

hello to each other and--

Linda: Yeah, yeah people meet here in the morning, get their mail, pick up the milk or something and kind of stick around and see what's goin' on.

M: Year round.

Linda: Yeah, oh yeah, all winter. There's a lot of people live up here. More and more every year. So you get more in the summer but a lot more in the winter than used to be.

M: Did you live right near here?

Linda: We have a camp down the road.

M: Who is we? You and--

Linda: My better half and my two kids.

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M: Just tell me about you and your post office in the Adirondacks and anything that comes to mind about this little place you've got here. I was--I passed here last September and I said boy I'm gonna--but this place was closed then that day.

Ruth: Well I think is one of the last, where there's a store/post office combination. One of the last. And originally my mother and father came here in about 1918 and bought the place and my mother got the post office in 1925. And back--

M: Where did you come from back in those days?

Ruth: England.

M: Oh England.

Ruth: Uh huh, yep. So they started the store and my mother was made post master in 1925. And she continued until 1938 when she died. So then I got it in 1940. Of course in those days, when I got the post office, everything was political. I was Republican and the other fellow that took the test was a Democrat. So he got the post office. But he kept it about a year, and for some reason they wanted him out apparently. And they called me and asked if I was still interested and I said yes because I had taken the test. And I've had it since 1940.

M: And you've been living here all along?

Ruth: Oh yeah.

M: Oh, so when the other guy had it you were still living here.

Ruth: No, no, the post office was moved from here to the corner, next corner, then he moved it down to his home. About a mile away. So then of course when he gave it up, came back here again.

M: But you still had the store here, meanwhile.

Ruth: Yes.

M: I see, so you didn't move, just that thing. Oh I see.

Ruth: Originally the post office was over in the big

hotel across the road. That's gone now. That burned in 1955, I believe, 56. But that's when the post office was there, when we came. We came here in 1918. Just came summers and then in 1925 we moved here.

M: That's fantastic. So tell me a bit about being the center of community life. Everybody comes to the post office.

Ruth: Everybody does. And have all sorts of things; people are always leaving messages for somebody else and leaving notes for someone. And doesn't really have to do with the post office. They didn't put it through the post office. But they was just a message type.

M: Yes, I noticed the bulletin board up there, talking about meals, and puppies for sale or anything that--

Ruth: Sure, oh yes. That's right, anything goes on there.

M: Anything else that you can tell me about the post offices. I mean you said this was one of the last little places where the store and the post office are together.

Ruth: Well, I think a lot of the change in the post office has been--like when I first took over their would be an inspector come maybe once a year--one time it went seven years before anyone came. And they might come on the train and stay all day or we'd take them back at night to the train's about a mile away. Take them down--my husband would

or I would, drive them down to the train. And they'd get on and go back to the city.

M: Tell me, what was life here like when your mother first had the post office back in--

Ruth: Well, I was going to high school in Utica and I didn't--I wanted to quit school and that's what I did. I quit my third year high school. Which was a mistake, but that's what I did. My mother needed me really to help her with the books and things. And taking care of the post office. We were quite busy then, especially at Christmas time. Was a lot of mail. And was more than she could handle alone. So I quit school to come and help her.

M: I think--what else was there--I mean were the winters tougher then, or I mean, there weren't too many automobiles then.

Ruth: No, I don't think so. No, when I first came we go sliding down the hill and skiing. We'd go way over the Round Lake spend the day there with some of the young people around. Snowshoe down maybe to the watch the train go through, simple things like that.

M: Yeah, but now you don't have trains, you got skimobiles.

Ruth: No, no more, no more. Snowmobiles.

M: Do snowmobiles come up this way from Old Forge?

Ruth: Oh yes, snowmobiles. Oh they stop all the way

along through. I don't think we see as much of them as like restaurants and bars see 'em more probably, they stop at those places more. And they circulate around Old Forge a lot, too. There's a lot of them there.

M: Yes, that's sort of the center for it all, isn't it?

Ruth: Yeah, uh huh, that's right. Yep.

M: That's fantastic. So when did you retire?

Ruth: In 1976, and then I had to hire somebody to--I had to have a clerk so Linda--we got Linda to come, she, of course she was on the list. And then later she got the post office, herself, post master.

M: Yeah, but what happened to the post office, you still have your little shop here and you still live here.

Ruth: That's right. Still keep it that way.

M: Now do you have children who are helping?

Ruth: We had three sons, they're all--they've all married, they live close by though. One's over in the shop here and they all have homes down that Booneville road. So they're all close by.

M: And what do they do for their livings?

Ruth: Well there's the body shop, one works at S\_\_\_\_\_ College at Utica, and one works at Utica Psychiatric Center. Mechanical work, carpentry that sort of thing. So they drive down every day.

M: Yeah, how far is that from here, do you know?

Ruth: About thirty miles.

M: Not that far, that's not bad.