

ED AND PATTY MILLER

Interview by Bill Miles
November 17, 1994

TOPICS:

Law Enforcement
Pubs (“Blind Pigs”)
Fire Department
Home Safety
Public Transportation
Recreation
Water Systems
Politics
Municipal Incorporation
Fire Fighting
Shopping

Little League Sports
Women’s Club
Incinerator
School
Church
Land Development
City Clerk’s Office
Old City Hall

Transcription by John W. Weigel
January 20 – May 6, 2001

[Transcriber's note: Patty Miller denoted by "W", Ed Miller by "H". The couple's daughter Jerry (or Jeri or Geri?) [Geraldine Flack] denoted by "D".

D: Yeah, we'll see who really like [inaudible]...

Q: Today is November 17, 1994. The time is ten o'clock. This is another in our series of fortieth anniversary interviews. My name is Bill Miles, and today we have the pleasure of interviewing Ed and Patty Miller. Ed and Patty are longtime residents, and they are also the parents of our present City Clerk, Geraldine Flack. Patty, you have been here for how many years in Madison Heights?

W: Oh, in...well, since about 1935 or '36.

D: [Laughter]

Q: And Ed, you were here in Royal Oak Town...you were in Royal Oak Township, more in Royal Oak.

H: I was born in Royal Oak Township, which become part of Royal Oak in the fall of '21...

Q: Okay.

H: ...and then I moved over here after we were married in '48.

Q: Okay, so you...you...you've both been here for quite some time.

W: Oh yes.

Q: How did you meet?

W: Well, we met out...really we met out in what would be Union Lake.

Q: Now how did you get out there from here? Did you go to a dance or was it...?

W: Yes.

Q: Okay.

W: Yes. Yes. And I had met some of the boys that Ed was with. One had gone to school with me here at Madison.

Q: Okay, you went to the original Madison High School?

W: Yes.

Q: Okay.

W: Yes. Uh huh. And Ed and I...there was a little...[inaudible] Ed and I...and Ed and his friends drove my girlfriend and I home...

Q: Okay.

W: ...to...back to my mother and stepfather's home.

Q: Okay.

W: And that's how we met.

Q: Okay. Now you're presently living in Union Lake, but your address here in Madison Heights was what when you lived here?

W: Well, the...the original one was on T...well, when I was a child...

Q: Okay.

W: ...it was 26640 Townley.

Q: Okay, and then when the two of you were married, you...

W: 26381 Dartmouth.

Q: Okay, and then you had how many children?

W: We had three.

Q: Three children.

W: Three daughters.

Q: Three daughters: Geraldine and what were the other names?

W: Sue and Cindy.

Q: Okay.

W: And our...our boy passed away when he was three months old.

Q: Oh, okay.

W: But...Ed...we lived over on Townley until...

H: '50.

W: We got married in '4...August of '48, and we lived over there until '50.

H: Yeah.

Q: You must have liked this area to stay here.

W: Well Ed...well, my uncle was Captain S...Skidmore...Robert Skidmore.

Q: Of the police department?

W: Yes sir.

Q: Okay.

W: And he bought a home up on Gregg, and he raised five boys.

Q: Mhmm.

W: And then he...when he passed away...but Ed helped him out on several raids in...in the area...

Q: So you worked with the police department?

W: ...for the blind pigs?

H: I did before I got in the fire department.

Q: Oh you're kidding, really?

H: Well just to raid blind pigs here...

Q: Really?

H: and over in...

W: Royal Oak Township.

H: the state.

Q: Okay. Now blind pigs, they were...this is during prohibition...or this was...?

H: No this was...

W: No, this is...

Q: These were after-hours places.

H: ...after the war.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: Okay.

H: This was when I was courtin' her in '47.

Q: Mmkay. Now what high school did you graduate from?

H: Royal Oak High.

Q: Royal Oak High. Okay.

W: And then...and then when we bought our home over there...well, Ed got a...was on the fire department when our daughter Sue was one month old.

Q: Okay.

W: And that was...

Q: Now this was the official fire department or...

W: Yes.

Q: ...this was a volunteer [inaudible]

W: No, no. He was a volunteer for yea...for several years before that. And then he got on the fire department...ridgit...ridgit...for reo.

Q: Did...were you...were you interested in being on a fire department or was it something that you just kind of...?

H: Oh no, I was interested in it.

Q: Really?

H: I wasn't really big enough to be a policeman in them days.

Q: Okay.

H: But I was big enough to be a firefighter.

Q: Okay. So you were where? Where was the station back then?

H: The station then was right where it is now.

Q: Okay.

H: At this one in about a year or two later—I can't remember just when—we had a little garage out on Thirteen Mile Road. It was a Number Two Station.

Q: Okay. Yeah, I think we could...

H: And the garage was a...belonged to Lamphere School Board. They used to park buses in it, and then they let us have it...have a...they tore out the bridge on John R was why we had to get a fire station out there. They tore that bridge right out and that was...

Q: John R and what?

H: Red Run.

Q: Oh, okay.

H: They tore that out so we could put a little fire hall out there and operate it up in their end from [inaudible].

Q: But there wasn't a whole lot on that end, was there?

H: No, not really.

Q: But you still...?

H: Fence and cows and...

Q: Barns and a few farm houses, not a lot though. Okay, how many years were you on the fire department?

H: Thirty-two.

Q: Thirty-two years? So you were married, you had your children.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: They all went to the Madison School District.

W: Oh yes.

- Q: What schools did they go to while they were here?
- W: They went to Wilkison [sic]...oh well Edison. Wilkison and then they graduated from Madison Heights.
- Q: Okay, so they never went to the original Kendall School. The one that was on...it was on John R, and then it moved over to Wolverine and Gregg and then...
- W: No.
- Q: ...the Methodist church took over.
- W: No. No.
- Q: Okay.
- W: No, no. I had gone to Edison, and then they changed the boundaries and then I was transferred to Koss School
- Q: Okay. And Koss was where?
- W: Up on...Park Court? Oh, Hales.
- Q: Hales.
- W: Hales. Yeah, Hales. And then...and then we used to...we...course, there was no school buses...
- Q: Mmhmm.
- W: ...and we walked, and it was quite a distance. And we used to take the shortcut. Instead of walking the highway, we would go through the woods. And cut through the woods.
- Q: It was pretty much farm around here, too, wasn't it?
- W: Oh yes. Yes, there...in fact, the neighbors...there was...they raised goats. And...well, in fact my grandmother had grazed at one ti...well, we had chickens and she had a couple of pigs.
- Q: Okay, and you said she owned quite a few lots?
- W: Yes. From Gregg down to...from Townley and Gregg she had about, what...
- H: Five lots.

W: Five lots there.

Q: Mmhmm. And then what, she sold them off to people that were interested in building [inaudible]?

W: No, she kep' 'em until my grandfather was killed in the explosion...the house exploded. My grandfather was killed.

Q: Oh rea...now how did the house explode?

W: From...

H: Coal gas.

Q: Oh really?

H: Coal gas. They had a...

Q: [Go off coal...?]

H: Forced hot water/coal gas/coal-fired boiler and sumpin' happened in it. He went out to check it and it blew up, and it blew him up against the rift...rafters.

Q: Oh lord.

W: And the only thing that saved...

H: Dead right away.

W: ...my grandmother was the cupboard knocked her over, and that saved her, and the dog.

Q: Now this was...were you on the fire department when this happened?

H: No. No. I was living in Royal Oak then.

W: This was January of '48. In fact, I was...

H: '47, wasn't it?

W: '4...

H: '48, yeah.

W: '48. And that was in January of '48. And then my grandmother and I stayed in part of the burned home until it was completed.

Q: Now how did you get it repaired? You called someone in the neighborhood [inaudible]?

W: She...no...she called...the insurance company had called someone...

Q: Okay.

W: ...and...and they had it re...re-done over.

Q: Now when you moved here to Madison Heights, did you build a house, or was there a house?

H: No, we lived...

W: We lived in that...in my grand...

Q: That s...that same house...

W: ...grandmother's.

Q: ...you lived in?

W: Yes. Uh huh.

Q: Okay.

W: And then we bought our new house up on Dartmouth and Andover.

Q: Now what was it like here for a young girl? Were there things to do? I mean...

W: No.

Q: What did you...what did you do, actually? Everything revolved around the school?

W: Every...well, really...

H: Family.

W: Family.

Q: Family?

W: Yes. The gardening, taking care of, you know, the home and things and...But on Saturday, if we were privl...privileged, my brother and I were given money to get on the Martin Line Bus, and we'd go into Royal Oak and go to matinee.

Q: Now the Martin Line, we've heard about that before. Where did the Martin Line run?

H: Highland Park to Royal Oak.

W: To Highland Park to Ro...yeah.

Q: Down John R?

W: Down...

H: Down John R.

W: John R.

Q: Okay.

W: And Eleven Mile Road.

Q: And what did you do went into Royal Oak? You just went shopping?

W: Yes, and, you know, go to the matinees on Saturdays.

Q: How old was your brother?

W: Well, he was....

Q: How many...how much age difference was there between the two of you?

W: Oh, not quite two years.

Q: Okay. Oh, say you're pretty close.

W: Yes. Yes. And...but really other than that, there wasn't too much activity. We were more or less out in the country.

Q: I always wondered, because you talk about kids not having anything to do now.

W: Oh there was plenty do.

H: We used to have the outdoor movies over here on Joh...Eleven Mile Road.

Q: Now I've heard about those. Where were they?

H: [inaudible] had the outdoor movies, even after the war they had them.

Q: Okay.

H: And they'd have a camera fixed...and I forget whether it was Friday or Saturday night. The kids would all come around in cars and roadsters, and everything, you know, we were watching...

Q: Did they show them on the side of the building?

W: I was too young.

H: Well, they had a...like a big sign, and they had it painted white. And they'd have outdoor movies there.

Q: Okay, was this like talking movies?

H: Oh yeah.

Q: Yeah?

H: Yeah, talking movies, and they had Jack's Auction. They...for a Friday night...

W: Oh yeah, that was...

H: ...you could go down there.

Q: That's the guy that owned the lumberyard?

W: No, no.

H: No. No.

W: He owned...

H: That's across the street from him.

Q: Okay, now this is Jack who?

H: Jack A...

W: Higgins...Contrell.

H: ...Contrell.

Q: Okay. Okay. He was a big booster in the city, wasn't he?

W: Oh yes.

H: Oh yeah.

W: Yes, he did. Yes. And then...well, too...when we first moved out here, I don't know how many years it was...there used to be a... a park up here off of...

H: Still is.

W: ...Gregg. And...

Q: Yeah, there's one just a couple blocks away.

H: That's [inaudible]

W: Well, that was quite an entertainment thing for us to do too, because the different church groups would rent the park out, and would have picnics there. And of course there was music and there was a lot of Polish picnics and things there, which was quite fun because, you know, we could go and watch them dance and listen to the music.

Q: So that park's been there quite some time.

W: Oh yes, we used to...

H: As long as I can remember.

W: ...my family, we used to haul water. That was how we got our water. We would go there with these big cans and...

Q: Was there a central well?

W: Yes, they let us use...

H: Yeah.

Q: Oh no kidding, now that's something...

W: Yes.

Q: ...we've haven't heard before.

W: Oh yes.

H: There was central wells...

W: And there was a pump there. And we would take our turns...now you know, bein' kids, my brother and I, if we were sent to pull the water, in the winter we used toboggans.

Q: Mmhmm.

W: Well, by the time you'd full and it'd fall out, we'd get home, there'd be... that...not that much water.

Q: How much would you carry at a time?

W: Well sometimes we had the two like there was...well more or less like steel garbage cans, you know?

Q: Oil drums or...

W: Yes. And...

Q: ...something like that, yeah.

W: ...we'd get them on a...on a wagon, or an...as I said, in the winter it was a toboggan, and we would fill them, and that was our water supply. So...

H: See, and the same thing at Thirteen Mile Road, across from where the city hall is, they had their own water system the people built. And same up on south of Fourteen.

Q: That's like the Frank Lloyd Wright Subdivision had a...is that what you're talking about?

H: I don't know what they call it, but they had their own water systems up 'til...

W: [inaudible].

Q: Yeah. Co-op still has their own water system. They still have a well.

H: Oh the co-op does? Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Yeah. But you...you guys didn't...you had to go haul your own water, right?

W: Oh yes. Yes.

H: [inaudible]

Q: Now you were highly involved in the city become a city?

W: Yes, oh yes.

H: Oh yeah.

Q: Now obviously there were some reasons that you wanted to see it become a city. Water would be a real good reason to me. I mean that'd get old real fast, carrying water around...

W: Well we had...

Q: ...in oil drums.

W: ...water later, but when Ed and I got married, it was...we would just like to see transferred from the Township. We thought going to a city was more...would be a lot...there are more advantages than staying just with the township.

Q: Roads?

W: Roads and...

Q: You didn't have as...the roads weren't real good.

H: Oh no. No. We got good roads after we become a city. We had [inaudible] paved now, aren't they?

Q: Now you're not real political kinds of people?

W: No.

Q: You didn't get into the pol...to political...what did...what did you actually do? How did you get involved?

W: Well, Bill Huffman and oh, who else, several others...oh...

Q: Virginia Solberg.

W: [inaudible] Michrina...

H: Royal Oak was gonna take part of...part of us, and Hazel Park was gonna take part of us...

W: Mmhmm.

H: ...and there was agreements that certain individuals would get good jobs and the rest were gonna be out.

Q: Okay.

H: And we fought like hell to get...to become a city, and the first election was messed up because Royal Oak had title to that school property.

Q: Okay.

H: And that messed up the whole election that year. I think that was in '55. Then '56 we had another election and went...put it over.

W: But Bill Huffman was really...he...

H: Davis.

Q: Darrel Davis.

W: Darrel Davis, John Michrina...

Q: Theodore Krenn.

H: Krenn.

W: Yes. Yes, but they...

H: Sargeant.

W: ...got the whole...asked the whole people to volunteer their services, and they sparked this all-out campaign to go from door to door to register people to vote.

Q: Is that what you were doing, was going door to door?

W: That's what I...I did it.

H: [Inaudible].

Q: Okay.

W: And...

Q: Where did you meet? Now I've heard this before...

H: At homes.

Q: ...that you met and you talked about it, but where did you meet?

H: In different homes.

Q: Okay. And there was...now when I was interviewing Art Selahowski last week, he said something about a restaurant, Virginia Solberg's restaurant. A lot of people used to meet there...

H: Oh yeah [but that there was too small?]

W: Oh yes, but that was very small.

Q: Okay.

W: That was...yes.

H: They had...

W: Jim had a...

H: ...Edwards' house, Solberg's house, pretty near all the ones that was on the...

W: ...yeah, and Edwards...and Charlie Edwards wanted the city...

H: Even...

W: They were...

H: Bill...

W: Pierce?

H: Bill Pierce. He was in there.

W: But...

Q: Now Bill Pierce, is that Russ Pierce's...?

W: No. No.

H: No, no...

Q: Okay.

H: ...Bill Pierce run the gas station right here...

W: Right here.

H: ...right...right here. That was his gas station and wrecker service.

Q: Okay.

W: Yeah.

H: In the winter time, we went out where the fire engines...Bill Pierce would have a wrecker by us and pull us out.

Q: From the mud.

H: All took care of it. Same as the guy up there...now he used to...

W: Mundy.

H: ...take care of...Bill Mundy.

Q: Okay, so he's been here for quite some time.

H: Yeah.

W: Oh yes. Oh yes. But the ditches along Eleven Mile Road and all along were so big and deep, I mean they were really...

Q: So this registering people for...for the city to become a city was quite a job, because you had to walk...

W: Oh yes.

Q: ..from door to door, mostly...

W: Oh yes.

Q: ...the roads weren't very good.

W: We walked door to door...

Q: Did you find people receptive?

W: Yes, very much so. Very, very. And we...we never asked their political or which way they wanted. We just wanted to know, "Are you registered to vote?" That was the main thing.

Q: Okay, now what did you do with the names that you collected? Who...?

W: Oh we took 'em...well, we give 'em to our committee chairman...

Q: Okay.

W: ...whoever that would be.

Q: Okay, now...

W: And...

Q: Okay.

W: ...they would take them to the, you know...

Q: Now, was that Ann Edwards that collected all of the names?

W: Uhh...

Q: Compiled all the names?

H: Secretary [inaudible]

W: I think so, yes. I think, you know...

Q: Okay, I think that's...I think that's...

W: I think it was, yes.

Q: ...what she told me when I interviewed her.

H: Yeah.

W: Yes, she was very active in that.

Q: Okay, it didn't bother people that they might have to pay more taxes for services...

W: No...

Q: ...or whatever.

W: ...more people seemed that they...they were really enthused to become a city. They really wanted to...to make this...and then the thing after it did become was the main thing...the name.

Q: Okay.

W: And that was...that was quite a thing too.

Q: Okay. How we got named?

W: Yes, how they got named.

Q: Okay. Well, give us...give us your...your story of how we got named.

W: Gene...

Q: Do you remember?

W: Well, no, other than they just asked people to send in different names and I don't remember how they even came to...

Q: Yeah, Michrina did it. Michrina added the "Heights" onto it, I guess. But they did have a thing where they asked people to...

W: Yes, yes.

Q: ...send in for names, right?

W: Mmhmm.

Q: Oh, okay.

W: I can remember different...if you had any suggestions, you know, what would you...

H: All...

W: ...like to have.

H: All them people on more or less the board at that time that sparked it, you know, they...they put in a lotta hours...

W: Yes.

H: ...lotta work.

W: Yes, they did. Yeah, on, you know...

H: There was a lot of ill feelings.

W: Oh yes.

Q: Oh, between who?

W: Oh, a lot of different people.

Q: Who didn't want it or did want it or...?

W: Oh yeah, who didn't want it.

H: Who didn't want it.

Q: Oh you're kidding.

W: They wanted to rename it.

Q: There were people...

W: Oh yes.

H: Oh yeah.

W: Oh yes.

Q: Okay. How about Horkey? Did Horkey want it to be a city or didn't want it to be a city?

H: He was against it as far as I'm concerned. He was against it, and then they elected him mayor the second term, I think, when we was a city. He was a smart man, there no question about it.

Q: I heard a lot about the name, that's the only reason I...I mentioned it.

H: [Inaudible]

Q: He owned a farm.

H: He had the farm where...what's that shopping center?

Q: K-Mart?

W: K-Mart, yes. Mmhmm.

H: K-Mart was there. That was all his farm.

W: It was quite a large farm.

H: You'd see him out there working every day from sunup to sundown.

Q: Okay, now you were a volunteer fireman before it was...

H: Yeah. Mmhmm.

Q: ...a city? Then you became a fireman after it became a city?

H: No.

W: No. No.

H: A township when I become a fireman.

Q: Okay. Now...now...now you're a city and you're on the fire department; what kind of equipment did you have back then compared to what we have today?

H: Oh there's no comparison. We had a ...a...a '46 American LaFrance which I think they still have, and we had an old Ford tanker, a converted job with the front end pump. And we took care of things pretty well with that.

Q: Okay.

H: And then we had a...we was gettin' into the rescue business, and we had a little ambulette they called...

Q: Now that's what I was going to ask you. Now you guys did rescue way back then.

H: We did rescue work with the engines.

Q: No kidding.

H: Well, instead of taking the engine out, the chief figured he'd get a...a little wagon, or a car...and we first want to think we bought from a undertaker, Chrysler with that fluid drive?

Q: Okay.

H: And...

Q: It was like a stick shif...automatic but...

H: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: ...it was like a stick. You still had to shift it.

H: And we used that, and...

Q: Who was the undertaker you got it from? Do you remember? Just the name?

H: Went down Eleven Mile Road in Royal Oak.

W: Some of it?

Q: [Inaudible]

W: [Inaudible]

H: No.

Q: That's okay. I was just wondering.

H: I can't...I can't place him right now.

Q: Now what did you guys do on...on the res...I mean, as far as rescuing? What could you take care of?

H: Breathing, bleedin', almost the same things they take care of now, only we were very, you know, compared to now, primitive.

Q: Yeah. Didn't have a whole lot of training. I mean, you didn't take a lot of classes or anything.

H: We had...we had training. Consumers Power give us some training.

Q: Oh no kidding.

H: They sent people out to...to...we asked them and they come out, and we had different people that were knowledgeable in...in that they give us training. We had a pretty good rescue outfit.

Q: How many guys were on the department then?

H: Six or seven.

Q: That was it.

H: Yeah, two...when...when I was on, I think there was seven, counting the chief...er, he was the captain then.

Q: Who was the chief?

H: Sloan.

Q: Okay.

H: And...let's see how we...I could be wrong in that I...[inaudible] six...I think there was six. And then when we got the little fire hall out there, we had to have one...one or two more.

Q: Yeah, that was the one up north.

H: We kept...we kept gettin' one or two a year then.

Q: Okay.

H: After that five...right...I could be...

Q: Because it's tough to cover a twenty-four hour shift...

H: Yeah.

Q: ...with that few people. You were on twenty-four hour shift then, or not?

H: Yeah, but we only had one extra day off then, about every sixteen days.

Q: Mmkay. So what, you were on a day, off a day?

H: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

H: 'Til the [Kelly?] day come up every sixteen days, I think.

Q: Okay. My brother's a fireman, too. He's a fireman up north. And how many guys did you have on a shift, two?

H: T...two, usually.

Q: Two, yeah.

H: Two, and then we got three for some reason, I forget now. We mustta gotten somebody with more people.

Q: Then you must have had to call the other ones in when...

W: [Inaudible]

H: [Inaudible] When we got a call, we turned this big siren on....

Q: It was like an air raid siren.

H: ...to call the volunteers in.

Q: Okay.

H: We turned the siren on, and we'd take off. And sometimes that siren would still be blowin' when we come back.

Q: Now did you...would you say that had...el...I mean, you...electrical work and stuff like that wasn't that good back then. You mustta had more fires I would think.

H: We had a lot of field fires in them days, lot of oil stoves...

Q: Okay.

H: ...old oil furnaces and that. They would...lot of them, and then we had some good house fires in...we had some pretty good little fires then.

Q: Nothing tall, though. There weren't any tall...

H: Nothing tall.

W: No.

Q: ...buildings so you didn't have to worry about that.

H: We didn't get the snorkel until...that's '68, wasn't it? '68, when they wanted to build the big tower...

Q: Mmhmm.

H: ...the Senior Citizens'.

Q: Mmkay.

H: And we bought that, which was a...a real good investment.

Q: Okay.

H: I think we paid...just round figures, a hundred thousand for...there, and last I heard, it's worth about two hundred and fifty thousand. It was all over half from the bottom on up.

Q: Yeah.

H: And that was a real good investment, even at that time.

Q: We recently had a millage campaign, and they were talking about what some of things cost, and some of 'em are half a million dollars now...

W: Oh.

Q: ...I forget what piece of equipment it was.

H: It's better to...it's better to, sometimes, if you've got a good foundation, build on what you have.

Q: Yeah, because, like you said, well after '46 LaFrance is still in operation.

H: Oh, it's still... it's not in operation. It's there.

Q: It's still around.

H: Yeah, last I knew it was still here, isn't it?

Q: Yeah, I th...I think I've seen it. They don't use it. I think it comes out for parades and stuff.

H: Yeah. Parades, yeah [inaudible].

Q: So tell me something about what it was like around this area. You never went up much past, what Twelve Mile?

H: No, we went all the way to Fourteen.

Q: You went up...but you didn't...I mean, not as far as the Fire Department but...

W: No.

Q: ...yourselves...

W: No.

Q: There wasn't much up there...

W: No.

Q: ...so there wasn't there to go up there.

W: No, you'd go into Royal Oak shopping and then...

Q: What did you have around here close by? Some of the shops and businesses?

H: There was...

W: Well, John R Lumber was there for years.

H: Yeah [inaudible]

W: And then I can...when we lived on...

H: Stop and Go's.

W: Yeah, that...

H: There was a poolroom around the corner on John R.

W: The bar on Dartmouth, and that was there for years.

Q: Sloppy Joe's was where? On Eleven Mile?

W: Yeah, it's...

H: Yeah, what is that bar called now? The end of....

W: And they keep...they keep changing the name, but it will always be...

H: It was always Sloppy Joe's...first was a...a old store that you had to walk up the steps to it. It had big windows in the front and they had a 32 ounces of...of beer for fifteen cents, I think.

Q: Oh my goodness.

H: But if they wouldn't sell you the 32 ounces 'cause you were looked young, they'd line up the shelves. Their shelves around this bar for...

Q: [Laughter].

H: Why I don't know but Sloppy Joe's always had a good reputation.

W: When we first moved out here back in the '30s, there was a bar right at the corner of John R and Eleven Mile Road. And it was Malley Barker's bar. Malley Barker owned the bar, and it was called...

Q: Now that's a name I haven't heard before.

W: ...the Sunset Inn.

Q: The Sunset Inn.

W: Yes. And then later...I don't know how or...but I can remember later a family by the name of Stevens had a trailer park there.

Q: Right. He's...Roy is in the Rotary now.

W: Oh is that right?

Q: Yep. Yep.

W: Well his father...Roy's father went...was...went to work with my grandfather down in Tim...

H: Timkins.

W: ...Timkins down in Detroit. And they used to ride together, my grandfather and Mr. Stevens. But I can remember when we first came out, this little old bar, real country lookin'.

Q: Okay.

W: But Malley Barker was the owner of it.

H: Now [who room come behind it?]?

Q: Now you're talking about...where was that again?

W: At Eleven Mile Road and...

H: Eleven Mile and John R.

W: ...John R.

Q: Like where Uncle [Boomba's?] is? It was like a...a store, gas station...

W: Yes, it was not right at the...

H: Jake [Lebo?] used to have a gas station there too.

W: ...corner, but it was...it was back just a little ways from there, you know.

Q: Okay.

W: Not right at directly on there, but back a little ways.

Q: Where did you shop? Where'd you get your groceries? Or did you have to go to Royal Oak?

W: Well when we first moved out, we went to Royal Oak, Hazel Park or that but then when Ed and I got married and moved over on Dartmouth, I used to take the girls and go over to on Stephenson...

H: Stephenson.

W: ...and Eleven Mile Road. And then...then we'd go down to Twelve Mile or later when it...then pretty soon the Ancona's...

H: Ancona's was always there. That was a little store right...

W: Down here on...

Q: Okay.

W: John R. And...

Q: Jake Ancona died recently.

W: Yes, yes.

H: Yeah, Jake and Tony, both.

W: Yeah, Tony, yeah, he was the boxer.

Q: And they had...they had a store where now?

W: A family store right down here on John R and...oh my goodness...it'd be more or less like kitty...pardon?

D: It was Collin...Collin.

W: Collin.

Q: That was like a little place where you'd get bread and milk and...?

W: Yeah...

H: Oh no, it was a...like a little mom and pop store.

Q: Okay.

W: And they had meats and things in there and...

H: They had meats and...

W: But I can remember the opening of it. We were so pleased to have a...

Q: Yeah.

W: store close [inaudible].

Q: Yeah, because it doesn't sound like you had a whole lot of places to go to.

W: No, we didn't. As I say, we...we had to go into Royal Oak. Or I can remember going into Royal Oak a lot.

Q: Clothing, where would you get clothing?

W: Royal Oak.

Q: Royal Oak.

W: Highland Park...

H: Monkey Ward's....Montgomery Ward's...

W: ...Hazel Park....

H: ...in Royal Oak.

W: Yeah, Royal Oak.

H: Federal's in Ferndale.

W: Ferndale.

Q: Okay, that was like where, on Eight Mile?

H: Sears in [inaudible] Highland Park.

W: Ferndale it was Nine Mile Road...

H: Nine Mile Road and Woodward.

W: ...and Woodward.

Q: Oh, okay.

W: And then...and of course in Royal Oak there was Montgomery Ward's and some other clothing stores there and the Woolworth's.

H: Woolworth's was a big place to go.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: Now that...you mentioned going into Hazel Park every once in a while...

W: Mmhmm.

H: Oh yeah.

Q: ...to shop. Was Hazel Park more developed than this area?

H: Oh yeah.

W: Oh yes.

Q: Okay.

H: At that time it was.

W: Yes, yes, yes.

H: They had a lot of little stores and...

Q: Paved streets and everything?

H: More or less on the main...

W: Yes, yeah. Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

H: ...the main roads.

Q: Okay.

H: That you didn't get off the main roads anyway.

Q: Okay, but they have a little different setup than we have, 'cause our stuff is set a little farther back off the street, and theirs is right up...

W: Right.

H: Well theirs is older.

Q: Yeah. Yeah.

W: 'Cause I can remember even going into Hazel Park to get school supplies.

Q: Mmkay.

W: When I went to...and...

Q: But you didn't drive anywhere.

W: Oh no, I was too young.

Q: Yeah.

W: My...my grandfather or my mother would drive.

Q: But I mean even when you were older and you were married, how often did you drive? Did you drive mostly or take the bus?

W: Oh we...we drove.

H: We drove.

Q: Okay.

W: We drove. Mmhmm.

Q: Okay.

W: And...well, we...

H: Always had a car, mostly.

W: ...went...well, we for a year and a half without a car.

H: Yeah.

W: And I used to take Jerry and Sue and take the little red wagon and head out over to Stephenson Highway...across Stephenson, to the supermarket to get groceries...and...and back.

Q: How about doctor?

H: Doctors?

Q: Yeah.

H: Oh we had...

W: We had in, well the chil...

H: ...Dr. Simon, who was in the...

W: Oh he was in...when become a city.

H: Become a city.

W: But...

H: He was our doctor at that time.

Q: He was here somewhere?

W: Oh yes.

H: In this area.

W: Yes. Yes. Uh-huh.

Q: Over where?

W: He had a office down on...

H: He had it down John R...

W: John R.

H: ...but he...

W: And then...

H: ...his first office that I know was at Stephenson Highway and John R.

Q: Stephenson Highway and John R. Okay.

H: He was a jolly little guy.

Q: Okay. Do you remember a Vanheusden?

H: Oh yeah.

W: Dr. Vanheusden?

Q: Yeah.

W: Oh yes.

H: He was one of the greatest...

W: He was...

H: ...guys that ever lived around here.

W: ...superior in his family, yes.

Q: He used to be...he was a doctor that, what, he checked the teams or...?

W: Yes.

H: Yeah, he took care of the teams.

W: All the...

Q: For Madison...Madison School District.

H: Mostly Little League Football and then they had...

W: ...and the...the Little League Football. When we got into the...

Q: Oh, okay.

W: Yes. We became a city, he...yes...he done all...took care of all the...the little ones for the Little League Football. We became active in that.

Q: Oh did you really?

W: Oh yes.

H: [Inaudible].

Q: That's nice. Little League Foot...Little League Football.

W: The Little League...

H: Oh yeah.

Q: Yeah.

H: Yeah, we was in that about thirteen years, I think

Q: Really?

W: The girls...our girls...

H: She was the princess...the queen, and her two sisters...

Q: Really?

H: ...were princesses.

Q: You're kidding! You're talking about Jerry!

H: Yeah.

W: Yeah.

Q: It's pointing to Jerry right now, Jerry's not saying anything yet.

H: She was the queen one year and...

W: We used to take 'em out sellin' candy for the Little League Football.

Q: Okay.

W: And they...they sold quite a bit and finally they said...well the other ones said, "If Millers are gonna sell candy, we're not gonna compete," so we backed off.

Q: Oh that's kind of nice you got involved in that.

W: Yeah, well I...I was in Ma...I was too when we became a city shortly after...became involved with the Madison Heights Women's Club.

Q: N...oh, now we have women's clubs now. We have like a Junior Women's Club, an Intermediate Women's Club...

W: Well, thi...this was just the beginning, and I can't think of the lady's...well, Virginia Solberg...Gin...I [inaudible]...and Betty...oh my goodness...Howe, and we met in her home a lot, and in others' homes, but we...we just meet at Betty Howe's and...oh my goodness...

Q: Gin Solberg got around quite a bit, didn't she?

W: Oh yes. Yes, yes she did.

H: Oh she was a worker.

W: Yes. Very involved.

Q: So what...say for instance, ladies' clubs and...you know, clubs, fraternities and sororities or whatever. They usually get involved in doing community kinds of things. What did you get involved in when you were in the Women's Club? What kind of causes did you pick up?

W: Oh my goodness...there was...I...you know, I can't recall now. I can remember...I can remember our first parade.

Q: Okay. When was that?

W: We were thrilled to death. Well, it was the city's parade...

Q: Was that when we became a city in...

H: Yeah.

Q: ...January?

W: Yes. And well it was...

Q: Through December?

W: ...well, it was in the spring it must have been. Or it could have been on one of Memorial Day, but it was...we took part in it. And...

Q: Because we have pictures of the parade, and it's cold.

W: Oh well...

Q: People are...

W: Well I was expecting...well it could have been in...I was expecting our third daughter, Cindy.

Q: Okay.

W: And I was very, very pregnant. And it was so funny because I was driving in a car, and the sign "City of Progress" and...and of course we...we all laughed about that, 'cause yes it was. And...but I can remember we...we had one or two cars in it...Madison Heights Women's Club did. And...

Q: Do you remember some of the other people in the parade?

W: Oh my goodness...

Q: Police, fire probably was there.

W: Oh yeah, always, always the police and the fire.

H: [Inaudible] never seen that parade.

Q: Oh really?

W: And...

Q: They didn't let the fire department in it?

H: Not in the...not in the victory parade, they didn't.

W: Well that wasn't...I don't think...This was...this was later, Ed, the Madison Heights Women's Club...

H: Oh.

W: ...came later. But...

H: Yeah. Well, that was a later parade. The original parade, they didn't...

W: No, I know.

H: ...they had no police and no fire for sure.

W: No, no political...

D: They called it the victory parade?

W: Yeah.

Q: Why did they not let police and fire in?

H: They...

Q: That's an odd...

H: ...they were...oh there was a couple firefighters there. I don't remember seeing any policemen, but there was somebody there.

Q: Somebody didn't get along, right? Oh okay.

H: Lot of frictions.

Q: Oh okay.

H: Lot of frictions.

Q: Okay.

H: Still going on.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: That's...yeah, that's true. Okay. I wanted to ask you something about the incinerator. What do you remember about the incinerator?

H: It's a junk pile.

Q: I've heard so many different versions about the incinerator. Where'd we get it?

H: Well that was in a junkyard.

Q: [I would get it?] It was a junkyard.

H: It was a junkyard.

Q: Okay. Who owns the junkyard, do you remember?

H: No.

Q: Okay.

H: I don't remember who owned that. But they come in and moved the dirt around, buried a lot of cars and...

Q: We thought we were doing something good, though, when we bought that, right?

W: Yes. Oh yes.

Q: I mean, nobody knew what this thing was gonna be.

H: Yeah that was [great?].

W: Nobody...everybody thought it was going to benefit them.

H: It was a great thing to have.

Q: You were...you had to take your junk someplace, right?

H: [Inaudible] collection. We didn't take it out there.

W: [inaudible] well, we...

H: You could, I guess if you wanted to, but you had...we had collection then.

Q: But that's...that's what I mean, though. They had to take this stuff someplace, because, what, you guys woulda had to bury it...

W: Oh yes. Oh yeah.

Q: ...or do whatever with it if they wouldn't have had someplace [inaudible].

H: We had private collectors.

Q: Okay.

H: I...I remember down Townley here. We lived here and we had a Mr. Thomas from...I think he was on...from West Eight Mile Road, wasn't he?

W: Mmhmm.

H: And he come around and he went into your backyard, picked it up, carried it all the way to the road, junked it. Actually, he...he was better, they picked up and cleaned up after him.

Q: Now was this...now you're talking junk or you're talking like garbage? This is...

W: Garbage.

Q: No kidding?

W: Mmhmm.

H: Garbage. [Inaudible].

Q: Now what would they do with this? They would take it...

H: I don't know. [inaudible] know.

W: We never know.

Q: They must have made somethin' off of it.

H: They might have been takin' it to pig farms out...

Q: Yeah.

H: ...but I don't know. We had a big pig farm, but it wasn't there then. It was before the war on Fourteen Mile and John R. Just east there was a big pig farm there, round '34, '35.

Q: Do you remember who owned the pig farm?

H: I have no idea.

Q: Okay.

H: But they used to come out...there was a lot of pig farms in that there. They used to come sometimes in the morning by the bar. And they have a whole trailer full of baked goods. 'Cause we went out and got some baked goods. It was only a day old, baked goods, you know.

Q: Okay.

H: And then they'd take it to the pig farm.

Q: Now when you say "the bar", you used to help out at a bar.

H: That's Cedar Inn, yeah. I'd run the gas station for him and kept the beer cold.

Q: Where was this?

H: Eleven Mile and Dequindre.

Q: Okay, that was whose bar?

H: Cedar Inn Barbecue. Bill Rintz owned.

Q: Okay.

H: Bill and Elvira Rintz.

Q: Okay. How many years did you work there?

H: Well, just a couple.

Q: Okay, you...

H: Three at the most. [I can't really remember?]

Q: How'd you...how'd you used to get there? You were a kid when you worked there, right?

W: He was just a kid.

H: Yeah.

Q: How old were you?

H: I think I was thirteen when I went out there.

Q: Holy mackerel! Talk about industrious. And you what? How'd you get there? Walk?

H: Walked, then I got a bicycle.

Q: Really?

H: And it fell off the car in front of Sloppy Joe's and got mangled. And I got another one and...

Q: Now this is interesting. You lived in Royal Oak, but you were coming over here. Now what made you come over on this end?

H: Oh Bill Rintz's bar that I went to.

Q: How did you find out about that place to begin with?

H: Well the lady next door is Bill Rintz's sister.

Q: Okay.

H: And when I lived in Royal Oak, that's...

W: With your folks....

Q: I see. I see. Okay.

W: ...on Lincoln.

H: We lived on West Lincoln and they lived right next door to us...

Q: And they said they needed somebody over here.

H: Old Bill used to come around and he'd co...come and visit and we'd talk and...

Q: That was the son. The son or the father?

H: No, that's the father of Bill.

Q: The father. Okay.

H: Yeah. The son never had too much to do with the bar. Bill brought...built him the TV after he come back from the service, and he had...all knew about radars and stuff, so he built him a...a store there.

Q: Okay, now this bar that you worked at, was that close to the Coach...Coachman...Coachlite, whatever the name was?

H: No, no, no. It was right on the corner. The...

W: Across...

H: ...southeast corner of Eleven Mile and Dequindre.

Q: That's where the gas station is now.

H: Yeah.

Q: Okay, so they built the TV place right next door.

W: Right.

H: Right.

Q: Okay.

H: I think that one's still there.

Q: Okay, what did you do when you worked in the bar? Sweep up? Wipe the tables down, things like that?

H: Oh partly sweep, but keep...keep the beer and pop on ice, and push in half barrels of beer.

Q: That's hard work.

H: Run the gas station.

Q: That's tough.

H: Oh they didn't sell that many. It wasn't that hard. The hours were long, that's all.

Q: Yeah. And you ran the gas station too?

H: Well, if you call it a station. A couple oil pumps, and couple of gas pumps, you had to pump the gas up in it, you remember?

Q: Yeah, yeah. This was the kind with the big...the tall cylinder.

H: Yeah, big tall one, yeah.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

H: And this was just before the war, you know.

Q: What was that intersection like there?

H: Oh that was nasty.

Q: We've never gotten into that. What...

H: That was a nasty intersection.

Q: ...what was that [inaudible]?

H: Accidents.

Q: Anything else there...

H: Lot of accidents.

Q: ...besides the bar and the gas station?

W: Well, when Rosie...

H: Rosie's bar was down at Ten Mile Road

W: ...later she built there. Yeah.

H: And then after the war she built one back this way.

W: Yeah.

Q: Now was this the famous Rosie?

W: Mmhmm.

H: Yeah.

Q: That we named the park after?

H: If you can call her famous.

W: Yes.

Q: Infamous, famous?

W: Yes. Uh-huh.

H: Infamous.

Q: Did she have a regular bar? There...

H: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

W: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Q: ...was a bar there. Now see I didn't...I thought it was a...just a house.

W: No, no. She...

H: [Inaudible] she had to run the bar.

W: ...had a bar.

Q: Okay.

W: Mmhmm.

H: And she built that one brick house there. It's still there.

Q: It...it...now...

H: On Dequindre.

Q: Now I wanted to ask you, that brick house that's there, is that where Bond-Bilt is now? It's like a big long...

H: I don't know...

Q: brick house.

H: ...I haven't been around there.

Q: Okay. I think that's the one it is, but I...

W: It...it's...it was a large brick home she had built.

Q: Yeah, I think that's it.

H: Had a garage in the basement and it went around in the back [inaudible]

W: Cindy...

Q: That's the one.

W: ...because...

Q: Because this is up on a hill.

H: Yeah.

W: Yeah, my uncle's property was right by...

Q: Yeah, just a little like a rise kind of a thing. Yeah.

W: Mmhmm.

H: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: Okay.

W: Mmhmm. That was all the woods then in the back there.

Q: Did you know Rosie? Did you ever meet her?

W: Oh yes. Oh yes.

H: Oh yeah.

Q: What was she like?

W: Umm...

Q: She's part of the history. We've got a park named after her.

W: She was umm...

Q: Kinda rough?

W: Well, a businesswoman more or less, the little time...I talked to her a few times.

Q: Did she get involved in anything in the community or...?

W: No, I don't remember ever...ever having...

Q: Mm-kay.

W: No. Do you ever? I don't think she [inaudible]

Q: No, I just wondered. Okay.

W: Not that I know of.

Q: Okay. How about where Little League Football....what else did you get involved in? Girls become cheerleaders?

D: Dad used to make the cheerleading costumes for some of the kids [inaudible]

Q: Dad used to make the cheerleading [inaudible]?

D: [Inaudible]

W: Yeah, with skirts.

Q: You're all right.

H: I rented [inaudible]

Q: Sorta like my Dad.

H: ...candy chairman, and then I was head of the cheerleaders.

W: Yeah, he was the head of the...that's when...

H: I had to make a couple of skirts for a couple of girls.

Q: Were you really?

W: Yeah.

Q: How'd you get into that? How'd you...where'd you learn how to sew?

H: Oh before the war I worked for a tailor for a little while.

Q: No kidding.

H: And these girls didn't have too much and we wanted to have skirts, so I got the materials and made 'em.

Q: Oh that's great.

H: And that was always some...there's always somethin' goin' on. We selling candy for the football and that there...we go way out by my mother-in-law's house, way up in Union Lake, selling candy.

Q: Mm-kay.

W: I can just...and the kids, course the girls then, as they got older, they, you know, we...their school and things...

H: Some of 'em coached...did you coach? Sue did I noted.

D: Yeah.

Q: You coached what?

D: The Wolverine Cheerleaders.

H: Cheerleaders.

Q: Really?

D: Mmhmm.

Q: Oh, okay. You were satisfied with the school district, obviously. Didn't have any problems with them?

W: No, ne...I never had any problems.

Q: School's a little different then than it was today.

W: Oh yes.

H: Yeah, they taught you.

W: [Laughter] The...

H: They taught readin', writin' and 'rithmetic then.

W: I don't know how or why but we never had any problems with the girls. They come home from school and they wait a bit, but they always had their homework done. And they'd always...we'd get around the table if they had a project, and we'd all work on this project. Dad made eskimo dolls and sew up things and...

Q: Did you get to learn...know any of the teachers?

W: Oh yes. Yes.

Q: Tell me about some of the teachers.

W: Oh my...well they were all...

Q: How about Helen Hennesy? Did you get to know Helen Hennesy?

W: No.

Q: No?

W: No. I...Mrs. Wilson...

Q: Okay.

W: ...and...and...[Sun?]

H: [Sadow, Sado?] ?

D: Mrs. Sadow

W: Mrs....who used to b...

D: [Inaudible]

H: It's the wife of the chief of police in...

Q: Oh really?

W: Yes.

D: [Inaudible]

H: Ha...Highland...Hazel Park.

W: Yeah, Jerry and...

Q: Okay.

W: ...Mrs. Christian and over...

D: [Inaudible]

W: ...yeah, and then over in the high school there was [inaudible]. Who's the one we went on the cruise with?

Q: This was a cruise, what, now?

W: Yes. Yeah...

Q: Oh, okay.

D: [Inaudible]

W: ...just here a few years ago, Cindy--the youngest daughter--and her family and Jerry and...and...and her daughter and Ed and I, we went on a cruise to the Caribbean. And Cindy as...and Bill's travel agent is the sister to Mrs. [Silbajinski?], who is...was Cindy's math teacher at school.

Q: Okay.

W: And she told Cindy, she said, "Oh there's a group from Madison High School gonna go on that cruise of teachers." And so by golly we ended up knowin' several.

D: Mr. [Girole?]

W: Mr. [Girole?] and...

Q: Oh that's really neat.

W: ...oh, who is the man...I...oh my goodness...and he recognized us right away. He knew all the Millers. But...

H: Who...who is the principal of Edison School?

D: Mr. O'Brien.

W: Mr. Brien.

H: Yeah, Mr. Brien.

D: Mr. Brien [inaudible]

W: Yeah, and...

Q: Do you ever go to school board meetings?

W: No, I never did.

Q: You belong to the PTA?

W: Oh yes. Oh yes. I was active over in the...at Edison, and helped out...and when the kids...then they had left and went to St. Dennis. And then Jerry wasn't too happy there and then she went back over to Edison.

Q: Oh you went to St. Dennis School?

D: Yeah.

W: Oh yes.

Q: Oh you didn't like it?

D: No, I had a bad experience.

W: Very bad.

D: I came back to Edison and I just loved it.

W: Mother had...I had a very bad experience.

Q: How old were you when you went to St. Dennis?

D: Second grade.

Q: That could be pretty tough.

D: It was.

W: Yes, it was. But when she came back...back over to Edison, she settled right back and she...well the girls were all pretty good grades, all of 'em. They...where they all had good grades.

Q: I was gonna to ask you where you went to church. You to church at...

W: St. Dennis.

Q: St. Dennis?

W: Yes. Before even it became...

Q: What was it back then. Was it a wooden...wooden building?

W: It was...

Q: I mean that building there looks fairly new now.

W: St. Dennis, we...it was...

H: No, no, it was a nice little church. Wasn't too little either. It was...

W: Yeah, when it first started...

H: That wasn't too little.

W: ...it was Father Wagner was the first one there.

H: Oh yeah, yeah.

W: That was...wasn't that big

D: It was little and then they built on the other half.

W: Yes.

H: Oh yeah.

D: And then they just redid it all over again...

W: Yeah.

D: ...it seems like three times.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: This might be a dumb question, but there was a St. Vincent too. Now why...

H: It's down here.

Q: Yeah, a lot of people wind up goin' over to St. Dennis. Why did they wind up goin' over to St. Dennis when St. Vincent was right here?

W: St. Vincent's wasn't there for quite a few years.

Q: Oh.

H: That come after...way after we were a city.

D: [Inaudible]

W: Oh yes.

Q: Oh, okay.

W: Oh no, no, that...that hadn't been there at that...

Q: Okay, that's what it was. That was...ca...probably came in that subdivision started to develop.

W: Right. Right. After the city...

H: They probably owned that property there.

W: became more populated and...but...no...

D: I think a lot of 'em [inaudible]

W: St. Mary Magdalene, now that's where I...

Q: That's in Hazel Park.

W: That's right I used to go.

Q: Yeah, okay.

W: And I took to go to catechism on Saturdays...

Q: Right.

W: My brother and I used to have to...but there also was...oh my, what was her name? A lady...and I can't think of her name now...but she held catechism classes one day a week in her home, and the priest from St. Mary Magdalene would come to...

Q: No kidding.

W: ...her home and...

Q: Made it a little easier.

W: Yes. And we would go there and for our catechism classes right after school and...what was his name...Mer...Merkel?

D: Oh, Ralph Merkel.

W: Ralph Merkel was...

H: Merkel's mother?

W: No, no. Ralph Merkel used to go...

H: Oh, he [inaudible].

W: ...to catechism with me and the Gales and...

Q: You mean like Bob Gale?

W: Yes.

D: Oh, Bob Gale?

W: Oh yes.

Q: No kidding.

W: Mhmm. Well, I don't know. He...he went to cla...but he...they lived right near them, these people...I can't remember this lady's name, if ever she was a saint.

Q: This was the lady that the had the catechism courses?

W: Yes. Yes.

H: Was that on Geena Avenue?

W: No, honey. Right up there on Park Court or Hales up in that area...

H: Park Court.

W: ...Park Court up in that area. It was in back of...

H: Wasn't that Geena Avenue before it was Park Court?

W: Well, I don't know that.

H: I think it was.

Q: So they changed the names of some of the streets then.

H: They changed the names of the street.

Q: Oh no kidding.

W: But I can remember it cost us, I think it was a nickel, to get the bus to go down to St. Mary Magdalene. But if the group of us would, as we make friends, we would pot our money and buy apples...a bag of apples. We'd eat 'em on the way home and wouldn't take the bus and we'd walk.

Q: Oh that's a neat idea.

W: Which was quite a [inaudible]

Q: Yeah.

W: And...well I can remember doin' that. But on Sunday morning we'd...if we didn't have a car, we'd...and couldn't get the bus, which was always late...

Q: Yeah.

W: ...rather than be late, we'd start hikin' and...

Q: Boy that's a walk.

W: ...we walked. But we walked it.

Q: That's a walk to St. Mary Magdalene.

H: I...

W: And...and a lot of times walked into Royal Oak too.

Q: Yeah, now that's even more of a walk.

W: And...

Q: Now let's get back to you and the city. Can you tell me anything about any of the other city departments?

[End of tape Side 1]

H: ...he could make anything...or do anything, for he was a jack-of-all-trades, and he was good at everything.

Q: Now this is the city hall on...

H: Yeah, and he took care of...

Q: ...here? Here across from the branch library or down at the new Civic Center?

H: He...he just stayed here

D: He did both. Yeah, he was at city [inaudible].

H: Did he? Yeah, he went down there when they first moved.

D: He retired from the new city hall.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: Okay.

H: He was a great man.

Q: How many...they didn't have a big department. It was him and...who else was there? A couple of...couldn't have been many guys. To take care of the streets and...

H: Nobody took care of the streets, really.

Q: Oh, okay.

H: The county roads...the main roads were county, and we didn't even have snow plows in them days until we become a city.

Q: Okay, I'm talkin' about after you became a city now.

H: Oh, we had good snow plowin'. We had...they started DPW up, and we had good collections...

W: Mmhmm.

H: ...good snow plowin'...

W: Yeah, our streets were always good

Q: Okay, now you had to go to people...they had to come to you and ask you for money, right? I mean...you...how did you get all this stuff?

H: Well, it [probably?] come from the taxes...

Q: Okay.

H: The only place it could come from. Nobody donated enough.

Q: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So they just...they had to come to people and ask them for taxes. There weren't that many houses here, were there?

H: There was quite a few at that time...

W: It was growing. It was...

H: It was startin' to build up good.

W: growing.

Q: Oh, okay, so you had a pretty decent tax base then. You must have because...

W: Oh yes.

Q: ...you wanted Lamphere...Lamphere wanted to join with you and...

W: Right.

Q: ...you had...it was fairly developed here and you didn't...

W: Yes, by then.

Q: Yeah, okay.

W: Because all year...well, Arbor Drugs came in and then they had the Farmer Jack's here.

Q: Okay.

W: And...well, Carp's, yeah, but then...and on...

Q: Where was Carp's?

W: Where Arbor's is.

Q: Okay.

W: Carp's Drug Store. And then the...

Q: Okay.

W: Farmer Jack's...

Q: That's on the west side of John R, just north of Eleven Mile.

H: Mhmm.

W: Yes.

Q: Okay.

W: And then you had all these other little places boomin', and it just seemed... it was such a shock. I mean...even today, to come back and see what has developed...

Q: Well this is...this is what's so amazing to me. I mean one day you've got dirt streets and dirt roads with ditches and everything...

W: Right.

Q: ...and what did they do, just start makin' roads right away?

H: Uhh...

Q: I mean, how soon did this stuff come in? It had to take a while to...

H: It come in pretty fast. Now that I look back at it, I really...you'd have to look at some off...official records on that [inaudible].

Q: But that's a priority, I guess, so people wanted that taken care of first.

H: We got paved roads and that was a real...real...

W: It just seemed to develop so fast before your eyes. But you know, when you're living here, you...you could see it but not until...like we have seen this city progress so since we've moved away.

H: We got rid of the big ditches first.

W: We've left...

Q: Now the big ditches were on...

H: Big ditch on Eleven Mile Road.

W: Oh.

H: And...

Q: I remembered that from when I lived in Warren. I lived between Hoover and Schoener; there were big ditches on both sides of the street.

H: It used to be carp come up them sometime in the spring time.

W: Our daughter Sue would...they were on their way home from Edison School for lunch...They would come home to eat lunch, and I would always...and it was winter, I had a...I always had a nice warm lunch waiting.

Q: Mmhmm.

W: Well Jerry came home and Sue didn't. And we begin to get quite worried, so we started hikin' and finally we met...met her and she was soakin' wet. Well her girlfriend had gone on the ice, right there at the corner of Dartmouth and Eleven...

Q: In the ditch.

W: In the ditch, and...

D: And on ice.

W: ...to walk on the ice, and she fell in. And Sue went in to get her because she was hollerin', and she went in. Luckily a truck driver stopped and got both pulled...both girls out.

Q: [Inaudible] my.

- W: And that girl came home; Sue was drenched in mud and ice on her.
- Q: I did that when I was a kid.
- W: It was...oh I was so glad to see those ditches...
- H: Sue later become a Marine captain.
- Q: She did?
- D: Mmhmm.
- Q: Maybe it was the ditch experience that did it.
- W: [Laughter] Well she...
- D: [Inaudible]
- H: She served a hitch in the Marine Corps.
- Q: No kidding.
- W: No, she worked out at Cranbrook for...
- D: Oakland University.
- W: not...Meadowbrook. Oakland University. She would take care of the celebrities when they would come to Meadowbrook. And she has quite a few autographs of famous ones that came there. And then if need be, she'd take them to lunch and so forth. And she got tired of it. She wanted to do something more and she put her application in to become a state trooper. And she was chosen to be the first woman state trooper, but she turned it down because she got her orders that she was accepted into Os...the officers' candidate school.
- Q: Into...for the off...for the Marines.
- W: For the Marines.
- Q: Yeah.
- W: So she took that, hoping to further her travels and things, and she became a communications officer.
- Q: And...now Geraldine became...
- W: Jerry became the city clerk. Jerry...

Q: Started to work for the city.

W: Right after high school. She came...

D: [Inaudible] high school. I needed money.

W: She needed some money...well, she worked for a while at Montgomery Ward's...

D: Yeah.

W: ...and she just didn't like that...that. And...

Q: That was in Royal Oak?

D: Universal Mall.

H: No, [inaudible].

W: No, Universal Mall.

Q: Oh, okay. Okay. I'm thinkin' too far back.

W: That was co-op.

Q: Okay.

W: And she found out she...she didn't like to be a saleslady. And so when she graduated, she just didn't know what she wanted to do, if she wanted to go to college or what. And she said, "You know, I'd like to get a job," and we were...her...I were thinking...I was ironing, and I was talkin' to her, and I said, "Well, Jerry, you know, the city's growin'. Why don't you go and put your application in up at the city hall, and she said "no, no Mom, because everybody think Dad had his hand in it." And I said, "Listen, it's between you and me. You go up to the city hall and...and...and see Sarah..."

D: Sarah Gable.

W: Sarah Gable.

Q: Okay, Sarah Gable was who?

D: Sarah Gable worked in the city clerk's office...

Q: Okay.

D: ...and she did all the elections.

W: And I knew her through working on the elections and then...

Q: She was not the clerk, though.

W: No. Dorothy Lentz.

D: No, no. [Inaudible] Dorothy Lentz was...

Q: Dorothy was the clerk, okay.

W: And...but I didn't know Dorothy. I did know Sarah because of working on the elections and...and...

Q: Oh, you worked on elections too?

W: Oh yes. Oh yes. We counted ballots. Then I worked on the one...the...When the city...when we went...we voted to become a city, and we worked from one morning until after 10:00 the next morning. We counted by hand.

Q: And you didn't have machines.

W: No, no, no.

Q: I mean, we had boxes. We would...

W: We had ballots and we had to count. And we were very exhausted, but...oh yeah, and we worked. And I wor...I also worked for a...a few months up at the city hall.

D: At city hall. Switchboard.

W: The switchboard operator.

Q: Oh you're kidding.

W: No.

D: Mmhmm.

Q: That's pretty neat.

W: But we...it was...

Q: So you both were really highly involved in the city.

D: Mmhmm.

W: Yes.

H: It doesn't seem like it.

W: Not really, you know, it just...

Q: Just kind of happened.

W: Really.

H: Just...

D: But I was proud to tell them where we came from.

W: Yes.

D: When we went traveling.

W: Always Madison Heights. They always, "Are you from Detroit?" "No. We're from Madison Heights, Michigan." And to this day we have our Madison Heights shirts we wear. We're very proud. We're very proud.

Q: Well, when you think of...how much is it...when did you leave here? When did you go to Union Lake?

W: '86.

Q: Well, it's been a while, then.

W: Yes.

H: '86. '86 we moved out there.

D: Mmhmm.

Q: So there's been some changes since you...

H: Oh yeah.

W: Oh, I can't get over it. I just can't believe it, really.

Q: It looks nice, doesn't it?

W: Oh it really does.

Q: Yeah.

W: Really. When you look back and think, "You had a little bit of help in it." It makes you feel proud.

Q: Yeah. I think John R is one of the most telling changes even since I've been here...

W: Oh.

Q: ...because this was all re...re-paved since I've been here.

H: How many times was the street paved?

W: And after Ed re...after Ed retired we left Jerry here, and to ta...to take charge.

D: Take care of [inaudible].

Q: Take care of everything, make sure everything was all right.

W: [Laughter] We're very proud of her. She really works. She...she was quite a worker. She started from the bottom and earned her way. And she works.

Q: Started as a...

D: Clerk-typist.

Q: Clerk-typist.

D: Dorothy gave me the chance.

Q: Did you stay in the clerk's office the whole time...

D: Always.

Q: ...never...never went into anything else?

D: No. No. Mm-mm.

W: And then she...Dorothy put you as the elections officer.

D: Then I became elections clerk, and then I became deputy, and then I became City Clerk.

- Q: When did you...when did you get machines? When did...did you first get machines?
- D: They get...they had the ABM machines, I think, when Dorothy was a deputy here.
- Q: Okay, so that would have been, like, what year?
- D: I think she was...in '55. Well, she must have been deputy in '57 or '58.
- Q: Oh that's...oh, okay. Okay.
- D: But I think they had machines there. I can look back and check, but it never...
- H: She worked for Mrs. Bradford, didn't she?
- W: Yes. Mrs. Bradford was...
- D: Yeah, I didn't know her. No, Myrtle Chamberlain...
- Q: I...yeah, I was just going to say, where did Myrtle Chamberlain come in?
- W: Myrtle...Myrtle Chamberlain.
- D: Myrtle...she worked for Myrtle Chamberlain.
- W: Yeah, it was...and Sarah...Sarah Bradford was...what was Sarah Bradford?
- D: She worked in the Police Department.
- W: That's right.
- H: Sarah Bradford was a clerk before...
- D: Myrtle Chamberlain.
- H: Myrtle Chamberlain.
- D: Then she became...she worked in the Police Department.
- W: And...and...and then...yes...and then, yes, got into the Police Department.
- H: Who?
- W: Sarah.

- D: Sarah. Didn't Sarah Bradford work in the Police with Darrell Warren?
- H: I never knew she worked in the Police Department.
- D: Well I heard she did.
- W: I can remember here Sarah Bradford was, you know, and I can remember they were all so thrilled when Jerry was born and we brought Jerry up to see them and things...
- D: I came up to City Hall to visit the ladies. I never thought I'd work there.
- Q: Well that's kind of neat.
- D: Yeah. [Inaudible]
- Q: This...
- W: This city. Yes.
- Q: This City Hall.
- W: Yeah. Oh yes.
- D: I remember...
- W: Darrell Warren. Yes. She was...
- D: Darrell was always nice, and she...
- W: Very.
- H: Well that was originally...that building was originally, what...built by the Metropolitan Club?
- Q: That's that kind of orange, brick, two-story...
- H: Yeah.
- Q: ...building.
- H: That was originally built by...or part of it was built. They...they couldn't finish it. And then the city bought it from 'em.
- W: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Now when that's...okay, Metropolitan Club started to build that building, and Metropolitan Club is, what? That's kind of connected with the police.

W: Police and firemen.

H: Police, fire and postal.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: Now...so that building, was that ever...did it belong to Royal Oak Township? It didn't.

H: No, it belonged to the Club, far as I know.

Q: City of Madison...yeah, and then Madison Heights took it over as a city hall.

H: Yeah.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: Oh, okay.

H: They sold it to Madison Heights.

Q: Did the city finish the building up?

H: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Q: The city completed it.

H: Completed it.

Q: Oh, okay. That's why in the Art Selahowski interview, he talks about...

D: Building.

Q: ...building a city hall...

W: That was...

Q: ...he's talkin' about finishing up that building.

W: ...finish...yes...that one. Oh.

Q: We didn't get into the part with the Metropolitan Club, 'cause he didn't know about that.

W: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

H: They started the building.

Q: Mm-kay.

H: And couldn't...you know, money was rough in them days.

Q: Mmhmm.

H: And they bit off more than they could chew.

Q: Was that like a...it would have been like your union meeting hall, or a place...

H: Yeah, well they were gonna...

Q: where you could have weddings or...

H: ...I think they intended to...

W: Yeah.

H: ...rent it out, you know, for meetings, different meetings.

Q: Mmhmm.

H: Different clubs.

W: Ed belonged. He was the president one year, for the Metropol...for the club. You...wasn't you president of...no, for the Goodfellows.

H: Goodfellows.

W: I belonged to the Met...the Auxiliary of the...of the Met[inaudible]

D: [Inaudible]

Q: Did you go and collect the...you got people to donate things for the Goodfellows and...

H: Oh yeah.

Q: ...pack them all up...

H: You didn't have to hardly ask any of the businessmen around here. They give you everything they had.

W: Very generous.

H: They were real nice.

W: Yes.

Q: And then, what, you took 'em all back to the fire station, divided everything up?

H: Fire station or...yeah, now I think we took 'em to the fire station. We'd get stuff for...we had to buy stuff too for the baskets.

Q: Uh huh.

H: And then fix the baskets and...

Q: Back then did you still sell the newspapers down on the street corner?

H: Yeah, at least back then. We sold newspapers, yeah.

Q: Where did you used to go to sell your newspapers?

H: Just on any of the one corners.

Q: Mmkay. 'Cause I remember a couple years...

H: You...you really see people then as they are then. When you're selling papers.

Q: ...I lived over by Dequindre and Fourteen. Yeah. Yeah, I've had people try to run me down on the street and...

H: Yeah.

Q: ...there's some strange...

D: I had a good time. I did it.

H: It's really...there's good people and there's bad people, and there always...

Q: Strange, yeah.

H: ...will be.

Q: Did you get involved in any of the political campaigns? Backin' anybody or passin' out leaflets or standin' at the...you worked the elections, so you didn't get into any of that kind of stuff...

W: Well...

Q: ... or did you?

W: A little bit. [Laughter].

D: Sometimes [inaudible]

W: Yeah.

D: ...political signs.

W: Yeah, on the fence...we'd let, you know, but we tried to...

Q: You had some very strong politicians here in Madison Heights.

W: Oh yes we did.

H: They were mean. Some of them were mean.

Q: Mmhmm.

W: Some were but the ones who really...

H: Did you ever...what was that judge's name?

Q: Lawrence?

H: Who?

Q: Judge Lawrence?

H: No, no, hell, he's...

W: Williams.

H: Judge Williams was a good judge. [There ain't nothin' about him?]

W: Williams? Was it Williams?

H: No, the one that lived down by the...in fact, the head of the DPW know about his house. Joe...wasn't it Joe? Or Tom?

D: [Bargo?]

H: Tom [Bargo?] bought...bought...

D: ...bought that...I don't know that [inaudible]

H: He had a hardware store on Rochester Road too. Hutchins? Hutchings?
Hastings? What the heck was his name?

W: I have no idea.

D: But as far as politics [inaudible]

W: Not really. We never, you know, we...

H: Aww, what the...Judge Broder was the old standby judge, though, back in the
township days.

Q: Now where was the court?

H: That was in the basement, in the library.

Q: They did everything there.

H: Everything. There's a library, there's city hall, the meeting room, the court.

Q: Did you ever take the kids to the library?

D: Oh, all the time.

W: Oh yes. Oh yes.

Q: What...what was it like back then?

D: It was [inaudible]

W: Small.

Q: They didn't do...they didn't do story hours?

W: No

D: N...we just went in after the school to [inaudible]

Q: To get books?

W: To get books to...

D: ...and...

W: ...for their projects and schoolwork...

D: ...yeah.

W: ...and things. But it was so small.

H: It was a room with the...

D: It was very small. No bigger...

H: ...built the wall here...

D: ...it was little.

H: ...it would be about as big as that.

W: It was very small.

D: In the basement.

Q: Okay. This...this room we're in here is like 750 square feet, so it's smaller even that.

W: Oh...oh yes.

H: [Inaudible] smaller...well...

Q: Like a good-sized bedroom.

H: ...put that bookcase there...that room over there...

W: Mmhmm. Mmhmm. But the ki...oh yeah, the girls always...

H: And then the jail was...

W: ...took advantage of the library [sic].

H: ...right around the corner. And our...we had a bathroom and a shower. Well that's where we had six showers, the fire department. They'd take showers down in the basement.

Q: Boy that basement got a lot of use, didn't it?

W: It sure did.

H: And the furnace room was down there. And the judge's private chambers was down there. And then the...the oil for the furnace was in the...the little black cutout room.

W: Well, don't...

H: Two big tanks of oil.

W: Royal Oak Township was pretty big, 'cause it expanded all the way over to Eight Mile Road.

Q: To Eight Mile, yeah. And they've got their own thing right now with the township down there.

W: Oh yes. Mmhmm.

H: They still got two sections of Royal Oak Township, one where it is, you know, on Eigh...Eight Mile Road, then one over on...what is it, Greenfield?

Q: Yeah, right.

H: Denzer's Forest there.

Q: Yeah.

H: The old people's home, isn't it?

Q: I think so, yeah.

W: Mmhmm.

Q: Yeah.

W: But we...we certainly...we...we were c...we were very happy when we became a city.

Q: Well you've seen it all.

W: I think it was really...it was well worth it.

Q: And you like the changes that you hear about today?

W: Oh yes. Yes. Yes.

Q: Well, we're glad you came back to talk to us today. We really appreciate it.

W: Well thank you for having us.

H: Hey, it's been fun.

Q: Good health to you and...

W: Oh.

Q: ...hope you enjoy your retirement.

W: Thank you very much. So far we have.

Q: Thank you very much for coming.

W: Thank you.

H: She's going to Israel in July.

Q: Oh you're kidding, really?

W: Yes.

H: Oh is that great. How have you...?

W: We are too.

D: Both of 'em are.

H: I'm goin' to a kabbutz [sic].

Q: [Laughter]

H: I always wanted to go to a kabbutz in the...

Q: How long're you gonna stay?

W: I think it's eleven or twelve days.

Q: Now this is...what, one of your daughters is going?

W: Yes, my daughter and her family. Her...

Q: Which daughter?

W: Cindy.

Q: Okay.

W: And her husband and son... daughter Rachel and son Mark.

Q: Okay.

W: Rachel's going to make her ba...bat mitzvah.

Q: Okay.

W: Over in Israel.

Q: Oh that's exciting.

W: Yes, very exciting. And they invited us to go.

Q: Well, I hope you have a good time.

W: So we're...

H: Thank you.

W: very excited about it. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW