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Orleans County Historical Association

Table of Contents: Ed Weeks Interview

SUBJECTS

NAMES

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

building wildlife marshes

State Conservation Department - wildlife

trees & shrubs planted

Soil & Water Conservation Dist.

pheasants, birds, opossum,

coon, fox, hawks, owls,

chipmunks, red squirrels

Cornell University:forestry

Sportsmen's Association, Albion

4-H work

Oak Orchard Wildlife Management

Boy Scouts

Cub Scouts

Eagle Scouts

Troop 43

Yukon Derby

Albion Nature Trail

Conservation Field Days

Barre Center, Burma Woods

"Tree of Life"

Orleans County Federation of

Sportsmen's Club

secretary-treasurer, 21 years

cabin named after Ed Weeks

Bullard Park, Albion

4-H Fairgrounds

Red Jacket Council

Brockport University

Health Department

sewer break, Albion 1979

pollution

National Environmental Act

pen & pencil sketches

use of fire-arms

farming

thrashing machine

Fordson tractor

International F-12 tractor

Albion Fire Department

Edwin James Howard Weeks, father
Sarah Amelia Smith Weeks, mother
Jean Weeks Stetson, sister
Eleanor Weeks Wilder, sister
Dorothy E. Weeks, sister
Wilfred (Bill) H. Weeks, brother
John A. Weeks, brother
Granny: Jane Glass Smith

Henry Hudson

George Batt

Jack Larwood

Bob Perry

Gerald Sharping

Bob Smith

Bill Sherman

Ronald Tuohey

Bob Stuerzebechner

Dick Bloom

Jim Gillette

Congressman LaFalce

Senator Baker

Assemblyman Steve Hawley

Senator John Daly

SUBJECTS & NAMES

West Webster, New York

Rochester, New York

move to Albion

The Depression

Model-T Ford pick-up

milk route

Colby, Adirondacks

1901-1980



Orleans County Historical Association

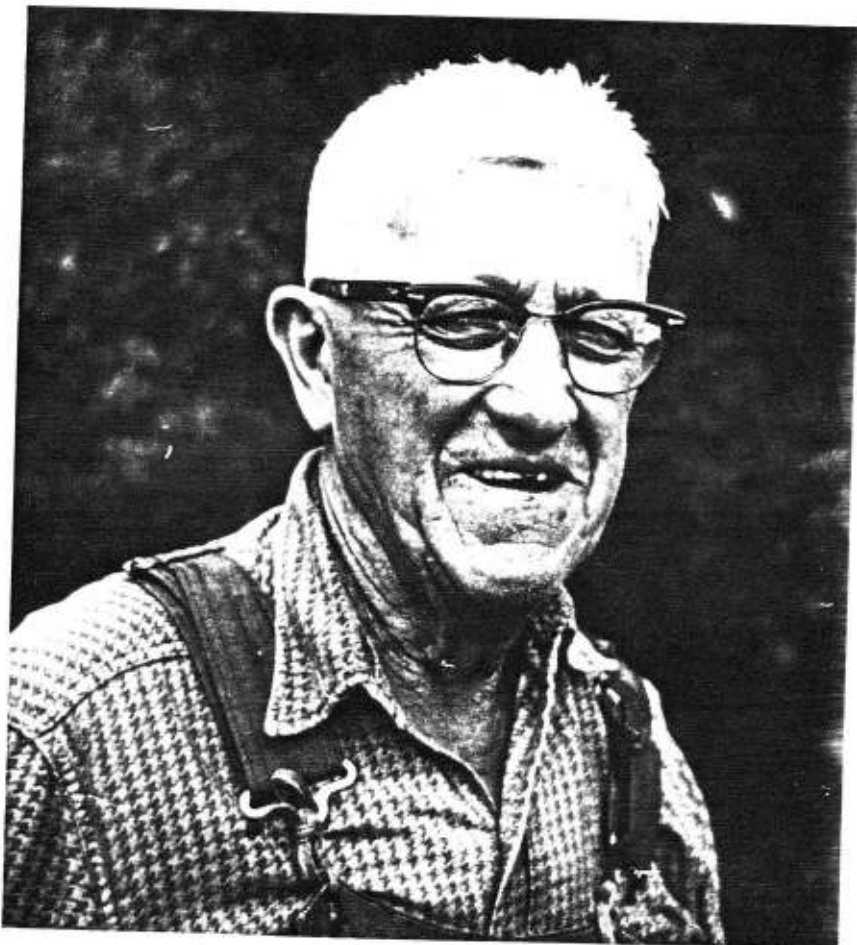
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Mr. Edwin Travis Weeks
2998 Brown Road
Albion, New York

Mr. Weeks was born December 25, 1901.

This interview was conducted by Donald D. Cook of Medina.

W Weeks
C Cook





Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

Edwin Weeks

Signed

8/17/79

Date

Understood and agreed to:

Jon Cook

INTERVIEWER

Aug. 17, 1979

Date

WEEKS 1

This is an interview for the Orleans County Historical Association
And this afternoon I am interviewing Mr. Edwin T. Weeks of 2998 Brown
Road, Albion, New York. Today is August 17, 1979.

C: Ed, where were you born?

W: Rochester, New York.

C: And when?

W: December 25, 1901.

C: Okay. And your family?

W: Well of course, mother and father and brother Bill are dead.
Dorothy is dead. Living is sister, Jean, brother John and sister
Eleanor.

C: Eleanor Weeks Wilder.

W: Eleanor Wilder, Eleanor, yes. Well Jean is Stetson.

C: Right. And they both live in Albion?

W: Yep.

C: Right. Okay, John is in...

W: John lives in Marcellus, New York now.

C: Right. Now what did your father do?

W: He was a commercial artist. Also worked on the farm. With me.

C: Uh huh. And you said you were born in Rochester?

W: Yes. In Rochester, New York.

C: Right. You were telling me about when you were a young lad.
Sundays your dad would always -- summer times, take you out.

W: Yes.

C: Rig up a team or ...

W: Dad was - dad while he was a city born - a boy born in the city limits and then they moved over here. But dad loved the outdoors almost as much and maybe more than I do. And I - he spent a lot of time with his boys in the outdoors. Uh - for instance, when we got old enough - now I don't think my father ever owned a gun. But when I, or Bill, or John got old enough he bought us guns and ^{taught} us to use them. We had hunter training from Dad Weeks, believe me. One cardinal rule was this: If you brought a gun in the house it must be unloaded. Because if dad walked in and picked up your gun and found it loaded, the gun stayed in the corner for thirty days.

C: It didn't happen too often, right?

W: No.

C: Didn't you say he would take you out camping and teach you wild flowers and trees and all this? When you were young?

W: Yeah. I tell you I got more of that from my grandmother than I got from anybody. Granny Smith was born - eh - Jane Glass in the Pennsylvania back woods. And she was brought up in the Pennsylvania back woods. Now Granny didn't know the scientific names of things but she knew just about every animal, tree, plant or what. The common names for them and - she lived in Rochester. And we lived out in West Webster. And Granny came out once a week. And just as soon as she got into her old clothes, she would get a hold of a basket and start for the woods. Her excuse was that she was going out to pick up some kindling wood but that (chuckle) was just an excuse. And of course I went along with her and learned about every - the common name of about every plant and tree with her.

C: She really got you into this outdoor bit and you've been with it

Weeks 3

ever since.

W: Well of course dad and mother were always that way minded. They never thought that any time we spent outdoors - was wasted. Well, back in those days kids had to work. Yeah. And we had certain jobs that we had to do. Sure, that was part of life. But they never begrudged us the time that we spent in the outdoors, learning about the outdoors.

C: Didn't you say he had a carriage or team or something that he hitched up on Sunday and take you out in the woods?

W: Oh, heavens yes. Every Sunday - every Sunday was a picnic. In the summer time especially. They'd hook up old Nellie to the wagon and load on everything for a picnic. And generally a half dozen people, relatives or friends from Rochester would be up. And we had a beautiful picnic spot out in the woods. It was about three quarters of a mile from the house. We drove down the lane, the cattle lane.

C: Where was this near, Ironduquoit?

W: No. This was over in Webster. Well it really was West Webster. Let's see, west of Webster, three and a half miles. And gosh, we spent about every Sunday in the summer there. We had a pile of fun.

C: You made a lot of your own fun, didn't you? You didn't have money. You just went out and did things.

W: Well after all, dad had six kids to take care of (chuckle). He probably wasn't poor in his day and age. He made good money, he was a commercial artist. But, take it even back in those days it took a lot of food and care for kids.

C: Growing kids.

W: We always had a garden. One of my earliest memories, I was perhaps

about three years old, up in Rochester at that time before we moved out. We moved out to Webster when I was five but we had a garden in Rochester. We lived on the outskirts. And one of my earliest memories is dad teaching me toads were all right, don't be afraid of them. And snakes were all right. Not to be afraid of them. And showing us how to handle them. For instance you can make a toad go to sleep. Well, all you have to do is take a piece of grass and rub it up and down across the little toad's head, between his eyes. He'll go right to sleep (laughter). Yeah, that's one of my earliest memories. It was my dad's.

C: Do you remember when you moved to Albion?

W: 1928.

C: The whole family?

W: The whole family. We moved up on South Main Street there, near the hospital. And a farm up there. That was sort of a sad experience in some ways because tough times arrived shortly after that you remember.

C: The depression. I grew up in that.

W: Because the whole ^{FARM WAS IN} ~~family lived in~~ the village - of course it didn't ~~bother~~ me. It ^{BELONGED TO} ~~bothered~~ my dad. Because the little farm was in the village, the taxes were pretty rough. And he finally lost the farm. And I ~~was~~ - I rented the farm for three years from the village. After they had taken it away from him, I rented it. I paid them the same rent as taxes and believe it or not, I made money. I had enough money to come down here and buy this place.

C: You bought this yourself?

W: Uh-huh.

C: And you've been here a few years?

W: I bought it in 1946 from Henry Hudson.

C: Do you remember what schools you went to? Did you go to school here in Albion?

W: No. I went to school in West Webster and I went to the West Webster rural school. I don't know what it is now. I've only been back there once or twice in that-- a half a dozen times at the most -- in that for years. It used to be - and they used to have a rural school outside of West Webster. It used to be up a long lane, away from the road. And it had all the grades in it, from first up through eight. There was two rooms in it and we had two teachers. A man up there in the upper four grades, and a woman taught the lower four grades. They sent me because, for some reason or other, you know, I was excitable as a youngster - to the doc - and the doctor said to send him to school. "I don't want him to have any books, just pencil and paper." And they sent me to school and the result that I finished - I was ready to go to high school when I was twelve years old.

C: Did you go to high school?

W: Oh, yes. I went to Webster High School. I didn't - I stopped when I had the third grade (year). I wanted to go to farming. And this was back here in World War 1. I was fifteen or sixteen years old and I was interested in getting in the Engineers. And they wouldn't take me. They said I was too young. And, ^{So} ~~before~~ I went to work, and for those days I made top wages. I worked on a thrashing machine one summer. I got ten per cent of the take. We worked from - well we'd start up at daylight in the morning. Five, five-thirty and get ready. You see it was a steam rig. So you would have to get your boiler going and one thing and another. Then we'd work all day long. Of course, take time off for breakfast, dinner and supper. And the people we were thrashing for, furnished the meals.

C: I've heard my grandmother talk about feeding thrashers.

W: We used to eat good. They - all these women, you know, were - well they didn't want the thrashers to go to the neighbors (laughter) and say they didn't have good food. We ate good. We had long days. That fall I ~~had~~ ^{HAD} ~~the~~ ^{ENOUGH} money to start farming.

C: From thrashing?

W: And odd jobs. Don, Back in those days if I wanted to go fishing, I had to get up before daylight and get the hell out. Because somebody, if I wasn't working on the thrashing rig, would be there and try to get me to come to work. And I say, apparently I satisfied people because I got top wages all the time. And I had money to buy a team of horses, tools, a couple of cows and one thing and another and start farming, When I was sixteen. I started farming when I was sixteen or seventeen years old. And of course, I've been at it more or less ever since. I don't know that I ever quit farming until - until I went to work for the Federal Government. And you see, I worked for your village (Albion), once upon a time. Oh, well, that came about because their firemen were going in the army. And I don't know if you remember George Batt? He used to work for the State School and he also did work at the Albion Fire Department. And he was going to have to go, so he come up and got me.

C: He was an Albion Fireman?

W: Yeah. And I served Albion in different catagories for ten years. I did just about everything you can think of up there. Everything from driving fire trucks to taking out the snowplow. The big snowplow alone. Plowing the roads.

C: Do you remember your first car?

W: The first car? Yes. I tell you, before I moved over here, I was in

the milk business for awhile over there. And I had a couple of milk routes. And one of my customers had a Model-T pick-up. I was delivering with horses, see. He had a Model-T pick-up, and he owed me a bill and we made a deal. I bought - I took the pick-up (laughter) for the bill he owed me and I used that darn thing for three or four years I guess. It was a Ford. No top on it or anything, you know. You know the planetary shift you had on there was ideal for a milkman. All you had to do is reach in and pull up that lever and let it down. You let it down and you were in gear. Pull it up and you were out of gear. So you could grab your milk bottles out as you were going from one to the other. I tell you, we never had any traffic problems. No, there weren't enough cars around to bother you very much. So you didn't have to watch very much. The horses were trained. Yep. But you actually - because - ^a
^{lot of} this is ~~part of the~~ country, ^{MILK ROUTE} ~~no fruit~~, see? And back in those days, these people were just moving away from the village and building homes. Get out of the way from town, you know. And of course they were all new customers, if you know what I mean. And my route, I think was pretty darn near ten miles long.

C: Did you get stuck once in a while ?

W: So with horses it was quite a long - it took quite a long time. You could do it in about half the time with your Model-T. And I'd just as soon use the Model-T.

C: Did you get stuck once in a while in the mud and snow ?

W: Yeah. And of course I guess I started tractor farming when I was, oh, I was only seventeen years old when I bought my first tractor.

C: That would be?

W: 1918.

C: Seventeen. What kind of a tractor was it ? One of the big steel...

Weeks 8

W: No. A Fordson. That was the first. One of the first Fordsons they put out. You had to crank the darned things to start them, you know.

C: Did you ever break your wrist ?

W: No. But you better learn how to crank them. You'll break your wrist otherwise. Then I bought another one. I bought a second one. And I went out doing some custom work. I had a hundred and some acres, and about twenty cows and a hired man. And I started doing some custom work. All kinds of plowing, fitting ground and I had one orchard that I took care of. Sprayed it, hired the hands and picked fruit and all that kind of thing. I was a busy young man.

C: Yeah. It sure sounds it. Those wheels on there, they didn't really have the big rubber tires then?

W: No. They had the great big steel wheels.

C: With the prongs or prods coming out of them ?

W: Yes. Oh they were miserable things to ride.

C: Yeah. I imagine.

W: And you had to be a little bit careful when you drove them what you hooked to because you could stand them up just like that. I saw one go backwards one day right on a fellow. But it didn't hurt him. He just sort of got pinned by it. Well, my first real modern tractor was a International F-12 and I had it made into an F-14.

C: That would be about ? It's hard to date, I know, but about...

W: The early thirties. I bought it from Jack Larwood. And there was a good tomato crop that year. And you know times, that was the beginning of those tough times. I had a good tomato crop and I got a deal from Jack. Jack Larwood was over where Harradine's is now. And because I had the cash to pay for it, I didn't have to go to the bank to borrow the money, I had the money

to lay right down on the - I bought the tractor for six hundred and fifty dollars, And he threw in a mowing machine. A tractor mower.

C: Yeah. I'll be darned.

W: Because I paid the cash. And I had that tractor when I moved over here.

C: Yeah? Still using it, still going ?

W: Yeah. Still using it when I moved over here in '46.

C: You're still farming a bit. I see your garden out there.

W: Yeah. I got a garden, but - and I do some mowing, but I don't do any farming. I haven't really - you see after I quit working for your village, well (chuckel) I don't want to say anything on this. Where it will be heard but I didn't get along too good with some of your village officials.

C: Well, I can understand that.

W: And I walked in one day and threw my badge and keys down on the desk and said, "Fireball Thomas wants my job. Call him up and tell him to come to work tomorrow morning."

C: Was that when you went to work for the Extension Service ?

W: No. I went to work for the, for what is now the DEC (Dept. of Environmental Conservation). The Conservation Department.

C: For Bob Perry ?

W: Bob Perry was one of my bosses. And I built wildlife marshes all over, I had five counties here in Western New York. I built wildlife marshes, planted trees and shrubs. I had a crew working for me.

C: This is DEC State land ?

W: ^{No,} I was working on private land. See back in those days your crew was paid by your soil and water conservation district. They, in turn, were paid by

the - were reimbursed by the Conservation Department, the State Conservation Department. Wasn't now, but was the State Conservation Department back then. And I had crews working in five counties. We planted trees and shrubs part of the time, And then we surveyed and I designed wildlife marshes and built wildlife marshes in several counties around here. And then the reason I quit the Department - well, Bob Perry called me up one day and he said, "Ed, you got to let your men go. I ain't got any more money to pay them." They were phasing out this wildlife marsh thing. I'll tell you what happened. They expected to raise a lot of ducks. Well, they should have known better, but ^{Don}, while certain ducks were not territorial, some of them are. Some of them require five acres of water for every brood of ducks. And they weren't getting the ducks. My Lord, they were good for every other kind of wildlife. And they were phasing it out. Well, Bob come to me and he said, "Ed, you better lay off your help." And I said, "Aw, Bob, they are just getting to the place where I can trust them. I don't have to watch them any more." Well he said, "If you can find the money to pay them, I don't care. Keep them on." I said (chuckle) "Have you got any money upstairs? If you have it, pay them!" Well, he says, "come on in the office." That was when the office was in Rochester, you know. And I said Okay, Bob. We went in to the office. We started plowing through things and we found some funds there we hadn't used. One of them was hedge improvement. And I said, Bob, my crew will be working on hedge improvement tomorrow morning. And they were. And he said, "okay, Ed." And I had places that I knew I could work. You see I had worked with a lot of farmers in that time building wildlife marshes and planting trees and shrubs on their places and one thing and another. And I managed to stay on for another year. To keep the guys for another year. But I got fed up on it. And I tell you quite frankly, it seems every time I've ^{BUILT A} ~~been~~ in marsh or designed a marsh, I had to

go to the Soil and Water Conservation engineers to approve my plan. And that's the way I got acquainted with them. They never let up on me. They were riding me to come to work for them all the time. So, here, when I laid off a bunch from the State Conservation Department, and went in to work for the Federal boys - and I worked for them for twenty years.

C: 'Til you retired, right ?

W; Yeah. Retired in 1970. Uh , I didn't exactly retire. I worked part time for the Soil and Water Conservation District. You see in each office you have two sets of people: You have the Soil Conservation Service which is a Federal Agency. You have your local - which is actually part of your county government- Soil and Water Conservation District. So I went to work part time for the Soil and Water Conservation District when I was retired. And then I could see that the load was getting heavier. That they needed a man there all the time. I was also on the Board as an associate member, while I was working for them. And at one meeting I told them, I says, "I know a young guy that would like this job and you'll need a full time man." It worked out very nicely. They got Gerald Scharping and he's been a darn good man. Great farm background and apparently enough mathematics so he could go ahead and design these things without - in other words, with a reasonable amount of coaching, he has done all right.

C: Done a good job. And still there.

W: Right.

C: You - Okay now when you quit farming, you did a lot of work here and made your estate - well I guess maybe I shouldn't say estate...

W: Well when I went to work for the Federal Government, I decided that it was time to quit farming, anyway. Well, the truth about it is that a man that

wants to do farming today, he's got to have a lot of land and big equipment. It's no longer a family thing. It's big business. And I like to grow things but I didn't like the business part of it. And here I had a good job. So I began to build the wildlife marsh, planted shrubs and trees and one thing and another. And of course, brother Bill lived right next door to me so we played back and forth. We planted some of the stuff on him and some of the marsh was on him. And we sort of ran this wildlife thing together. It was a hobby, no money in it. Besides, I would imagine it cost me two thousand dollars a year, To carry on and do what you want to do. As far as I am concerned it's money well spent. I'm getting my two thousand dollars or more too.

C: You see a lot of wildlife right here. Birds and that ?

W: That's right. I even have a few pheasants here. And I don't think I'm going to let the boys hunt them this year. I didn't last fall. I've been trying to get the DEC to close the season for one year to see what would happen. We don't get to first base. We tried to talk them in to closing one town somewhere. See, Don, they can't let go of the money. You know what I mean?

C: Yeah. They need everything they can get.

W: They got to have that money ^{from} license and they just won't do it. It's too bad. It might work. Frankly, I don't think there is any one thing to lay, that you can lay your finger on that has caused this, ^{die out of pheasants} ~~deal to settle~~. I think it's several things. I believe that it is, probably some of it is pesticides that is used on the farm. Part of it is, in fact, that your farming is bigger fields, different crops, also predation. You have a great deal more coon than you had before. Also you have opossum that you didn't have years ago. They are two bad predators. I don't think you have as many fox as you used to, but I really don't think the fox had a great deal to do with

keeping the pheasant population down. That's right!

C: Your hawks and owls ?

W: Yes. And hawks and owls. This is a very definite thing. Now you've got a small population. And you've got a big predation on them. And I believe that, along with the difference in farming practices, has caused this thing. And whether we'll ever get them back again, I don't know.

C: You remember when they first released pheasants in New York State ?

W: This was about the time I was born. But when I hunted my first pheasants, and I don't give a darn who knows that because the statute of limitations has taken care of that, I hunted my first pheasants when I was twelve years old, with a .22 rifle. Our dog used to chase them up in a tree and we'd shoot them. And Don, when I got my first shotgun, I had a partner. We'd go out hunting and take turns carrying the shotgun. We had lots of fun and you could take any kind of old dog out to hunt pheasants. Because you had your pheasants changed over the years.

C: They're runners now.

W: That's right. They were sitters when I was a little kid. Well those that run, were pappas and mammas. Those that didn't run were dead! It was as simple as that. And this is one of the - there is one thing else that has occurred, too. We do have, of course, in some of our animals and birds, a change over the years. We have many birds staying here, Don, that didn't use to stay up here in the winter. For instance your Cardinals. Twenty five years ago the nearest home was Pennsylvania, The southern part of Pennsylvania. Now we have Cardinals and also have Song Sparrows that stay here all the year. Not a lot of them, but some. Mourning Doves are staying here. Then all these birds, you also have a tremendous increase in red squirrels and

chipmunks, for some reason or other.

C: I can remember seeing my first Cardinal just before the war. Saw it on the Culvert Road in Medina.

W: I have an idea that one of the reasons for chipmunks and red squirrels is the fact that you have many, many small areas of pine woods. You go back to the late thirties, and the 4H started planting trees back in those days. I think I went up to Lowexville and brought the first load of trees back here.
- (End of side one).

W: We'll take this story along. I don't know. Do you remember Bob Smith? He was your 4H agent back in those days. And Bill Sherman was one of your teachers, Ag teacher up in Albion. We went down to Lowexville. I had a good little ton Ford platform truck, And we brought back forty five thousand little trees. Now I'm telling you it was a good thing that it was raining hard and cool. We stopped on our way back in Mexico to get lunch and it was raining quite hard. We stopped right in front of the restaurant. Before we got in to the restaurant, my tires were just as dry as that walk out there. (Pointing). I happened to have on brand new tires or we never would have made it. There was pretty close to five tons on that ton truck. Then we came down here and brought them down. Down where Tuohey lives on 31.

C: Which Tuohey is that?

W: Lets see. It's just this side of the 4H fairgrounds.

C: Ronald Tuohey.

W: Right! I don't remember whether he was living there. I don't think he was living there then because he was just a kid. I don't remember.

C: He's a lot younger than I am.

W: Gee Don, I'm getting to be an old man. I can't remember ~~anything~~ ^{NAMES} any-
more. A professor from Cornell, a forestry professor, came up for a planting

demonstration and they handed out the trees to the kids. And when I am driving around Orleans County I can see these small-- you see, what these kids was plant mostly a hundred or maybe two hundred trees or something like that. Small lots. And I believe they are responsible for certain types of wildlife and bird life that you have around here. I believe this is a definite thing.

C: Yes. I know in the winter time they like to get in there.

W: That was quite a trip, Don. We got up there in April. And of course the snow hadn't left up there. We followed one of those rotary plows for eighteen miles. And you could ^{NOT} look out on either side. You were driving ^{between} two ~~WALLS~~ ^{WALLS} of snow. And we ~~MADE~~ ^{MADE OUT} all right. We managed to get the trees on and bring them back. And I say we had a real load. But apparently that started it. And I see these small ^{LOTS OF} trees all over.

C: What kind were they? All different spruce trees?

W: Oh yeah. Pines and spruce. Different kinds that they raise^d back in those days. Most of them white pine and Norway spruce, And scotch pine of course. They had two nurseries back then! Saratoga and Lowe^Xville. And you know, I had another trip up in there in the Adirondacks with ^{ANOTHER} one of your 4H men. I went back there one year. Your 4H kids had a forestry project, and I think your sportsmen's association and your Buffalo News put up twenty-five bucks apiece for each one of the kids. And Bob Stuerzebecher and I took them up to Camp Colby in the Adirondacks and we stayed there. We drove as much as a hundred and forty miles each day taking these kids around to different places. And I run into these kids every once in a while now. I don't know. I can't tell you exactly when that happened but that was -- it must have been back in the sixties sometime. And I say, I run into one of these kids. They're

mamas and pappas today! But we had a picnic up there. And ^{HERE} ~~then~~ again because of my ability to teach kids, they used me up there also for that. You see we'd start out in the morning and make a trip. Now we'd take our lunch with us, come back and have our supper and we'd generally get back and have everything done by five o'clock. And then they'd have something going on. I'd have to teach the kids plant identification or something like that. While I was gone, or while we ^{WERE} ~~was~~ gone, one of the professors would set up a display of different kinds of plants and trees and shrubs that grew up there. And then it would be my job and take these kids ^{and} see that they knew exactly what these were. And it was a tremendously interesting experience. We had two station wagons then; The 4H had two station wagons. Bob drove one and I drove the other. (Laughter) Oh it was a picnic!

C: Do you remember when we cut the logs at the Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area ?

W: Oh boy, oh boy. Yes, and Don, I'm almost certain that my gang planted those trees.

C: Right. Now that was the Boy Scouts wasn't it ?

W: No, I had paid men working.

C: Oh. This was when you were working for Bob Perry ?

W: Yeah.

C: You said you planted with the Boy Scouts...

W: They ^{WORKED} ~~were~~ with Boy Scouts. For instance where the Albion reservoir was up there, I brought ^{THOSE} ~~them~~ trees down here too. Yeah. And I believe Dick Bloom ^{WAS} ~~is~~ one of the scouts, One of the oldest scouts back in those days. And they planted trees there. We also planted some up in Bullard Park. That was a ^{SAD} ~~bad~~ mistake, though. (Laughter). Those trees were just coming along pretty good

Weeks 17

and they let somebody go in to cut hay there, and they cut (chuckle) all them trees out. Think what that would have been today. That was a shame!

C: I remember when we cut those logs in Oak Orchard; we cut them for the Log Cabin down at the 4H Fairgrounds and they were about thirty years old by the rings. Is that right?

W: Right. Just about the time my gang was working.

C: Well you been speaking of Boy Scouts, I want to go into that a little bit because you've spent a little time Boy Scouting.

W: Well, I started in Boy Scouts, of course, when I was a Boy Scout myself in 1913. I never went very far ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ it. I walked about a mile and a half to my Boy Scout meetings, and I had plenty of other outdoor activities. And Boy Scouting, back in those days was almost one hundred per cent outside. Outdoor activity, you know, so there wasn't the urge to go ^{FURTHER} ~~through~~ in it, in the first place, Maybe I knew more than the instructors.

C: You probably did. . .

W: But then, when I got to be sixteen or seventeen, a man by the name of Smith came out to West Webster from Rochester. He was a city man. He believed in kids. He believed in Boy Scouts. And he started a Boy Scout troop but he didn't know a darned thing about the outdoors. Yes. I was his outdoor merit-badge-man. Yeah. Well I was too young to sign the things, but I'd take the kids and give them their tests and he would sign their papers. I had all the conservation merit badges back in those days. They were different than they are now. Most of them were agricultural: Gardening, bee keeping, raising pigs, raising chickens, what have you, Back in those days, I even taught horseshoing. Because I could shoe horses back in those days.

C: Farriar they call it?

W: Yeah. Farriar. I learned helping a blacksmith shoe my horse. I shod my own horses. Yes, Take them to the blacksmith, ~~and I~~ ^{HE WENT} went to work in Rochester. He'd quit. Well, ^{WHEN} I needed a horse shoe, so I just went up there in his blacksmith shop, started the fire up and shod my own horses. And I also taught that in the badge work. And then I helped more or less, in the merit badge council over there in Red Jacket Council back in those days. And we moved out to Webster here and my sister, Dot, went to work for them- I can't think of - Doc Hyler. Doc Hyler was their regional, ^{AREA} man here.

C: You mean when you moved here to Albion.

W: No. This was in Brockport. You were, back in those days - Orleans County- was tied up with the Red Jacket Council. And I was Bob's conservation - merit-badge-man out here. And I still do a little, but not very much.

C: Your'e still doing something in scouts ?

W: Yeah. I'm supposed to be a Commissioner for Special Events.

C: Well you've got a few plaques and citations.

W: Yeah. There's a few things up there that I've had, Thank-you notes.

C: When did you get the Silver Beaver Award ?

W: November 13, 1976. I think one of my greatest pleasures has been as a merit badge councillor to your would-be Eagle Scouts. I've always been impressed with the caliber of the boy that was going to be an Eagle Scout. I am very, very certain he had a little bit on the other guy, On the ordinary guy.

C: Not too many make it.

W: I don't know why, ^{but} they do. I suppose because some of it is the extra effort they have to put in the thing. Every one of them I dealt with, and I've dealt with a lot of them.

C: Well you had to. Sixty years or better haven't you ?

W: Yes. Now Eagle Scouts, it's always been a pleasure to work with one of them. And I run into them now and they are grown men and got kids of their own in scouting. Yes. And then as far as the local thing, I am one of the men who set up ~~248~~ ^{TROOP 48} here.

C: In Albion ?

W: That is in other words, first we set up as a Cub Pack. See, I believe in '58, '57 or '58. I can't tell you exactly. We set it up as a Cub Pack and then we found out that we had to have some place for our Cubs to go. So we set up a Scout Troop. I am one of the original men and I was their neighborhood commissioner for many years. This was another very nice experience. One I've had a lot of fun, Too, ^{is} teaching some kind of conservation at the Yukon Derbies. I don't do this anymore because I can't take it.

C: They usually pick the coldest week of the year. (To camp out).

W: It's a cold job. But just the same it was a lot of fun and I notice that more and more of the kids take an interest in the outdoors. In a way, I am a little bit sorry that scouting has moved a little bit away from that kind of thing. I realize that they had a problem. Many of the city kids and one thing and another needed scouting. The result is, scouting is a little different now. It still has a lot to do with the outdoors, but it has a lot to do with city living also. I suppose that's the necessity of modern times.

C: Yeah. That's why you're lucky. You've lived the area you have. You know. I think I am. We've seen things that these people are never going to see. Yeah. The future generation I am talking about.

C: Right.

W: This has been one of the very good things, now one of the very fine things I have had is this association with your 4H.

C: I want to get into that here. Are you all done with scouts ?

W: Yeah.

C: Okay. 4H and I want to get in to your teaching in Brockport and that. Okay. Go ahead.

W: Now I think probably my introduction to Brockport University was mostly to Jim Gillette. He was the guy that started me working on this teaching up at Fancher. Well I'd go up there...

C: Who is he ?

W: Well he's a professor. I believe he's down at the college and all. A professor of general arts. And Jim knew that I had outdoor training and that I used to go up there and I'd use the slides for lessons. I was teaching everything from Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to college students.

C: Backyard ecology and the whole bit ?

W: What ?

C: The chain. The food chain, the backyard ecology, the whole bit.

W: Yeah. And I did go up to the college itself a few times, occasionally. But I spent most of my teaching along that line, ~~and~~ was with Jim up there. And then again, you know, I am getting old, Don. Another young fellow that came in there after Jim left, That is Jim went back to teaching, And I worked with him quite a while. And then they put on a special seminar up there and I was one of the speakers. And they brought in a bunch of teachers, seventy-five teachers. They wanted to teach them how to teach a nature trail. And I had just set this one up in Albion, that they have now.

C: Where is it ?

W: It's in the woods up there. It isn't the same as it was. They put in a lot of exotics in there. But I taught just the way it was back in those days. I set up some forty or fifty objects in there with names on them. And then I

had all of the fifth and six grade kids in Albion schools up there several times. I don't know, we'd spend as much as two days - classes out there. And they sent me seventy-five teachers down. Brockport University sent me seventy-five teachers down to me to take them out on this trail and teach them how to use it. Now, ~~they~~^I also set up - well, I drew up a course. I also taught ~~of~~^{the} Albion ~~them~~ teachers how to teach. When you go into a nature trail, you just don't point to a tree and say, "that's a beech tree," And go on to this one and say, "that's a basswood and that's poison ivy." (laughter). That is not the way. The kid is going to forget it before you get out of there. You try to tell him it's a beech tree, you tell him why it's there. Perhaps how it got there. Perhaps how old it is, what it's used for. What use has it had.

C: A special bark, all shiney there.

W: Yeah. All this, you spend enough time on so the kids are going to remember some of that. And I guess I have taught your 4H ~~lets~~ ever since they've had a 4H sixth grade Field Days.

C: The Conservation Field Days. Is that what you mean? All sixth graders in the county.

W: All six graders. Iv'e taught that as long as you have had it.

C: You remember where you started out?

W: In Barre Center. Up there in the Burma Woods.

C: I remember. I know that Diane Knack, before she left, she said that all kids going through school now had all had it. So all the kids that have graduated (in Orleans County the past decade) have all been taught by you on the outdoors.

W: ~~is~~ One of the things that has happened was that we only see the six

grade kids for one year, But we see their teachers year after year. And I can remember when I use that thing over there (food chain chart). That thing I call the Tree of Life. And I taught that this was a perfect thing, see, excepting for the deer in the picture. Because a deer in a civilized community had no check, In other words he had no predator, We had to be his predator. Now I tell you, the first few years that I used that ~~thing~~^{darn} thing, you know, for about ten years, I think. The first few times I used it, I got dirty looks from the teacher. But they accepted it now. We are getting the message across to them now that wildlife has to be managed even in a civilized community. Perhaps more in a civilized community....

C: Sure. They start eating your expensive shrubs and everybody is going to start screaming.

W: Yes. It's been a very pleasant job. One of your unpleasant jobs I have had working with you for your sportsmen (the Orleans County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs) has been with your pollution abatement.

C: Yes. I know that you had a bad deal here recently.

W: Yeah. I had three or four bad days here, let's see ,the eighteenth to the twenty-third. (July 1979. Sewer break in Albion).

C: Did you see the article in the Medina paper?

W: Yeah. Well, I got a little bit tough. And I believe I've gotten across, Don. Because up to the Fair last Saturday--last Friday at the Fair, they came in and told me, "Weeks have you been to Albion today ?" I said, "no, what do you mean ? Well, yes. I drove through." "Didn't you smell it ?" "No," I said, "what's the trouble ?" "Well the west end again." This is a week or more after, ^{this} it happened. ^{DON} it took five days to get rid of the odor and it took twenty-four hours to get rid of this. I went to town. I wasn't nice. I didn't try to be. And

frankly I am going to insist that this be a permanent repair. I have received notice from your Health Department that they will also insist that this be a permanent repair. Otherwise it can happen again. Don, I have right in the drawer there a letter that I think I sent to (Governor) Tom Dewey in 1946 on this same project. Now, thirty some years is too long! I want the thing to end. You know, actually you don't have to pollute a stream every year. If you pollute it once in three years, you've done it. You kill off the aquatic life in the stream, both animal and vegetable, to the point where there is no more pollution. It takes about three years for it to come back. Now I can remember when Marsh Creek was probably one of the finest bass nursery streams in New York State. It isn't any more. Because over the years, over this some thirty years, this has happened periodically. Professor Morcher from Cornell, I asked him. I said "Doc, how long does it take to clean up a stream?" He says, "three spring ^{FLOODS} ~~flushes~~". I believe, and of course, you've had a big pollution problem down in your neck of the woods, And Holley. These haven't been pleasant things. But I'm not ashamed of the fact that I have taken part in it and I believe we are on the way to some improvement. The Health Department is beginning to cooperate with us a little. Now I had to chew them out because they don't work on Saturdays and Sundays, *apparently*.

C: You can't find them?

W: I found out how to find them, through your sheriff. You see you were up there that night. (Sportsmen's Federation meeting). All right, the sheriff cooperates with me now. I still don't buy the fact that they don't have anybody that's capable of making an investigation, ^{on} ~~and~~ that kind of thing. Well, any person, any police officer could make this investigation. I don't say that

they have the ability to run the samples of water. But they can find the source; and they didn't. ^{BUT} ~~And~~ the last time it happened, they immediately notified the Health Department. And I got on the Health Department at those special (phone) numbers that they gave me. And we had it cleaned up in less than twenty-four hours. So maybe that's the way to do it. Maybe you have to get tough. Maybe I haven't been tough enough in these years.

C: You have sure tried.

W: Well, actually I am a civilian. I don't have any power.

C: Lots of time the little wheel that squeaks gets the grease.

W: I am thoroughly convinced that if we are going to clean things up, we have to work at it. But I don't believe we can do it in twenty minutes. It took two hundred years to get to this place, and it's going to take time to clean things up. And I'm not too crazy about some of these people who I call "Fringe Fanatics" that want to change everything by tomorrow. Right now I am working with Congressman LaFalce and Senator Baker of Tennessee. What I would like to do is to make these people that I call "Fringe Fanatics", when they make complaints, make documented statements along with them. At the present time they don't really have to. They can start a court proceedings without it. That's the ^{WAY} ~~reason~~ they held up our \$2,400,000. for our DEC. All they ^{HAD TO} ~~ever~~ do is go and complain to the courts. ^{OF COURSE} ~~the courts~~ -- the judge ^{HAS} ~~have~~ found in our favor. And as he said, 'without prejudice'. Which means that they were at fault and shouldn't have made the complaint in the first place. But I am trying to get an amendment to this National Environmental Act that would require that when they make a complaint, they make a documented statement and be responsible for the truth of that statement. With some kind

of a penalty if it isn't true. I can't see that that would stop legitimate complaints. But it would stop some of this fringe stuff. Of course I have been very successful with your conservation legislation.

C: Yes. That was nice. Assemblyman Steve Hawley and Senator John Daly gave you a surprise.

W: Yes. It was a very nice thing and very much of a surprise. I didn't expect anything like that.

C: It was nice they named the cabin after you at the Albion Sportsmen's Association.

W: Yes.

C: You've been Secretary-Treasurer for twenty-one years with the (Orleans County Sportsmen's) Federation. The first one they ever honored.

W: Yes. And thirty-three years with my own outfit (Albion Sportsmen's Association). And these things, you know, I wish these honors conferred on me would encourage other people to do what I've done. Now I realize that everybody can't do it. I do realize that you have ^{TO HAVE} a background. After all, Don, on this legislation thing, I had started in 1944 with your Federation. And ^{OVER THE} ~~all these~~ years I have gone through at least four thousand laws a year.

C: Spent a little time reading.

W: And I've got to the place now where reading these digests, I know whether I need to see the whole law. And while I have ^{not} had an awful lot of success with your Assembly because of the fact that your New York City legislators are not conservation minded, Not what I call conservation minded, But certainly the Senate has been a hundred percent cooperative. And it's been very nice to be on a first name basis with ^{some of} your legislators

and congressmen.

C: Sure. And you need a bigger wall for all your awards.

W: Well, I got a whole lot of stuff in there, as a person says. There is one in there and in 1967, I believe, I got an Americanism Award from your Legion for the same thing. For ^{when} I'd work with young people.

C: These sketches now. I just want to get this on tape. You do all of your own pen and pencil stuff, don't you ?

W: Yeah. It's a hobby of mine.

C: Did you learn from your dad, or did you pick it up on your own?

W: Well a little of each. I think this is a thing you inherit. Now I don't ~~say~~ ^{say} you can't learn it. But I ~~do~~ ^{do} believe you inherit it. Well, of course you can improve it by study. I probably don't do more than one or two a year now. Well actually about every other year I take these things up to school. For instance this was up there to show what kind of a media you ~~do~~ ^{do} used, And they had them up there for their old folks day.

The above interview was transcribed by Luther Burroughs of Albion, N.Y. Don Cook of Medina, N.Y. conducted the interview and did the final typing.

Sportsmen Pay Honor To Senior Member

J-R

10-2-1978

By DON COOK

ALBION — In a picturesque setting of colorful fall foliage and rippling blue water, the Albion Sportsmen's Association dedicated its newly constructed building here yesterday afternoon.

And in a most appropriate manner, they dedicated the building to one of the most active members, Edwin T. Weeks, who also has the distinction of being the oldest member serving with the club.

The Albion group lays claim to being the oldest organized sportsmen's club in Orleans County, beginning sometime prior to the Civil War, and known then as the Albion Rifle Club.

For years the Albion Sportsmen's Association has owned 23 acres of property on Keitel Road known as Peck's Quarry. Meetings have been held in buildings throughout the village such as the recent meeting-place at the Albion Volunteer Fire Hall.

This past summer an all-out effort by members produced a 20x40 size clubhouse on the west bank of the main quarry. Besides the members other volunteer labor and material aided in constructing the building. Farmers, businessmen, many other members were congratulated in "getting the job done." Two specially named were George Majors and Dick Morton by club president Wallace Thompson.

The dedication ceremonies opened with a smorgasbord dinner for members and guests yesterday afternoon.

President Thompson, acting as MC for the occasion, highlighted the event by announcing to the audience the building would be known as the "Edwin T. Weeks Building" in honoring their friend.

Ed Weeks has for years been fondly referred to as "Mr. Conservation" in Orleans County.

For 38 years he has been the secretary-treasurer of the Albion Sportsmen Association, and currently still holds this position. He is also a past president.

This is the second major honor bestowed on Weeks this year. In early January the

Orleans County Soil and Water Conservation District cited him with a plaque and at that time claimed him as a living legend.

Earlier honors include the Silver Beaver Award, highest honor possible for adults in Boy Scouting; the Albion Sportsmen's Association presented him with a plaque last autumn; the Orleans County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs cited him in 1970, the first such recognition from this group; and others such as boy scouts, girl scouts, schools and the 4-H Staff.

Weeks reiterated the statement he made last January when he emphasized ... "It's nice to know people care and they honor you while you are still here to appreciate

it."

Joining Weeks were his family Mrs. Eleanor Wilder and Mrs. Jean Stetson, his sisters, both of Albion and his brother John who is director of the Onadagua Nature Center, Baldwinsville, N.Y.

Other speakers at the podium were Supervisors Clayton Plummer of Carlton and Theodore Swiercznski of Gaines; Past President Joe Licurse, Sheriff Donald White and Conservation Officer Richard Tuohey.

Besides President Thompson and Secretary-Treasurer Weeks, current officers introduced include Eugene Christopher, vice president. Directors are Joseph Licurse, Howard Barry and Dennis Ebbs.

STATE OF NEW YORK

—o—
The Legislature

ALBANY

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File

Ed. Weeks

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

Senate No. 206

Assembly No. 196

IN SENATE

By Senator Daly

IN ASSEMBLY

By Mr. Hawley

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature]

*

Legislative resolution congratulating Edwin Travis Weeks, Conservationist, of Albion, New York, upon the occasion of being cited by the Empire State Chapter of Soil Conservation Society of America

Whereas, On Tuesday, January sixteenth, nineteen hundred seventy-nine, during the annual meeting of the Orleans County Soil and Water District Edwin Travis Weeks was presented with a plaque citing him for

his more than fifty years of teaching, practicing and assisting others in

the practice and art of good land and water use; and

Whereas, This distinguished guardian of nature maintains his own

farm as a wildlife preserve and conservation management area, using it

to personally teach scouts, 4-H members, students and civic groups the

values of resource management; and

Whereas, As Legislative Chairman for Orleans County Federation of

Spokesmens Clubs and Albion Sportsmens Associations since 1944, Mr.

Weeks has been a vigilant crusader against legislation which would be

detrimental to conservation and sportsmen; and

Whereas, In conjunction with Edwin Travis Weeks' tremendous

involvement with preservation of the natural resources of this great

Empire State, his spiritual appreciation is evident in his photography

and writing; now, therefore, be it



CITED AGAIN--At the Orleans County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs meeting last evening, state Assemblymen R. Stephen Hawley (left), surprised Edwin T. Weeks of Albion. Weeks was cited by the state Legislature, congratulating him on the occasion of being honored by the Empire State Chapter of the Soil Conservation Society of America. A joint resolution that passed both the Senate and Assembly states, "Be it resolved that this Legislative Body congratulates Edwin Travis Weeks upon being honored...and expressed its appreciation for his dedication to the preservation of this land and to the education of others in this vital endeavor."
-(J-R Photo)

Avid Conservationist

ALBION-Edwin Travis Weeks, 78, died Friday at his home in his garden on Brown Road, Albion. He was found by a member of the family when he failed to answer the telephone.

He was born in Rochester, N.Y. December 25, 1901, the son of Edwin J. and Sarah Smith Weeks and had resided in Albion since 1929.

An outstanding conservationist he was honored this past year through a resolution of the State Legislature, signed by Governor Hugh Carey for the half century he had generously dedicated to the cause of conservation in New York State. His home farm is the site of a 65 acre forest and wild life preserve.

He attended schools in Webster, N.Y., U.S. Technical School, Beltsville, Maryland; Michigan State University, where he studied engineering and numerous technical sessions in USDA, Soil Conservation Service. He worked for the United States Department of Agriculture organizing what is now known as the Orleans County ASC Committee. He was honored by the Empire Chapter of the Soil Conservation Society of America. He served as crew chief for USDA-SCS and was responsible in creating and teaching Orleans County Conservation Field Days.

He lectured on Conservation in Orleans County schools, public and parochial at Fancher Campus and N.Y.S. University at Brockport.

An amateur photographer Mr. Weeks took thousands of photographs used in Conservation Education for illustrated lectures.

As a member of the Agriculture Legislative Committee for the Lakes Plains District he kept up a current correspondence with legislators, often outspoken in his demands in the cause of conservation and firearms legislation, soil and water practices. He was a liaison member of the Orleans County Planning Board.

He was a life member of the Albion Fire Department and had received the coveted Beaver Award for a half century in Scouting.

He was legislative chairman and secretary-treasurer of the Finger Lakes Conservation Council of Region 8, NYS, DEC and his work as secretary of the Albion Sportsmens Association was honored by dedicating the new cabin at Pecks Quarry as the Edwin T. Weeks Bldg.

He was also a member of the New York State Forest Practice Act Board and had laid out nature education trails for several schools. BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA: Boy Scout 1913

at Webster, New York. Conservation Merit Badge Counselor, Rochester Council and Red Jacket Council, B.S.A. (1920-1940) Conservation and related subjects, Merit Badge Counselor Lewiston Trail Council 1940-present.

Helped organize Troop No. 48, Lewiston Trail Council 1958. Served as Neighborhood Commissioner 1968-1971.

Conservation lecturer to Orleans County Boy Scout Troops for two decades.

Present Title: Assistant District Commissioner for Conservation, Lewiston Trail Council.

Presented Silver Beaver Award 1976.

He was a member of the United Methodist Church of Albion and was a long time Quadrennium lay leader and teacher of a Sunday School Class.

He is survived by a brother, John A. Weeks of Marcellus, N.Y.; two sisters, Eleanor W. Wilder and Mrs. Melvin (Jean) Stetson, both of Albion, several nieces, great nieces and nephews and great nephews and several cousins.

Services were held at the Christopher-Mitchell Funeral Home, 21 W. Ave., Albion, Monday at 2 p.m. Burial was in Mt. Albion cemetery.



Edwin T. Weeks

September 3, 1980

Madison