things like that on farms.

CRIST: And were others that you knew at the American Steel, were they getting work like that, too?

FLICKENGER: There was two or three other men that I knew of that worked with me on the farms.

CRIST: Then in this whole span of years you have some recollections about Alliance industry in general and I think probably there are some other specific plants that we haven't mentioned yet.

FLICKENGER: Yeah, there was the Woodes Engineering Company which was located at Park and Patterson and there was Transue and Williams and of course the B&W Plant came in later years. And the Alliance Manufacturing, at one time that was a pottery where the Alliance Manufacturing was. Then there was a vitrous China located on Mahoning.

CRIST: About what years are we talking now.

FLICKENGER: We're talking in the 20's at that time and maybe a little before.

CRIST: Well during all this time you branched out and you got involved in some other things in this town, too, didn't you?

FLICKENGER: Well I kind of got into politics along about 1948. Well I ran two years before that as a Councilman at Large and I got beat out, and two years later I came out and ran for First Ward Councilman and I was lucky enough to be elected and I was in City Council for ten years.

CRIST: Working with City Council with a group of people from different segments of the city; I suppose working with them is a little different than working with the men in the shop.

FLICKENGER: Yes, it was quite a bit different, fortunately I was working with a couple of men from the plant, Mr. Ogline and Harry Wheeler, the plant engineer. And I think at that time the Council really done their work while they were at Council. To me there was a certain amount of prestige went along with the job at that time with the money that we derived from working there.

CRIST: In that time that you were a member of Council was there any particular project that was started or under way that was of particular significance?

FLICKENGER: Well the ground work had been laid for a new reservoir and the electrification of the water department. And Dr. Morgan who was the President of Council put me on the water committee and I served on the water committee with Mr. Wheeler, Fred Russell, and myself and there was somebody else I don't recall today I think it was Oscar Davis. And of

course we acquired the land for the lower Deer Creek which was quite a lengthy process and the electrification of the water works was another big project and the chairman, who was Mr. Wheeler, had me work on a program where we were going to change the meters in all homes about every seven years. We would take so many each year for seven years and that way the meters would be in good service and then we would start right back over in another seven years and start to change them again.

CRIST: What were the specific years that you were a member on City Council?

FLICKENGER: I went into City Council in 1948 and my last year was 1956.

CRIST: Since 1956, 1957 in that general time, you've been active in the community in many ways. You've kept your interest up in all things haven't you?

FLICKENGER: Yes, while I was in City Council I also served as a member of the Board of the Directors of the YMCA. Of course, with my work at the shop I couldn't attend the meetings regular so they asked me if it would be all right if they would make me an honorary member of the Board, which was okay with me because their meetings were held at noon and we had quite a few change overs at noon with some of the big machines, blowers down there, and it was impossible for me to get to the meetings.

CRIST: Go back a few years again now back to American Steel and the end product of it all at American Steel. What was something of the range of the product that came out of the shop?

FLICKENGER: Well we was mostly in railroad work. We'd make bolsters, side frames, knuckles, jaw bars and later time we made fifth wheels for these big tractors. And we also made some teeth for steam shovels out of special metal that you couldn't touch with a drill. And we experimented with tire molds down there at one time. We had a gentleman by the name of Mr. Donaldson from the Machine Steel Casting was in and we experimented on making tire molds.

CRIST: The, other plants in town, let's take American Steel for instance, or Transue and Williams for instance, they were making railroad equipment too weren't they?

FLICKENGER: Yeah, they were making some pins out there and some plates that I know of.

CRIST: I guess what I'm getting, trying to get at whether, was Alliance known as a railroad industry town at that time.

FLICKENGER: More so, Morgan Engineering Company and Alliance Machine were more noted than American Steel Foundry. We were noted. The American Steel Foundry is a large company. They had plants at Granite City; East St. Louis; Newark, N.J.; the Alliance plant; Sharron, PA; there was another plant in Franklin.

CRIST: These, all of the plants you just mentioned, are they all still active?

FLICKENGER: That Newark plant I don't think is active anymore. The one at Franklin, the East St. Louis plant is no longer in operation. But in the meantime the American Steel

Foundries got into diversified industries. Car wheels and other stuff, they did have the Cincinatti Milling Machine Company at one time. Now whether they still have that or not, I don't know.

CRIST: You were born in Alliance?

FLICKENGER: Yeah, I was born in Alliance at 750 E. Cambridge.

CRIST: And as you were growing up as a young fellow you ah, what was your first job?

FLICKENGER: Well, my first job was sweeping out a grocery store.

CRIST: What store?

FLICKENGER: Well, it belonged to people by the name of Speigels on South Webb Street. At 419 South Webb, and I think I was roughly in the third grade of school at the time. And, of course, I carried newspapers. I had the first Canton Repository route in Alliance.

CRIST: Is that so?

FLICKENGER: In 1913.

CRIST: Now was that, can you, where did that route take you?

FLICKENGER: Now that route took me up Liberty Street and on Cambridge and Summit and Grant and a couple of other streets up there. It wasn't a very large route; they just started the paper over here in this town.

FLICKENGER: That was at the corner of Garwood and South Webb.

CRIST: Did they have an office over here?

FLICKENGER: No, the papers came over by streetcar and there'd be two men come over at the end of the month to collect the money.

CRIST: Where was the streetcar terminal?

FLICKENGER: The streetcar would throw them off at the corner of Liberty and Main.

CRIST: The streetcar came down Main Street?

FLICKENGER: Yeah, the streetcar came down Main and of course there'd be the car that ran from Canton to Salem.

CRIST: That would go through Alliance to Salem?

FLICKENGER: Yes.

CRIST: After the Repository, then what?

FLICKENGER: Well, I continued working in the grocery store and helped dress chickens out on the week-end and delivered groceries in town here with a horse and sled. And along about 1919, I think it was 1919, for about six weeks we delivered with a horse and sled. And of course in the summer months we used a little pick up truck and delivered groceries, model T truck.

CRIST: And the store, what was the store?

FLICKENGER: The store that I delivered groceries for that we used the sled was Hartman's Grocery Store.

CRIST: And where was it?

FLICKENGER: That was at the corner of Garwood and South Webb.

CRIST: Have any specific recollection of Main Street? Any buildings that are not there now or that stood out to you now in your mind as you were growing up?

FLICKENGER: There was a building in particular, it was setting where the present First National Bank is. It was sort of a five and ten cent store run by people by the name of Deibold out of Massillon. And I recall very plain that when they tore, when they were tearing the building down there was some toys laying around there and they told me I could pick up the toys and take them home. And of course the First National Bank at that time was across the street from City Hall and the Industrial Federal, the Industrial Bank was at the corner of Seneca and Main. They were in there after the Post Office moved out, which was located at Seneca and Main at the Southeast corner.

CRIST: Then if you were to continue West on Main Street, any specific recollections?

FLICKENGER: Well, I remember Martin's Confectionary Store, there was a piano store immediately in the back of that on the Square, and this old piano over here came from there. And next to that was a saloon right across the alley from the City Hall.

CRIST: A saloon across the alley from City Hall? Now that sounds interesting.

FLICKENGER: _____.

CRIST: Not too sanitary over there. Now I don't suppose anybody from City Hall spent much time in the saloon, though.

Well we'll get on with the history. Then the trolley or the streetcar, I did want to ask another question about that. How often did it come into town?

FLICKENGER: The streetcars ran every hour to Canton. They come into Alliance on the hour, the same from Salem. Then they run on over to Canton after lunch and then back down to Salem. Of course you had a half hour service from Alliance to Sebring. And I forget what the service was from downtown Alliance to Mount Union. They also had a streetcar that ran the North end of town, down North Union, out Vine Street and they, into Rockhill Park. They'd stop right at the entrance of Rockhill Park at Vine and Rockhill.

CRIST: I sometimes wonder if we're any further ahead now than we were then. That sounds like a pretty efficeint way to get around. Well Jake, is there anything else you think of that you might like to share on this particular tape that we have not touched in anyway about the plant, the politics, or the city in any way? Perhaps you have a thought about your political philosophy.

FLICKENGER: Well, I feel this way. I've worked with Republicans and I've worked with Democrats in City Council and I had no trouble, in fact I had more trouble with my own party than I had with the opposite party. And I've always felt this way; if it's good for me it's good for you, if it's no good for me it's no good for you. You have a certain amount of money to operate on and that's what you have to look out for.

CRIST: Well that's very fine and I appreciate this chance to chat with you. I've been talking to Mr. Jake Flickenger, of 413 W. Ely Street in Alliance, about his career in Alliance. Lifetime career here of rich, rewarding ways, growing up in town, being a part of the industrial scene, a member of City Council. And we appreciate this chance to have it as a part of the Oral History Project. Thank you very much Mr. Flickenger.

FLICKENGER: You're welcome.

ALLIANCE MACHINE COMPANY.....Flickinger 3, Flickinger 11
ALLIANCE MANUFACTURING.....Flickinger 8
AMERICAN STEEL FOUNDRIES.....
.....Flickinger 1, Flickinger 6, Flickinger 10
BABCOCK & WILCOX TUBULAR.....Flickinger 4
CANTON REPOSITORY (NEWSPAPER).....Flickinger 12
CITY COUNCIL.....Flickinger 9
CITY HALL.....Flickinger 14
DAVIS, OSCAR.....Flickinger 9
DEER CREEK.....Flickinger 10
DIEBOLD STORE.....Flickinger 14
DONALDSON, MR.....Flickinger 11
FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK.....Flickinger 14
HARTMAN'S GROCERY.....Flickinger 13
HILLGREEN LANE.....Flickinger 4
INDUSTRIAL FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN.....Flickinger 14
MACHINE STEEL CASTING.....Flickinger 3, Flickinger 11
MAIN STREET.....Flickinger 14
MARTIN'S CONFECTIONARY.....Flickinger 14
MCCASKEY PLANT.....Flickinger 3
MORGAN, DR. WILLIAM.....Flickinger 9
MORGAN ENGINEERING COMPANY.....Flickinger 1, Flickinger 11
OGLINE, MR.....Flickinger 9
PIPE ORGAN WORKS.....Flickinger 4
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SALOON NEAR CITY HALL.....Flickinger 14
SPEIGELS GROCERY.....Flickinger 12
STREETCAR.....Flickinger 13, Flickinger 15
TRANSUE AND WILLIAMS.....Flickinger 8, Flickinger 11
VITREOUS CHINA PLANT.....Flickinger 8
WHEELER, HARRY.....Flickinger 9
WOODS ENGINEERING COMPANY.....Flickinger 8
YMCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.....Flickinger 10