

### **Transcript of Interview with Norman Woodhouse - Part Three**

ANNOUNCER: Welcome to Mansfield University Voices, An Oral History The following interview is Part Three with Norman Woodhouse. Mr. Woodhouse talks about his family, lumbermen and being Constable of the town of Morris. The interview was conducted by former Mansfield University history professor, Dr. Paul O'Rourke, in late July of 1973.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What did you enjoy doing when you were a teenager?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: What?

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What did you enjoy doing on the farm here when you were 15 or so, when you were growing up? What kinds of things did you like to do? Fish or hunt, or--

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Oh, we liked to fish a lot, but dad wouldn't let us fish. Made us work. He'd tell us, "You go fishing some other day. You've got to work today, you ain't going to run around." But my brother run away from it.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: But there wasn't much baseball playing or things like that?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: No baseball playing. They'd see that these pictures in the paper. Now, people lived back as long as I did, they'd say, the darn fools. That's all.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: There wasn't much of it?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: No. I don't know. I often get that paper and throw it away after I look at it. I said, the other day of course couldn't see too good but the other day, all there was pictures, pictures, pictures. I said I wonder what they expect us to pay for that daily paper [indecipherable].

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Right. But you never played much ball as a young boy did you?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Oh, no.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: There was never much of that. What was life like for your mother on the farm?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Huh?

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: When you were living at home with your parents, was life pretty tough for your mother, for a woman on the farm?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: She worked with us out in the barn and field, picking stones and logs and helped logging.

DR. PAUL WOODHOUSE: Oh, she did?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Right along with the rest of us. She done more work, really, than dad did. He never was as healthy as she was.

DR. PAUL WOODHOUSE: I see.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: But she was real healthy. That's who me and my brother takes after. My grandfather lived to be 102-years-old. I don't know that I'm going to make it or not.

DR. PAUL WOODHOUSE: Well, maybe you will.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: I really hope so. And I told that girl the other day, she was here with the meals. She said, "Norm, I'm about 20 minutes late." Well, I said, "People can stand it if they just think so. I'd be a half a day if you fellows miss it." "Oh, no," she said, "we don't want to do that." But she said, "We've got people, if we miss them an hour," she says, "they're hollering, why don't you get here earlier." Well, now I think they do real good.

DR. PAUL WOODHOUSE: I think so, this Meals on Wheels.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: They have quite a ways to go and they're figuring on, well, how these rolls are getting fixed. They hold you up there in places. All them things take place.

DR. PAUL WOODHOUSE: That's right.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: That's what I told this girl that's here right now. She often talks about it. She said, "You're always so good natured to us. If we missed a half an hour, we never get a call from you." But she said, "We do with some of them." She says they throw away a lot of their stuff. Well I told them that I had quite a lot of cats. This is a great place for cats here. People throw them off.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Is that right?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Let me ask you about the old logging days again. Did you ever go down on one of these runs down the river when they used to send the--

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Rafting.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Yeah, on the raft, down the river with the logs. In the old days when they used to send the raft down the river with the logs. Remember the old days they used to, I guess, send the logs down Pine Creek, go down the river.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Did you ever go on one of those?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: You did?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What would you have to do?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: I used to drive logs down Pine Creek and limbs would arch in the water, in the spring of the year. Sometimes they wouldn't get them in until late in the fall, depend on the spring, on the snow in the water. Yeah. I used to drive logs down Pine Creek.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: How far down would you go?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Oh, it depended on the weather and the days.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Would you be going down toward Williamsport? As far as that?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah. Yes. Sometimes we went as far as Millbury. Millbury is a little below Williamsport. When all the logs down there would fill all those big dams would be, you could walk right on

them. They would have them all linked together, kind of a, I don't know, a wire or something.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What kind of fellows went on these logging trips? Were lumbermen a pretty tough breed of men? Did they do a lot of drinking and so forth?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah, they were. Yep. They were like it was over in Putnam County. Putnam County was the greatest place to fight. That is where I learned some of my devilishness I guess.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What kind of fighting was it? Was it kneeing and biting and gouging?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah. If you couldn't fight, then you couldn't drink whiskey with the lot of us. You wanted to stay away from Gavilton because all we had was pigs ears over there.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Was what?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Pigs ears is what they had called them.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Men who had lost part of their ear, was that it?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah. Yeah. You could walk in there anyplace in most any house and buy you a drink of whiskey if you wanted it, what you wanted. You didn't have to be, they didn't ask you whether you're age or anything about it. They would hand it right out to you. All they wanted was your money.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: And it would be a lot of fighting and the fighting would be real, what you might call, dirty fighting, huh?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah, there would be some awful fighting when they got drunk.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Yeah.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Get drunk and get to fighting among themselves.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: You had to be tough as a lumberman.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: You had to be tough and you know'd that when you went over into Galvinton and over into that country, if you wasn't tough, stay out of there. If you couldn't fight you was in for it. That was all there was to it.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Was there much gambling? Did the lumbermen gambling?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Oh, quite a lot. Yeah.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What would they gamble?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Oh, play cards and drink whiskey.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What kind of whiskey would they drink? Would it be stuff made around here?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: A lot of this was homemade and it was real stuff by golly. You got a couple good drinks of whiskey and you could fight if you was any good. If you couldn't drink, you had one and you wouldn't be in it.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Now, you said you put the first axe into the timber over there around Cherry--

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: At Cherry Springs.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE And that is over there is over there is Potter County.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: That is right where they had us at the time and they've got a big airfield there now. And you could ride down the highway for a dollar and back in an airplane. But two years ago the airplane man got killed. So there's a new one that's got it now, they say. I didn't see him the other day. But these people never seen, I was going to say a crowd out in the woods. That's it. Well they was an awful crowd, I never seen many in Cherry Springs, and I've been over, oh, several years to see it.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Was that a virgin forest, an untouched forest when you put the axe into it over there?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Hemlock and--

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Hemlock, mostly hemlock, and cherry.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: How old were you then, around 20?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Oh, I wasn't 20 yet. I was about 17. I rode up past [indecipherable].

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: You'd go over there, what would you go over there for a couple months and then come back here and farm with your father and--

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Well, generally, but I'd, I'd work out mostly. And I used the money to go home.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: I see.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: You needed money. They needed it to help get them something to eat. And people really would have starved. But I sent a lot of money down home. And I helped build that barn, and it was built about four or five years one of them tornados come up through over there from over the other way and blowed her down. We had a [indecipherable] roof barn. Pretty nice looking barn. Tore it all to pieces. We had some heavy rain through here.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: We do.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: And thunder.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Let me ask you about a natural disaster. Do you remember anything about the flood of 1889?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: The what?

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Do you remember anything about the flood of 1889? When you were about eight-years-old then, when they had the big flood through here.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: No, I don't remember too much. I remember some. But not too much. The June flood. I was scared to death. When I got older--

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: This was in 1972?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah, years ago I went up to see my brother and he lived above Jundas [?] house. And you know, I can't understand to this day why people ain't afraid of Jundas house. That's the darndest hills and stuff back down there. And them hills is all, I don't know what they build all them big roads through there for.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: You ran for Constable here for the first time when you were around, now you're the Constable right now?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: At the age of 92. You're still Constable. And altogether you've been Constable about 50 years.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah, that's about right.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: But you first ran for Constable way back when you were about 25-years-old?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Well, I was constable before that. I was appointed by an old man in, Wellsboro judge. I can't think of his name now. A little old fellow.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: It wasn't Crichton, was it?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Huh?

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: It wasn't Crichton, he would have been older.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Seems as though, was it Cameron?

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Cameron.

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah. Judge Cameron. And he thought, he'd seen me someplace. [indecipherable] How did that happen? I was called in for something, I forget what it was. And he seen me, he was a little fella, about this high. I always thought so much of that little jigger and I asked him one day, I said, "How's 'a come you picked on me for Constable?" "Well," he said, " nice big man, you were a nice spirited man and I said, you'd be just the man for down there." And that's the way it went. Well then every year sometime they elect a new Constable, but now they don't elect them only every seven years, six, seven years. Six years now.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: So, you were first Constable, maybe, when you were only around 20, or so, or 21. Probably around 1902, 1903. How much did they pay you in those days?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yes. They don't pay too much. That's the trouble now.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What did they pay you then? What did you get?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: It was an all fee job.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: All what?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: All fee job.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Is that what it was then?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yeah. Now if you catch a man drunk down to Morris and he won't behave himself, you take him to Wellsboro. They allow you eight cents a mile for taking him over there.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Was this in the old days too?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Huh?

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What did you get in the old days if you brought a drunk or someone into Wellsboro?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: We used to get two dollars and a half.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: For every one you brought in?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yes. You had the Justice of the Peace in town, down here. Now, you have to go into Wellsboro. Well, if you get from one to the other, why you don't know what you're doing. You never do know.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Was this a tough town to be a Constable in?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Huh?

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: Was Morris a tough town to be the Constable in?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: It is today.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: It still is?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Yes. You have [indecipherable] down there.

DR. PAUL O'ROURKE: What kind of people gave you the most trouble?

NORMAN WOODHOUSE: Well, that's pretty hard to tell. We've got some awful good Polish people and we have got some that you can depend on. And we've got Polish, Italian, I don't know what else we have down here in Morris. And that's what fooled me on that man the other night, getting that money from up there. I think they must have fooled themselves. Better wait and see that man. He come here from Covington or someplace, I don't know where, and bought this outfit out down here and some oil company bought it, I'm sure from him, and put him in there. And you know, they would go down there some nights and they would have those Polanders in there and about a dozen or so in each hotel of other breed. They get drinking and get in an argument between them. One knows it all and the other knows it all. Well, if you go in and try to talk to them, hells to pay, and then you either have to fight or tell them what to do. But they don't bother me much anymore.

ANNOUNCER: That concludes the interview with Norman Woodhouse. These interviews are not copyrighted and you are encouraged to let others know about them and to use them for your own research.