

Interview with:

Willard Cohodas
Marquette, Michigan
November 13, 1995

RM: If you want to start with the opening setting and make your comments as we go along.

WC: This is Willard Cohodas, I am standing near the entrance on the left where some very good maps have been made where the Cohodas family originated from. As far as we know back about the latter part of the 19th century where the family lived in Cabildi(?) which today is part of modern Poland. They came to Marinette Wisconsin around the turn of the century around 1900. Where the family lived for a short time before spreading out. Early in the 20th century my father Harry Cohodas and my uncle Sam Cohodas came to Houghton Michigan where they really started their careers. There is an oil painting you will notice and in the foreground you will see the top of a Jewish temple which is on the Hancock side of Portage lake and on the Houghton side to the left a white building which is the first main building that the two brothers used as a produce warehouse when they started Cohodas Brothers Company.

**There are two chests one in front of me here on the left and one over the right around the corner which was Sam Cohodas's pride and joy. I knew when he passed away that he would want me to put these into the collection.

**All of these pictures in this first cabinet are of the early days of all of the Cohodas family members. Which included pretty well all of us and the history of the Cohodas Brothers company as it evolved through the years.

**The next to the first cabinet are pictures of many of the Wholesale food jobbers conventions which adult members of the Cohodas family attended through the years.

**Down to the bottom here you will see the first Cohodas orchard in Lower Michigan.

**Also there is a can which was the first apple juice produced in Lower Michigan by the Cohodas orchard canning plants.

**Here again are some more of the canning items, the apple keg apple juice, and the cherrie alba queen canned cherries all produced in Alberta Michigan which is in the Lower Peninsula.

**Again there is more of the family photographs of the family.

**The large gold framed photo is taken when Harry Cohodas my father, was the president of the Superior Bank in Hancock Michigan and up above is a photograph of part of the Miners First National Bank when Sam was the President of that particular bank and the

directors of that bank. I am standing in the very back on the left in the second row.

**Here are items pertaining mostly to the operations and the records of Miners First National Bank, which is the first bank of the Cohodas Family banking enterprises.

**In the left hand corner on the second shelf is a china plate that someone brought into the bank in Ishpeming a few years ago and on it is a photograph of the Miners Bank from 1906 when it had been destroyed, when the building had been destroyed from the gas leak in the bank. And we thought it would be interesting to keep this in the Miners Bank memorabilia.

**As you know the Ishpeming Miners Bank which was the first in the MFC holding company, is the MFC First National Bank of Ishpeming.

**The sculpture of Sam was done by Wilfred Neesen of Northern Michigan University faculty back about 10 years ago.

**Above the sculpture is a oil painting of Sam that was done by a man in Houghton in the early 60's.

**The painting of the Cohodas lodge on Lake Michigamme, which was built in 1935. Below that is a photo of Sam in his home in Ishpeming. Next to above that is Aunt Evelyn, Sam's wife and some other pictures of Sam.

**The sailfish above the cabinets, is one that Aunt Evelyn caught believe it or not by herself when she was in Florida one winter.

**the rest are family pictures of different events and at Lake Michigamme and the inside of the Cohodas Lodge.

**here are more memorabilia of the Lodge and down below on the left is a Harlican Manora which is usually lite during period of Hanukka which is an eight day celebration in December.

**In the same cabinet on the first shelf is memorabilia from the Green Bay Packers. The Cohodas family actually became interested in supporting the Packers from about 1926 on. At one time Max Cohodas younger brother of my dad and Sam was on the board of the Green Bay Packers when he passed away my brother Arnold Cohodas became a member of the board of the Green Bay Packers and we have supported them all through the years, in fact now through one of our banks we handle about 300 of the Packer seasons tickets for people in the Upper Peninsula. And we have been doing this for about 40 years.

**These are momentos that have been given to different members of our family both in the United States and in Isreal.

**If you will notice in the right hand corner of this cabinet is a picture of Sam Cohodas with President Ford and of Sam Cohodas with one of the early Prime Ministers of Isreal.

**Above that is a plate that was given to Sam of Goden ? when she was the Prime Minister. There are other momentos given to members of the family.

**Here are some very valuable momentos given to different members of the family. Items from the state of Israel. One Item where you see the Israelli coins these are very rare coins that were given to Sam Cohodas a few years ago.

** Here again are pictures of members of the family at various events in Jeruselum Israel when we have been there.

**On the shelf below to the right, is a collection of very valuable ancient Oil lamps from Israel from about 2025 years ago, that were given as gifts to the family.

**In the last cabinet on the right, are the uniform of Sam Cohodas in the American Legion, he was in the First World War, he was one of the founding members of the Ishpeming American Legion of the in the World War one.

**This is a flag given to the family on the occasion of one of our visits to Israel.

**In front of me are various citations given to family members ? and out of states and from the State of Israel.

**This I call the people University wall which you have, well things have been given to Peoples University and the State of Israel by members of the family.

**next to that is the pillow Sam Cohodas received when he was made an honorary family.

**In the next section in front of the white post on the right, citations given to Sam Cohodas from Northern Michigan University, citations from Suomi College given to the Family, at the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company and other citations given for Lake superior State College in Sault St. Marie Michigan and other citations in this area.

**Then we have citations and certificates given to the family from government people both from the state level of Michigan and then from the National level. Along with a flag that at one time flew over the National conference in Washington.

**As we turn the corner next to the door leaving to a store room, we have all of the citations which were given from K.I. Sawyer to Sam and the family over the years. You will notice Sam standing next to an Air Force bomber, which says "Mr. Sam" that was presented to him just a few years before he passed away.

**Up above you will see a painting of Sam which was done by an artist commemorating him on his 90th birthday.

**In the last cabinet before they take this ?. In the first section you will see two high school diploma's given to Sam Cohodas, one is from Ishpeming High School and one from Marinette High School. When Sam and my dad were 9 and 13 their father passed away, leaving the two oldest boys to go out and work and support the family. So naturally they had very little formal education. And in honor of things that had been done by Sam, through the years he was honored with these two diplomas.

** In the right hand corner of this first section you will see my dad Harry Cohodas receiving the distinguished honor from Michigan Tech University in Houghton Michigan for what he had done for Michigan Tech.

**In the left hand corner in the lower section you will see the family gathered to honor the memory of Max Cohodas by Saint Norberts College in DePere Wisconsin for what he had done for that school.

**Even though these three men had little education of their own they were very very interested in education for all people.

**In the middle section of this last cabinet you will see Sam Cohodas and Sally Mitchell with Governor and Mrs. Romney on one of the occasions they came up to Marquette.

**And next you will see Sam with Governor Milikin of Michigan.

**Above that picture you will see a picture of Governor Williams of Michigan with Harry Cohodas.

**Above that is a picture of President Ford with Sam Cohodas the Jamriches and some other friends of theirs.

** In the section next to it is a picture of some of the stars of Anatomy of a Murder, we had a reception for them at the Cohodas lodge at the conclusion of the making of that movie.

**Here in the last section before the main entrance we have some more pictures of different occasions, there is one picture in the lower section of Sam with Glenn Seaborg and John Voelker when Glenn Seaborg was honored here at Northern Michigan University.

**Up above this last cabinet there is an aerial view of Bay Cliff Health Camp that was given to the Cohodas family in honor of the work that we have done with Bay Cliff through the years. Sam and Arnold Cohodas were on the board of Bay Cliff shortly after it was organized. And I went on the board in 1942 and now I am the oldest member in service of the Bay Cliff board.

tape ended

Bay Cliff Health Camp, Bay Cliff, California 1942-1953

Types of tape: original, photographs, slides, etc. with labels, original master, copy, etc.

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