

Consent Form

I, hereby release my taped interview for use by researchers subject to the following conditions:

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tape to be used as or when it can
serve a useful purpose.

Signed

L. McKenzie Paige
interviewee

Signed

Margaret Benois
interviewer
and
Dolores Sheltus,
(Signed for by
M. Benois)

Date

April 27/79

The Eastern Townships during
World War II 1939-1945

Interviewer- Margaret Bailes

Interviewee- Mr. S.M. Paige

Margaret Bailes and Mrs. Dolores Sheltus, The Eastern Townships during World War II 1939-1945. In answer to your questionnaire during World War II I was living in Windsor, Quebec down near Richmond. I was born in Kingsbury, County of Richmond, June 26, 1900. And with my parents moved to Greenly across the St. Francis River from Windsor, extension of the Alfred Mountain Railway, from Kingsbury to Greenly 1905 and lived there with my family till 1928 when I was married to Winniford Hatch of the Brompton Road. Bought a home in Windsor in which we are still living. My father, locomotive engineer for the Alfred Mountain Railway, spent his working life with the O.M.R. and after 1910 a branch line of the C.P.R. from Windsor to Eastman and North Troy, Vermont. I am a descendant of American ^P₁ages who landed in the States from England in 1639 and around 1800 came to Canada with the Austins and settled on the west side of Lake Memphamagog and Jeremiah died in 1824 and his wife in 1831, and they are buried on the shore of Lake, not far from the St. Benoit de Lac Monestry on the now McMaster property. With respect to the Great Depression I do not remember too many details. The paper mill run part-time and every employee at least had work part-time or worked alternate weeks so all had some work. As I remember people in Windsor did not fair too bad, however,

I do not think or recall but I think the Canada Paper Mill did work nearly full-time during the entire period.

With respect to myself, I was on the staff of the Paper Company and worked full-time as a cost clerk on maintenance and capital expenditure cost. Later as supervisor where I spent my working life from 1919 to retirement in 1965. Previous to the depression in 1929-1930 many ordinary people bought common stocks on the stock market and those who bought on margins or primides surly were in trouble and lost money heavily. I do not remember but I would say that when World War II started if the depression was not over it sure speeded up recovery. My salary in 1940 was \$135 per month and in 1945 about \$190 per month. When the war began I do not recall any special circumstances. I continued my work at the mill daily. I do recall that the mill, if my memory serves me right, did do some special machine shop work. One of the mill men rigged up his own machine shop and made some persision instruments. This was all brought about by the rush to equip ocean going boats and other items suddenly required for the war effort. With the war the paper company made some expansions to the mill buildings and machinery as it was almost impossible to get new equipment and machinery on the count of restrictions for the war effort. Alterations to machinery and buildings involved using some second hand steel beams and machinery converting them to the purposes required. The mill did have some priority as they rigged up machinery to convert rolls of

Kraft paper to pass over as stout a machine. The tar solution was applied to the paper and made into rolls as we see them today at building products stores. Hundreds of these rolls were shipped overseas and used to black out cities in England. As I recall at the time the war clouds were brewing. We followed the newspapers and radio very closely analysing all the reports and speeches by the politicians and church world was taken very seriously. All the treachery of Pearl Harbor was carried on radio and I remember having hearing the news early in the morning. Also the sinking of the German war ship off the coast of South America was followed on the radio as taking place in the early evening.

In my immediate family my two brothers joined the Air Force and served here and overseas. My wife also had a brother in a tank corps wounded in France. I do not recall living conditions too clearly. Sugar and gasoline were rationed, some coal replaced by coke. We had coupons and gasoline coupons. I could pass them to a friend if I wished and the same with the sugar. I would say we managed very well.

I can recall my young son wanting his first fish pole and we could not get one. Also wasn't able to buy him any kind of a gun. Many items were not available owing to the seriousness of the war we probably had a very severe fear of what might happen. I do not remember the date, but I remember one evening after dark going over near the paper mill to witness a trial of a complete black out. Of the two mills from the bright lights about the

yards and ect. everything was turned off, the windows covered with black paper and not a light could be seen. This really impressed me and almost made one take a deep breath and think of serious conditions that existed overseas.

Many here volunteered for the Seventh Eleventh Hussards including myself which was a local group. There was an armory here in Windsor which equiped the volunteers with all the clothing which we kept at home and my wife just told me that she had to find the room to store these things, overcoats and all, both for myself and my son and a friend who was rooming with us. From my diary I find entries of army practice in the summer of 1943 and '44. I remember especially evening drills and on Sundays going on marches and conveys especially to the Canada Paper limits and other places about the country. One of the novelties that we included quite a different group of men in this outfit. Our mill manager, the late Mr. Alec Philip, members of the mill staff, paper makers, painters, members of the town of different walks of life, and I remember it was a great experience. We had a broadened gun and other arms which we were all to become familiar with. I remember on one trip to the company limits, if my memory serves me correctly, one particular short thick set French Canadian brought along a very large glass jug full of homemade brew. This was passed around for all to get a swig and some I remember had more than one drink. For me I would call this a sign of real fellowship among probably 50 persons as a broad

guess on September 4 and 5, 1943 our group and others around the townships had army trucks take us from here and other towns, I recall men from Richmond and East Angus all going to Thetford Mines for the weekend for army manovers and eating, sleeping with army equipment. I cannot recall too much of this trip, the ride in the big open army trucks in a convoy is recalled. My emphasis from some of the boys was the men who would be in charge and I can remember as we got off the trucks at Thetford Mines giving us orders and very precise commands. I believe the units from East Angus but I've forgotten his name. The trip home is recalled. We were riding in big army trucks, some sitting on canvas bags among boys from other towns and the fellowship and the early evening scenery was beautiful. And then after dark the long convoy of the truck lights as we passed over the hills and vallies the headlights and red tail lights were quite spectacular.

Other activities of our family and friends included Red Cross meetings, packing boxes for the soldiers overseas. This is usually done by some church group and others who raised money and packed boxes of cigarettes, chocolate bars, items of clothing, and other comforts. From my notes I had an entry of a meeting on April 19, 1945 of a meeting at the Canada Paper Clubhouse re. victory celebrations. April 15, 1945 Memorial services at the St. George Anglican Church for President Rosevelt. May 8, 1945 holiday for the

V-E Day parade. August 15, 1945 was the V-E Day. August 10, 1946 a party at the community hall Offerd Road near Sherbrooke for returned soldiers.

I must not forget that about four miles from here at St. Francois Xavier de Brompton the Air Force had an air field where many boys started their early training in small air planes for the Air Force. Everyday small planes were in the air. The famous flyer building was also there. A severe air accident took place on October 9, 1943 when 24 members of the R.C.A.F. in the liberator bomber on a flight from Gander Lake, Newfoundland to Rockcliff, Ottawa disappeared in a storm. Seven hundred and eight flights were made to try to find this big plane with a cost estimated at nearly a million dollars without success. Nearly two and a half years later in June an air bush rescue pilot looking for a Norseman was reported missing but later turned up reported seeing the wreckage of the Liberator embedded deep in the the dense undergrowth against a sheer cliff. A search party headed by squadron leader Harry Cop of the R.C.A.F. took an artisan trip up the 2800 foot peak of Black Mountain, highest in the district, about 10 miles southwest of St. Donna came to the sight. Later with sacred ^{rites} rights a triple funeral service was held on July 3, 1946. The men were buried beneath a stone ~~carra~~ ^{carra}, funeral services were performed by three army chaplins and 23 white crosses and a star of David marked their resting place. This accident is of particular interest to me

as a cousin of mine, Sergeant W.G. McNotten, navigator, lost his life in this air disaster.

An interesting war issue stamps including King George 6 in Navy uniform the one and five cent stamps. Army uniform the two and four cent stamps. Air uniform the three cent. A four cent grain elevator and freightor and an eight cent farm scene. The ten cent parliament buildings at Ottawa. Thirteen and fourteen cent Canadian ram tank. A twenty cent Canadian corvette and the fifty cent, 25 pounder field gun. And one dollar a Canadian destroyer. The post office also issued slogans related to the war effort for cancellation purposes. One of the famous ones was the large "V" for victory including the Morris code three dots and a dash. Besides, for instance, "Save metal, rags, and waste paper." "Conserve coal, one ton in five." "Buy victory bonds." These were issued for many other themes, many bilingually.

During wars people in the arm^{ies} forces write letters and others write to them. Owing to the necessity of secrecy, we had letters of which the envelope may have interesting particularities. Some are mailed stampless with a few post office hand stamped cancellation. Some stamp removed and pasted by censor on active service. We also had air mail envelopes which is made of light-weight paper and written on the inside of the envelope. Another envelope made the mark U.S. Army Postal Service and they had originated in Africa and another could be from Australia according to

the necessity of the secrecy nothing shows the original until you can ask the sender.

Well, ladies these are some of the memorial memories I have of the war years and I hope it will be of help to you.

This is further to what is already on the tape. The ladies here in the town during the war effort had a room over at the Chateau Windsor Hotel and past their time there making up bandages and gauze and things that were required in the war effort. These would be packaged up and sent over to Europe as required. Many people did knitting and some of them took it to church on Sunday to hurry and get the work done.