

A Champion Potato Picker From an Interview with The Gallaghers

Interviewers Richard Rand and Brian Sipe

Interviewees: Gerald Gallagher, Pat Gallagher, Don Gallagher, Guy Gallagher, Theresa Manney, Mary Schneider

Richard: Today is September 24, 2009. It's 10:30 – 10:40 am and we're at Brian Sipe's house on 49 Third Street in Presque Isle, Maine.

Don I got some French crews. A young feller, well he was only fifteen. So when he first started working for me, he wanted me to lengthen his section for just one day. So the first year, I lengthened him out. He got seventy. That's pretty good. The next year he wanted me to lengthen him out. He got eighty.

Richard: Eighty barrels.

Don: Yup. Eighty, a hundred, one twenty, hundred thirty, hundred forty two during the last year he was with me. But he was twenty-five years old. You know. By that time

Guy: A hundred forty two barrels. And when he came back, what twenty years later?

Don: Yup

Guy: And asked Donald if he would write something out for him.

Don: Me, he asked you, I don't know French

Guy: Well, you had to sign it. And I translated it for him. A little statement that said that in that certain year that he had picked this many potatoes.

Don: He was a good picker

Guy: Yes, he was.

Mary: What was he going to do with that?

Gerald: Well, he was going to show it to people.

Guy: When he would tell people out there, they wouldn't believe him.

Brian: So how many barrels did he pick?

Guy: A hundred forty-two barrels in one day.

Brian: In one day?

Guy: In one day. It was a long day. You kept the day longer, if I remember.

Don: Well I got the section longer, that's for sure.

Guy: Well, what about the other two? They just stood on the ends and just watched, I guess.

Brian: But, did he do this...

Don: Just one day. It was just one day.

Brian: Ok, one day.

Pat: Brian, did you pick potatoes?

Brian: I picked one day.

Pat: And how many did you get?

Brian: I picked I thik fif... Forty-two barrels.

Pat: Ok, can we put that on record?

Brian: In one day.

Gerald: That's pretty good. <many talking>

Theresa: We had some very strong people coming down from Quebec.

Guy: And we had some young kids that were very strong. One man that got underneath the tractor with the wide wheels on the front had lifted it right off the ground. Now that's how strong he was. You remember that?

Don: Who?

Guy: I can't remember his name but I remember him doing it.

Brian: well, this guy who picked a hundred forty-two barrels, did he also pick other days and pick that many?

Pat: Why do you think that's <garbled – too many talking>

Guy: He picked 98.

Brian: Oh, he picked all season, but that one day he picked one hundred forty-two.

Don: I had to shorten everybody else.

Pat: Are you, are you trying to say he should have gotten rid of the rest of the pickers and just let him..

Brian Just let him go.

Richard: Conditions must have been just right.

Don: Huh?

Richard: I mean somebody must have got in front of him and pulled the tops.

Guy: Did that happen? Did they sometimes do that? That somebody would pull the tops for him.

Don: Well, you know

Pat: The champion potato picker in Presque Isle. They did that for him.

Don: Well, he certainly broke the record. Well, he would. And that's not affecting his record. Is it?

Richard: No, no. If he picked them he picked them.

Don: If he picked them, he picked them.