

**Raymond Bodette**  
**Retired West Addison dairy farmer**  
**Interviewed for Mountain Lake PBS on July 14, 2011**

"I was born down by the lake in West Addison, not in the house I live in now, but close by there. And I grew up there on Hospital Creek near the lake and I went into the service when I was 21 years old. I just married and didn't intend to come back to the farm but I enjoyed the farm and my father needed help when I got out of the service, so I went to work with him then...so that was in 1956 and I've been there ever since. I have a son and a grandson on the farm with me now...and I have retired.

It's a dairy farm. It has changed a lot over the years and possibly not for the better either. It seems like over the years it's not as good of a lifestyle as it used to be. We have 220 acres in New York State that we use and we do have to cross the bridge or ferry, several times a day sometimes.

When I was born, I guess the bridge was four years old, so I never thought about not having the bridge. Actually being so close to New York State, we probably used the bridge more so than people in East Addison did. In fact, when my Grandfather had the farm, he did a hay and butter business in Port Henry, New York and sometimes it was over the ice in the winter time. But I suspect before the bridge, it was the ferry at Crown Point and so I'm sure. When they started the bridge it was very expensive. I'm not sure that people used it anymore than they had to. In fact, sometimes when we had guests from New York, my father would row the boat over to Crown Point to save a dollar...so quite interesting.

My uncle was a gun smith who lived in Port Henry and he was a bachelor...kind of a fun guy, had a motorcycle with a side car and had a good camera and took a lot of pictures and actually he must have taken pictures weekly or even twice a week of the bridge when it was being built there. So I probably have 250 negatives, not only of the bridge but of ball games in Crown Point, hunting and fishing expeditions, and so there are a lot of things to see.

Well I knew it was going to be an inconvenience to us [bridge closing] because we do use, have land over the bridge [in New York]. But the old bridge was very narrow and obsolete. And even though you hated to see it demolished, it was the best route to go I think. Eventually, it would have to be blown up or destroyed anyway.

Well, of course when the bridge was closed, it affected us quite a lot because we make numerous trips over the bridge everyday in the summertime and so it was an inconvenience and the ferry, bless it, is still an inconvenience for us. If you're hiring custom work in Crown Point to haul feed to your farm in Chimney Point, it cost about twice as much.

I think the new design is beautiful. In fact, I could stand on my doorstep this morning and look at Port Henry and see the arches almost come together. I think it's going to be an asset to the whole community.

I am anxious to have it done. In fact I had thought at times, maybe a simpler bridge in place faster would have best thing for all of us. But I think, with a little bit of suffering, we're all going to be better off with the new bridge.

We needed the bridge and it was an inconvenience because we use 200 acres in Crown Point, New York and we either have to move machinery over there or move the crop back so we don't have another avenue. It's no choice.

Well, when they blew the bridge, it was in the middle of a snowstorm so we didn't, couldn't, actually see it fall but actually I thought it was the only route to go. In order to place or site another bridge would have been almost impossible with historic sites on both sides of the lake. It seemed to be the only option ...so I wasn't happy about it but I knew it was the route that had to be done. That was a factor in the old bridge...it was a good thing to have it gone but heavy, heavy trucks and a lot more of it led to the demise of the bridge I think.

The morning that they blew the bridge, my son has a house on [Route]125 about ½ mile from the bridge and there were a lot of people there, including Mr. Clark. But just before they blew the bridge, we had a snowstorm so you couldn't see anywhere near to the bridge and so we missed that part anyway, but it went down without us anyway!"