

**An INTERVIEW with ED CHAMBERLIN**  
about his historical film work for which received the  
2013 Mayor's Award.

***How long have you been studying Mishawaka's past? How many years have you been working on the history films?***

I began working on historical films in 2007; this probably began my "official" studying of Mishawaka's past.

***What sparked your interest in our community's past? And why did you choose to make movies about it?***

Growing up in Mishawaka, I've always had a natural curiosity about my hometown, but I guess I became intellectually intrigued after reading David Eisen's book, *Mishawaka Mosaic*.

***How many films have you made about Mishawaka? How many history films in total?***

I have made three films that deal specifically with the city of Mishawaka -- *Down to Fame: A History of Mishawaka High School* (2009); *On Solid Rock: A History of Mishawaka's Churches* (2010); *Ball Band: The Story of Mishawaka's Famous Factory* (2012).

I began working on the historical documentaries unofficially in 2008. I started with a commission to produce a 15-minute film on the history of the Lincoln Highway, and then that same year, I produced an oral history documentary for the Mishawaka's Lions Club, in conjunction with their 85th anniversary. I have also produced several other documentaries that each focus on the history of an individual local family.

***Have you had training in making films? Or are you self-taught?***

I teach a course at Mishawaka High School that deals in television production, so my experience in video production was a natural way for me to independently preserve the stories of Mishawaka's past.

***Any film makers or film styles that inspired you?***

I am definitely influenced by Ken Burns, the PBS documentary film maker of films such as *The Civil War*, *Baseball* and *The War (WWII)*.

***Were there challenges to your projects?***

Because I prefer to make films on stories that haven't been preserved yet, there are few *individual* sources of material available to gather information. Therefore, I spend a lot of time researching many different sources (written and recorded), as well as interviewing as many people as I can locate, before I can even *begin* to put a film together.

***Any surprises along the way? About a subject? About the past? About the process?***

There are always surprises doing projects like these, which is one reason I enjoy doing them! Here are a few things that stand out to me:

With the large number of active Mishawaka High School alumni, and the strong traditions of the school, I was surprised that I could not find any comprehensive book or recording of the school's history.

I was surprised at how closely aligned the history of Mishawaka is with the history of its churches. (People sometimes ask me to create a film on the history of the city, and I tell them I already did – *On Solid Rock*.)

The first thing that surprised me about my research on Ball Band was that the plant was never officially named "Ball Band!" I was also amazed at how many different types of products were manufactured there. (*Editor: The company originally opened as Palmer and Warden Woolen Mill, then it became Mishawaka Woolen and Rubber Mfg. Co. In the late 1960s, it was renamed Uniroyal, Inc. Many of its rubber products were marketed under the name "Ball-Band."*)

***Do you have a special or favorite memory about your subjects?***

Some of my favorite memories are the personal stories that individual people shared with me – stories that can rarely be found through "research," yet now they are preserved for generations to come.

***Any special memory about old buildings or historic places before you began making films about them?***

My mother and father (and my brother and three sisters), along with my wife, our two sons and myself, all graduated from Mishawaka High School. My father also taught there for 33 years, and I've been teaching there since 1986.

***Which film are you especially proud of?***

Of the Mishawaka documentaries, I am probably proudest of *On Solid Rock*, but to be honest, I'm proud of all the films I've made; the personal family biographies I've created are the most satisfying to me.

***Any future projects planned?***

I'm always open to new project ideas! I am currently doing preliminary research on the individual downtown businesses that have been major parts of Mishawaka's history.

***Anyone you'd like to thank or give credit to for help and support?***

My wife and best friend, Kim, who helps me with these projects in more ways than she knows! Dave Eisen, for all of the cooperation and encouragement he offers to me. The entire staff of the Heritage Room at the downtown branch of the Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library. And the Mishawaka Lions Club for sponsoring my Mishawaka documentaries.

***Please add anything else you'd like us to know.***

Here are the basic criteria I use for determining if an idea can be made into a successful film: Is there a large enough pool of potential people to interview?

Is there enough research material available to tell the entire story effectively?

Are there enough photographs or film available for inclusion in the film?

Is there a large enough potential audience to create the project? ::

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