

Hugo H. Herbert b. May 19, 1888 T-3-67

Side A

It was during the years of 1908, 09 and 10, wait, I think the years, 06, 07 and 08 I worked on the steamer "Helen C." "Helen C." was named after the oldest daughter's name. Her name was Helen Christianson. And I liked that particular life because we were out in the open territory in the \_\_ Bay and the river. We got may of the cargoes that got to Michigan City. But what we brought here mostly went to the other side of South Bend, or anyway to the paper mills, into South Bend. Other things were railroad ties. May loads of railroad ties were brought here, and built may of the railroads in this territory. The telegraph poles, many of them more than 100 feet in length, were brought to Chicago or Waukeegan. They had a treatment plant in Waukeegan where the posts were immersed in the preservatives. I also liked the life on this particular boat, although it was a lot of hard work, but I liked it, because I could see a lot of new people, . and it was like home life there. Also plenty of recreation while we were loading on various shores of Lake Huron and the two rivers. After the first year, there was no telephone communication in those days, like we know of today, so every spring season I got a telegram from the captain, "Be sure to come back", and that's the reason I liked that kind of life, because this was, at

the same time, what I wanted too.

Laurie: How long were out on the boat? You said you went back out in the spring, and then-

Hugo: Well the season usually started around the 1st of April and ended as late as the 1st of December, sometimes a little bit later, even, as long as the lake was open.

Laurie: So what was, did you have regular routes?

Hugo: No, not regular routes. No. every time you was in a different place. You see, the timber was cut, and then brought to the shores of these various places, not in any port, this was out in the open lake, where they make masts, where they dumped all the material like ties and posts, see they dumped it in the lake and made a raft out of it, and I was towed alongside the boat sometimes as much as a half a mile away, out in the lake, you know. And then we had, either with our own loading equipment, you might say, or they had special equipment for loading railroad ties. Some was done by machinery, it was dumped down in the hold of the ship and other members of the crew was there to store it.

Laurie: How much could the "Helen C." hold? Do you remember tonnage?

Hugo: Uh - No I don't remember exactly, but you see, they were comparatively small boats.

Laurie: How long would you say that boat was?

(2) Herbert

Hugo: Uh, about 250 ft., yeah

Laurie: Was that boat diesel powered, or...

Hugo: It had coal fire. In those days there was no diesel invented yet, you know...So they had good old fashioned generating coal, so every time we came to this end of the lake, we took on coal, enough for the round trip.

Laurie: How long would a round trip take?

Hugo: It would average from 2-3 weeks. It varied somewhat.

Laurie: Mm-hm.

Hugo: See the loading process took the longest, often from a week to 10 days.

Laurie: It didn't take that long to unload the ship though, did it?

Hugo: No, unloading was done often in a day, yeah. Cause we were better equipped for unloading than loading.

Laurie: You said you used to come into Michigan City:

Hugo: Yeah, we came into Michigan City quite often. And the Hoosier slide was still there. And one time we came to Michigan City when the bridge was rammed by the United States \_\_\_\_, I believe, wrecked the bridge.

Laurie: What was Michigan City like when you would pull in, like, could you describe it.

What kind of activities would be going on in the harbor?

Hugo: Well, during the season there were lumber boats coming in. All several times we brought lumber into Michigan City too, down to the - what's the name of the lumber company down 6th Street?

Laurie: I know which one you mean...

Hugo: Yeah. Well anyway, the boats would come clear around 8th street, as far as the public service substation is now. That was all lumber yards up there. Well, there were not only the lumber yards, but there was a tannery on the corner there.

Laurie: On the harbor?

Hugo: Right by the harbor. And lumber docks, where now, of course, a building sits there. That would be the, gee I'm sorry, I can't remember names.

(3) Herbert

Laurie: That's OK.

Hugo: But anyway, there was a lot of lumber yards here in Michigan City at that time, and they had a coal dock where they the schooners could be fueled.

Laurie: Do you remember where the coal dock was?

Hugo: Yeah, like half way to border\_\_\_, that side. Yeah, I wish I remembered the names of the people who operated various places.

Laurie: It would be like \_\_ Henry lumber, and-

Hugo: Yeah, Henry was there. And a lot of the public would help you unload. At that time we had a ton of bank stock. At that time was had a lot of railroad ties, and the railroad ties were loaded right onto box cars, open cars, you know. We'd do one and another empty one would come in and we could do a pretty fast job of that, you know in other ports, like Chicago, they were loaded on the dock first and then hauled away.

Laurie: When you would come in to Michigan City to unload, would you get any time off to come into the town itself, or would it be just unload and leave again?

Hugo: Oh, we had, depending upon how late we were up at night, if we came into Michigan City in the morning, then we would have time off. They're on from 12 to 6, and they're off from 6 to 12, and so on. And the same thing, if we expected to go out at 6 in the evening, we would be off from noon til 6.

Laurie: What kind of activities would be popular with schooner men, then, if they were off for 6 hours?

Hugo: Well, I was a wheelsman.

Laurie: What was your job:

Hugo: To steer the ship.

Laurie: I see.

Hugo: I have a photograph here of it. You steered the ship, you got your orders to go by the compass, and you repeated that, made sure that you understood when the captain would tell you "North by West", you repeat "North by West". Not only you understood that was for you, but the other ones. You tried to keep the boat on that course as well as possible. You were rated also according to the way you steered the ship. Now I was

(4) Herbert

preparing also at that time get a pilot license. But although I had learned a lot about navigation, particularly on Lake Michigan. But I could not go to the Academy to get a license because I was not a citizen, and I was not 21 years old. For he last year I sailed on the Lakes I was 21 years old, but then the last year I was on the lake I intended to get married, and we decided I should not be gone 8 to 9 months out of the year, so I should look

for another occupation. So I went to the Coin National Trade School in the Chicago and learned to be an electrician.

Laurie: I want to talk about that, but when you were a wheelsman, is that what you said, a wheelsman?

Hugo: Yes.

Laurie: Were there any, um, I was just going to ask about the activities Michigan City offered, you know, the men off the ship, off the dock. Did you... we're got some stories of big fights that used to happen between men on the docks?

Hugo, Well, I experience no trouble.

Laurie: No?

Hugo: This first time when I came to Michigan City on a freighter I stopped in the first Tavern which was often referred to as the "Talk of the Flood", but they were very courteous, and the first thing they did was give me a bottle of whiskey, to make sure I would come back, although I didn't drink any whiskey. Beer was the most that I would drink. But that was part of the faith to get you to come back. If I remember right, that saloon was owned but the man who later became mayor of Michigan City. I'm referring to Mayor Miller. Yeah - He was also running long shoreman's crews to unload boats.

Laurie: How many men were on the "Helen C."

Hugo: Well, about 12, yeah.

Laurie: And most of them did what?

Hugo, Well, of course there was 2 deck hands, 2 wheelsmen and two watchmen, that made 6, 2 firemen and 2 engineers, that made 10, and the captain and the mate, were 12, so just about, yeah. On that size boat that's all the crew they required. Now also a few times I was on the larger oil carrier, and they had as many as 20 and 24 in the crew. They'd have, in addition to the deck hands, two coal packers, and then they had 2 oilers, and they had two mates and two assistant engineers, and so on, you know, and before I didn't mention about a cook. But on the big boats they had a cook and a steward and a \_\_\_\_.

More people.

(5) Herbert

Laurie: When you would come in and unload the cedar ties and things, would take up another load from Michigan City?

Hugo: No, there was nothing to take out, When we would go, I never heard of any export out of Michigan City.

Laurie: Where would head then after that? Would you go up North again?

Hugo, Yeah, always then we went out, what we called beach combing. We were the beach combers. When we came with a load of ties, we came from this location, until it was all taken care of, and then we'd go up and get another load, until we were fully loaded. If you were partly loaded, then you weren't quite finished yet, and yeah - here is the boat fully loaded. See they hoist up - here was the shore people ready to leave. That was deck load

Laurie: Were there very many accidents?

Hugo: No, we never had any, although there have been boats on the lake in a big storm, they would roll so much that the whole deck load would fall off, you know. You see how that is made - it stood reasonably rough weather, but sometimes you'd get extreme, you know. That was in 1908. A load of cedar ties. Those are all photographs that I took. And I showed them to Brighton. He said "You developed those?" I said "Yes". There was, you know, no electricity on the boat. I had a little outfit that I made, hand operated, and he said it was marvelous. I showed him all these pictures, and he said, "That's wonderful photography".

Laurie: What kind of light did they have on ship then, kerosene lamps?

Hugo: Yeah, kerosene lamps. In fact, when I sailed on the ocean, you had paraffin lamps, because kerosene was considered too explosive. You had to have a lower flash point, so it was safer to use paraffin oil in our lanterns, our lights.

Laurie: OK. So, I Don't know anything else to ask about. You gone into great length - if you can think of any -

Hugo: Well, I'll tell you, when I first came to Michigan City, there was still the Hoosier slide, and we were not too much interested in going up town. I don't believe I got any further than 4th or 5th Street, and..

Laurie: Hm. What would an average day on a ship be like? What time you , you know, what would it be like from the time you got up til you went to bed?

(6) Herbert

Hugo: Well, most of the time a had the pick of the watch because I was the oldest man,

you know there were two wheelmen. Whoever had seniority took the first watch, that was from 6 to 12. And the other one had to take from 12 to 6. Once that was established that was it. Most of the time, I was senior wheelman, and I had my shift from 6 to 12. You were pretty sleepy when you had 12 to 6. But you didn't dare to go to sleep, you had to watch closely. So I would always smoke a pipe. If should happen to doze that pipe would fall down and wake me up.

Laurie: So, you'd be the wheelman from 6 in the morning to -

Hugo: From 6 in the morning to 12 noon, and then from 6 in the evening to 12 midnight.

Laurie: And then the other hours -

Hugo: You could do what you wanted, yeah. Now if you were in port, you'd sleep all night, and then you had to had to work all day.

Laurie: When you were in port would you sleep on the ship or would you go to a boarding house?

Hugo: Oh no, you sleep on the ship, yeah. Compared to what we had on the ocean, this was a banquet here on the lake, yeah. Wonderful food. best of everything.

Laurie: Would you stock up on food when you came into port?

Hugo: Oh yeah, you had big coolers with ice - there was no refrigeration, there was ice. You'd get a half a tone of ice and put it in there, it would last you for a couple of weeks. You'd get a couple of sides of beef hanging in there. Now like at night, when you get up at midnight, you could go to the galley and get a cup of coffee and a nice big piece of pie, a regular lunch, you know. We would really have good food. There was some people, of course, would always complain about it.

Laurie: What did you enjoy the most about your days on the Great Lakes?

Hugo: Well, you see, in the first four years my ambition was to become a pilot. So naturally interested in navigation and studying the handling of ships. I could have passed an examination easy if I had been old enough or - I had to be a citizen, you know, to get a pilot license. Well, I really don't know what we'll say now.

Laurie: OK. we can go to your experience when you went to trade school, then?

Hugo. Yes. I went to the Coin National trade School, and I happen to have -

Laurie: Oh...

(7) Herbert

Hugo: And I've got a date on the back of it.

Laurie: 1910.

Hugo: Now this year, is also something - Northwestern elevated railroad. While I was going to school. I worked in the morning, helped then make up a train at the Wilson Ave. terminal, and I'd take a Rush hour train to the loop and around and back again to the ..

Laurie : You were..

Hugo: I was a trainman. A guard, they called it, That's what they called it - a guard. The conductor was an experienced man, but in the rush hour he had so called student guards. If you were going to school, which I was, they would hire you to take the train in the morning. They figured we were the most reliable, you know. We were students trying to help pay our expenses. And we got up maybe 5:30 in the morning to get out to the terminal about 5 miles away, and then I would get out to the yard and help clean the train out, and in those days, people would pack in to the cars solid, stand up, they didn't mind it, they took it for granted, you know. Today if you have to stand up it's terrible. In those days it was all accepted. As you came close to downtown, they still kept coming in, and then in the afternoon I would do the same thing for repeat. go down into the loop, bring to people back. Then it was the same old story after \_\_, and I did that while I was going to school. I went to school, then I went to the Western Electric Company. They had an ad in the paper that they wanted an electrician.

Laurie: How long did you go to school?

Hugo: Uh - about 4 months, December or late November of 1909 until March 1910. Then I spent 2 or 3 years with Western Electric Company and found out what life was like as an electrician. And they wanted to know the experience I had. I said, Oh, I'm a graduate of the Coin Electric School. And they said, oh that don't mean anything, you gotta start at the bottom here. And they told me how much they would pay which was ridiculous, and I went back to the school and was saying what was wrong. There they told me I was an electrician and here they said it don't mean anything here. And they told me to go to Gary, there was a new steel plant going up, and they needed electricians, and they was quite sure that I would get on there. So I did, I went over the Gary, and I did not tell that I was a graduate of the school, I told them I had some experience.

END OF SIDE A

SIDE B starts

(8) Herbert

Hugo: They gave me several sheets of paper with a lot of questions on it, and then when I first started, I thought it looked familiar, it was the same questions we had at the Coin School. So I sat down, and I just filled them out, 1,2 3, and I just sat there like this, and about twenty minutes after he stuck his head in the door and he saw me and said "What's the matter? Can't you make it?" And I said "I'm all through." he says "You're all through? Let me see!" He says, "Oh, you're the kind of fella that we want around here." So I got on, and I had some experiences there, would you like to hear 'em.?

Laurie: Yeah, Gary's pretty close to here.

Hugo: So they sent me to a new merchant mill that was being built. And the big electric foreman on the job, and they said all right, now that I sent you out here, just to kind of get you onto the ropes, so he took me over and introduced me to this fella and said, here this man will help you on this particular job, and he said- Now you go over to the tool room and get a C clamp and a ratchet and an old man, and in there, those terms didn't mean anything to me at all because I never heard of them. We were taught about house wiring and stuff like that but not about mill construction. So I thought are they kidding me? So I went over the tool room, and I thought, well, I'll ask for the most logical. I'll ask for the ratchet. So I said "I'd like to have a ratchet." And the man said " Would you like a C-clamp and an old man too?" I said "Yes". And so I found out what those things were. They were just named that way because they were just tools you had to use in your line of work. So we got out on the job and they laid out the holes that we were to drill, and then this man, I'll call Mike said this way, and I started to drill holes, and it was supposed to be a two man job, the old man was a 3 counter iron that you clamped around the columns where you were drilling holes with a so called C clamp to hold it in place and a ratchet to drill the holes with. So I started in, and I was used to, from the boats, that if you had a job to do you did the job. So I pumped away and drilled all the holes and while I was doing that, along came the foreman. And he asked where Mike was, and I pretended I didn't know and said, he must have just left. And the mill was about 1/2 mile long , so when the foreman came back, about an hour, an hour and a half later, he came back, and here I had done, drilled all the holes that I could possibly drill and mounted by switch boxes and got ready to even put up some conduits, and he inquired about Mike, and I pretended and said he must have just left. Anyway it was about 11, 11:30 before Mike came back. He said, "What are you trying to do here?" I said " Is this all right? Didn't I do well? Didn't I mount those boxes right?" He said "Why you've done a whole day's work already" So I told him I was used to working when I had a job and do the best that I could and he says "You'll learn". Well in 6 weeks time I was foreman of the job. I was able to handle it, and after I'd been there 6 months, at that time they had no telephone company, everything was done by messenger. So a messenger boy came by one day and told me he had a report from the office of the superintendent. And I thought, what did I do? Usually when you got called to the office it meant you had to pay a ticket. So I went down there and had to wait. While I was sitting there, honestly I was sweating. I thought, what's going to happen. So finally when he got through, he said, "Herbert, we've got a job for you to do

(9) Herbert

and we need you there, that's over in the coal plants, they want to take change in the pumping station and the substation for the general distribution of electricity in the coal plant. Well that was a job that is for a man with a lot of experience. So when he came in a day or two later where I was working, he said " Well, are you all lined up"? I said "What do you mean lined up". He said he wants me to take charge here of this job. I said, "Well I don't believe I can. I never did this kind of work before." He gave me a big roll of blueprints and said" You can read blueprints, can't you?" And then he walked out. Then I was general foreman just 6 months after I left school. And today you'd have to have a man with at least 8-10 years experience to get that kind of job. But in those days, those kinds of men were not available, there just wasn't any. So -

Laurie: Were there a lot of people becoming electricians.

Hugo: Well, when they needed help, you know. A lot of them wouldn't last more than a week or two. Then they'd let 'em go, just like the man showed me around, you know, I guess he got a ticket. With that attitude he just couldn't produce.

Laurie: When did it become popular to start electrifying plants?

Hugo: Well, that was comparatively new in those days. After that job we went back to Chicago because in the meantime I got married and my wife was brought up in Chicago. And I got a job with the \_\_\_ Edison Co. in Chicago with station construction work. There of course they had more experience help. We got laid off in the early part of February to ...

Laurie: Oh..

Hugo: That's a long time ago, 1912. right about that time, that's the last half of the book I got, they laid us off because we were non union electricians that worked for the company, but the brick layers that were working on the construction would not work with us. We were non union.

Laurie: There was no union electrician union you could join.

Hugo: Well there was but not in the company. the company hired anybody that's capable of working. So it was not restricted in those days as it is today you know. Today all that work is done by outside electricians contracted for it rather than in the company, and they have all union help. electricians employed by NIPSCO are different kind of a local and different pay rate than they have for construction workers. Construction workers are higher paid. All right? Now..

Laurie: You said you were laid off in 1912?

(10) Herbert

Hugo: So then I went to Gary and got back into Gary and they told me there was job going on in Michigan City and also told me that a pal of mine who also was a foreman in Gary when I was, that he was the general foreman in Michigan City. So I went there and found him and he was busy over some blueprints, and all at once he turned around and says " Well Herbert, you're just the guy I want, I need a foreman." You see it was divided into 3 branches. One foreman had maybe 20 men putting up the overhead wires, all over the plant, line work, line foreman. And another man, we were all in Gary together, we all knew each other. This other man had charge of the work in the new steel plant. So they got me in what they called a wood shop, where they made the wooden crate cars, and the idea with the new steel plant was they would build steel cars. So my job was to put in separate motors for all the machinery they had. They had about 100 kinds of machines in there that had to be electrified.

Laurie: You had to cut wood, shape wood, and

Hugo: Yeah build and - at that time they had overhead line shafts built all over. They had one big \_\_\_ and belts all over the belts. Belts would break, they'd shut down until that could be fixed and so forth.

Laurie: How did the belts work? Were they conveyor belts" I don't understand when you say belts.

Hugo: Well here they had an engine here, and there as a big shaft going out into the plant with a lot of pulleys on it, some would go this way some that way, and another line shaft down there, and from there another pulley would go down to the machine, and you'd put the belt on to run the machine. They had drills and they had shapers, and anyhow, a lot of machines and every machine gets a certain thing, until they finally finished the car in the erection shop, all the parts were all over the erections shop, and like an assembly, until they put the wheels under it and finally the box car was assembled. They turned out quite a few a day. I forget how many. Anyway, Even if I brag al little bit, but they kept track of the production per man, and my crew was higher than the others and I was quite proud of that. It all goes back, to be successful you gotta be the best you can and that's what I learned on the boat, the ship. Cooperate. So anyway we replaced the line shafting in the belts. We had separate motors for each machine. Men operated it, they turned on the electric switches.

Laurie: And the motors would hook into the main power line?

Hugo: Each machine had its own motor instead of that long line shaft business.

Laurie: Oh OK. I don't know much about. I don't know much about even present day electricity, you know? You just tune on a switch and it comes on.

(11) Herbert

Hugo: Each machine, they wanted to operate for instance, drills in holes, that was the operation for the machine, So they don't really have to operate a lot of power to run the machine. Each one had its own power. then I got into the planing mill. Then I got into the blacksmith shop, electrifying that. Then I got over into the foundry. When I first got to Michigan City I asked the foreman how big a job this was. He says, well we gotta be outta here in 6 months. I thought I can't afford to move for 6 months. There was no trucks, transportation like today. You had to crate call your furniture and bring it to the crate car and bring it to Michigan City to the Central Deport where you know where it ends, and then hire a train man to haul my furniture, then uncrate all the stuff, so when he told me we had to be through in 6 months, after I was there 2 days I thought I know I'm going to be here at least a year. and after two years i n construction when that about rounded out. then they had a lot of electrical equipment that needed repair. Who could do it? I said I'll try. I didn't have any experience in that but all I could do was use common sense and do the best I could. And so I was doing repair work there. One more year. And that year I knew there were a lot of houses in Michigan City that needed electrical wiring. At that time only 10% of the houses were wired for electricity. So I went and started an electric business with another young fella, and I was in business for 52 years.

Laurie: You started that business in 1916?

Hugo: 1916, yeah.

Laurie: I have a couple of questions before we get into that. When you were in there, the factory, you knew what the working conditions were- was it a clean factory for people to work in?

Hugo: Yes. Now the wages, by comparison, was lower than Gary, lower than Chicago of course. Didn't have much competition from anybody else, because the Barker clan, the people who ran it, tried to keep everybody out of the Barker factory so they could work at their price and not the people's price. There was no union, and you just had to take whatever the contractors would pay, and they told me when I came here that Barker, some years before that, he'd have all the people from the factory come over the shop. and he's get on a chair or something and preach to them. no here we had an order coming up, we gotta be competitive, we got beat the competition, so you gotta take a cut in wages of some much, otherwise we won't have any work, so that way you might agree. They took the cuts when other places were raising wages, yet they cut the wages in Michigan City. But that's the way I hear it anyhow, that's the way it's been told to me. Anyway, I think it's a hard life. My wife's father worked there for 90 cents a day. Now, of course, everything was in comparison, but it was too low, because when I went first to Chicago, I got \$4.50 a week, and then I got \$9 a week. \$9 a week, that was a man's pay. The average unskilled laborer, that was the pay. You earned \$0.15 and hour. You worked 60 hours a week. We worked from 7 in the morning to about 5 or 5:30 in the evening, 10 hours a day, everybody was used to that. Not like today.

(12) Herbert

Laurie: Is that how you worked when you were electrifying the box cars? 10 hours a day, 6 days a week?

Hugo: Yeah, we worked 6 days a week, 10 hours a day. When I went into business that's the way, we had no choice, but then shortly after we went to a 9 hour day, and a half day for Saturday. When I worked in the business I got first class electricians for 35 cents an hour.

Laurie: Did you employ a lot of the poor ones who had worked in the past for Barker.

Herbert: Yeah, a few from there.

Laurie: You said you did mainly hose wiring?

Herbert: Mainly hose wiring, yeah. Although the \_\_\_ Factory was my first large job, and then the Weil McLain factory when they came we got that job. And we had a number of jobs and other businesses on Franklin Street, but most of our work was house wiring, particularly in the 20's when Long Beach started. We did all the work at that time for the Long Beach Company.

Laurie: How do you go about wiring a house? I mean, I understand how you can wire a house as it's being built, but when it's already standing, how do you-

Herbert: You take up the floor. See in those days they didn't have \_\_\_ flooring like you got today. It was easy to take up the floor lengthwise of the house, and you drill the holes through there and you bring the wires through those holes, in porcelain tubes you put through the joists, and the wires through that. It was safe. There's a lot of houses that have the original wiring that we put in, and it's safe. Today they don't consider that anymore and they changed the rules and the outlets gotta be in boxes and such.

Laurie: How were the outlets when you would do it. Did you have floor outlets? 'Cause I've seen a lot of older homes where the outlets are flat on the floor.

Hugo: Yeah, when you put your walls, very few walls outlets, if the people had a plug in the kitchen, that was a luxury for the iron, and maybe a toaster. No others - appliances. Vacuum cleaners and all that stuff came later.

Laurie: When you would wire a house, would you wire all the rooms?

Herbert: Yeah, all the rooms. You had one outlet, and most of the switches were expensive, and people were always asking "how much is the switch?" And the cord pulled down with a socket on it with a 60 watt lamp, that was a luxury.

(13) Herbert

Laurie: So you didn't have to bother with wall plugs, because like you said, there wouldn't be any appliances to plug in there.

Hugo: That's right.

Laurie: Then how would it connect outside? you'd run it through the walls into a window, or..

Hugo: No, we'd, already they had service where the mains had to be wired, in the basement we had a fuse box down there and one main switch, al just small, you know 2 wire 30 amps,. and later a luxury, we had 3 wires, 30 amps. And then there were 60 amp units. Now 100 amps service is minimum.

Laurie: But when you were doing it, it was..

Herbert: 30. Two wires, 30. People only had lights, you know, and an iron. Usually when they used the iron they wouldn't use the lights, but there was plenty for that.

Laurie: You said in this article that you sold the first radio in Michigan City?

Herbert: yeah, in 1921. I went to Chicago to see someone in Chicago from Westinghouse Co.. They had a radio in the exhibit, and they had a single wire

running out and hanging out of the window. I went over the window and opened up the window to make sure it wasn't connected to anything. I couldn't believe it. There were earphones, no loudspeakers yet. You had to put on earphones, and you could hear and talk from the broadcasting station, at that time it was called KYW, and it was remarkable, you know. And right away I got some of there equipment, battery operated. A couple of years later, we sold one, first we had earphones, then all kinds of shapes and sizes of loudspeakers. Some of them had fancy looks, some looked like big horns. Then they built cabinets, built radios in cabinets. Still battery operated. You had A and B batteries, usually it was a storage battery and you had to get it re-charged, and as a part of our business we would give a new battery so they could use that while we were charging their battery and the feed batteries were blocks of ball cells, as much as 48 in the feed battery, and they did a fairly good job too. Still later came on electric connectors that changed alternating current with direct current in the set, and they did away with that - oh, just gradual developments. First we had sets full of expensive tubes, now today we have solid set where you don't need any tubes, so that was quite an advance.

Laurie: "When you went to Chicago to see the radio, was it a very impressive event, were there a lot of people?"

Herbert: Oh, it was for dealers, you know, they went there to see, they didn't believe you could do that, they had to see it. Like I said I had to go over there and look out to see that that wire was not connected, the aerial you know.

(14)

Laurie: When you got back to Michigan City, did it sell well?

Hugo: Oh yes. We did a fairly good business, not like today, you know. Lots of people still considered it a luxury.

Laurie: You know how much they sold for, those first radios?

Hugo: No, I don't remember now.

Laurie: Did people used to come into your store to see them?

Hugo: Yes. At the beginning I bought some folding chairs, a dozen or so, and I had people come in, and when we got the first loudspeakers, had them sit down and then make sure that....

SIDE B Ends.