

FRANCES DOOLEY

Interview by Lois Myers
June 20, 1995

TOPICS:

Sewers
Land Development
Recreation
Home Ownership
Senior Citizens Center

Transcription by John W. Weigel
January 7, 2001

Q: ...20th, 1995, and I'm at the Senior Citizen, and I have the pleasure and the honor of taping Frances Dooley for our Historical Commission and also for the fortieth anniversary our city is celebrating now. Frances, would you tell us a little bit about yourself? And about the city and when you moved here, and anything you want to add...

A: Well, I bought my house in, oh.

Q: ...you just say it...wait a minute...wait a minute. Anything you want to do, you just tell us and we'll put it on here, okay?

A: Mmhmm.

Q: Go ahead, it's yours.

A: Okay, I bought my house in February the 22nd, no...now I mess it up where you are...in '52, so I been here...

Q: Since...

A: ...since '52. And we bought the house new and it was a mess down in our neighborhood. We had to have our grocery...our milk carted in. We had...our oil had to be carried in from Main Street. And we had a bad mess there for a while.

Q: Now could I ask you a question? Were...were you there when they had the...they used to have the water? Everything would be blocked up. The sewerds [sic] and everything and the water would be in the streets and the kids used to get in there?

A: Oh, yeah, that...

Q: Okay, tell us about that.

A: Down Hudson...

Q: Yeah.

A: ...in my block, I...I'm in the second block, and the third block is where the school starts, and the people there, they get to their houses and had to go in the rowboats. Had to go in the rowboats to their house and one of our seniors, Elsie Walsh, was standing there sweeping the water out of her house. For many a time she had...

Q: Okay.

A: ...to do that. It was...it was really something.

Q: I remember seeing it...

A: Mmhmm.

Q: ...and seeing it in the papers.

A: Mmhmm. It was bad. Well, like when we first moved there, the oil company could come right to [Cowan?], then he'd...they'd have to come through the field and bring five-gallon cans of oil. They had...three men would bring five-gallon cans of oil and fill our fifty-gallon drum.

Q: Mm. Took quite a long time, didn't it?

A: Yeah. It...it sure did. It took quite a while. They were there for a long time. Milkman come from John R and Hudson. They had to go up a block and a half to bring us our milk. It was really something. And my...my son started school there and he went to through...through the grade school and the junior high and he graduated from Madison.

Q: Was that school across the street from you there, when you moved there?

A: No, no.

Q: It was built later?

A: Yeah, it was...when my son...he started in Roseville...

Q: Yeah. Mmhmm.

A: ...over on Lincoln, and then...then he went to Wilkinson and then Halfman was built. He didn't go to Halfman; it was built after.

Q: I don't think he went to Wilkinson, did he?

A: Oh yes, he...he...

Q: Now wait a minute. Now Wilkinson came in later because in high school, everybody used to go from grade schools to the high school, remember?

A: No, he went seventh and eighth and ninth at Wilkinson.

Q: Oh did he? Okay.

A: Mmhmm.

Q: He's not as old as I thought.

A: Yeah, he went seventh, eighth, ninth Wilkinson, and then he went to the high school.

Q: Oh.

A: He graduated from the high school.

Q: Mmhmm.

A: It was quite a walk, but now the kids get it easy. Their parents take 'em and bring ba...take 'em and then go pick 'em. They don't...they don't have to walk.

Q: Yeah. Yeah.

A: And I always did. And...oh I...I've enjoyed livin' out here. I...I really think it's a nice place to live.

Q: It is. You meet a lot of nice people out here, don't you?

A: Yes. Lot of nice people I've met here. And then I got connected with the senior citizens, and I've been here ever since.

Q: Good.

A: And [inaudible]

Q: And you lost your husband, when did you lose him?

A: And I lost my husband in '62.

Q: '62.

A: Uh huh.

Q: I was in [inaudible]. I remember seeing him...

A: Yeah.

Q: ...but that's just about it.

A: No, he was too sick. He didn't much get out.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. He...

Q: He drove a pickup truck at the...way back, didn't he?

A: No, uh uh.

Q: Well, maybe I have him mixed up with someone else.

A: No, he didn't have...we...

Q: Oh.

A: ...in the very beginning, we didn't have a car, but then my uncle passed away, and we got his car.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: And he worked at Beaumont Hospital for a while. He worked at Chrysler's and then he worked at Beaumont Hospital. He was a housekeeper there. And he was...that's where he worked when he died...

Q: Mmhmm.

A: ...it was at Beaumont.

Q: Do you remember the roads before they were paved, or...

A: Yeah, our roads were terrible, you...well, like I say, we couldn't even...we could only get to first co...block. You couldn't get down to my block at all when we bought. But we were very fortunate. We moved in February, and we caught a day when everything was froze, and we could get right up to our house. But then two days later the people had to carry their stuff and...down at the end of the Hudson.

Q: Mmhmm.

A: They couldn't get their...bring their furniture up there. It was too bad. And...moved...the roads were really bad.

Q: I...do you remember when we used to have the square dances, or was that before your time?

A: Before my time.

Q: That was when we was a township, I guess.

A: Yeah, it must have been, 'cause see I...yeah, we were still a township when we moved here.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was still...

Q: Well, this was back in the '40s, early 40s.

A: Yeah, I know; I wasn't here then.

Q: You wasn't here then.

A: No, I didn't come until '51.

Q: Oh yeah. Was...was John R paved at that time?

A: Yeah, but it wasn't wide like it is, I think just two lanes.

Q: Do you remember the Martin Line bus, did you ever use that?

A: Yeah, I used that quite a bit. We used to go to Royal Oak and...and...

Q: Highland Park. Right

A: ...down to Highland Park. Highland Park was the most...I used...I liked the Martin Line. They were real nice.

Q: They really give you good service, didn't they?

A: They did, yeah. That was really...Martin Line was good.

Q: You remember when the hospital was built over...[inaudible]

A: Well, I...

Q: [Inaudible]

A: ...yeah, I remember when it was built, but I can't remember when. But...

Q: Mmhmm.

A: Through since my stroke I...

Q: Yeah.

A: ...can't remember. But it's...can be [really?] nice, I think.

[tape turned off and on]

Q: Okay Frances, where did you go shopping?

A: We went to Hollywood Market on Lincoln and Campbell, and we had run a little red wagon, and we always got ready and took that, and went down and did our grocery shopping, and we come home. Summer or winter, we had...we went. We walked over there every Friday night. And then on Saturday was our day out, and we got ready, and my son said, "Let's go knock the candles, watch them knock candles down." So we went down to the Wayside Bowling Alley and we spent our Saturday nights there watching 'em knock the candles down.

Q: I'll be darned.

A: It was somethin' different.

Q: Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

A: Rather than sit home. That way, you know, when you don't have much, you have to do what you can do.

Q: That's right. And we were all ba...like that back in those days.

A: Yes, that's...we sure were.

Q: That's what made it easier to live, was everybody was in the same fix, about.

A: Yeah, everybody was in the same...

Q: Yup.

A: boat.

Q: I remember you when we used to work in PTA.

A: Uh huh. I was...

Q: You got out a little bit then.

A: PTA...PTA for a long time.

Q: Mmhmm.

A: And then I had the Marauders, Drum and Bugle Corps I was connected with.

Q: Yeah.

A: I was their Corps Mother, and I went on a lot of trips wi...with them that I enjoyed.

Q: Mmhmm.

A: Went to a lot of states that I probably never been...

Q: Right.

A: ...if it wouldn't been for them.

Q: Mmhmm. They had...I remember us making uniforms for 'em.

A: Mmhmm.

Q: You remember that?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, we used to get together in that little, old building...

A: Yeah, that was...

Q: ...on the corner of Gardenia and...

A: Uh huh.

Q: ...John R. Used to be where we used to go...

A: Yeah, that...

Q: ...and make uniforms for them.

A: Well, we used to have our...our rehearsals and practices, and we practiced out here in the back...

Q: Mmhmm.

A: ...and we met in [Lou?] house

Q: Right.

A: ...the rest of the week.

Q: Mmhmm.

A: With the Drum and Bugle Corps.

[tape turned off and on]

Q: Frances, where did you live before you moved out here?

A: Well, I lived in Detroit for twenty-five years, on a street called Hershey. And toward the end I bought a beauty shop. And I had a beauty shop on the...right on my corner. I just had to walk a block to work.

Q: I'll be darned. That surprises me.

A: Yeah.

Q: I never knew that.

A: And then from there, after I left my mother's, we...we bought a...we got an apartment on Montana and John R. And we lived upstairs in an apartment.

Q: Mmhmm.

A: And then when we saw in the paper that they had houses out in Madison Heights for sale, and they were reasonable, we come and saw it, and we bought a shell. And then we finished it, right up completed it ourself.

Q: Mmhmm.

[tape turned off and on]

Q: That's good. Go ahead. When did you...what...what did you just tell me?

A: I graduated from the beauty school in '38.

Q: Uh huh.

A: 1938.

Q: What's beauty school was that?

A: Delmar.

Q: Delmar.

A: Out on the boulevard.

Q: Mmhmm.

A: It was supposed to be one of the best ones.

Q: Good.

A: It was really good. I really enjoyed the work.

Q: Now you have a place up north, don't you?

A: Yes, we...my son bought a hou...bought eight acr...we have eight acres up there.

Q: Eight acres?

A: Eight acres. Mmhmm. It's mostly for deer hunting.

Q: Now where is that, hon?

A: It's in a place called Lovell.

Q: Lovell?

A: Uh huh. It's near...near Grailing.

[tape turned off and on]

A: ...I spent all my summers up there. I would go up on Decoration Day and come home in October. But since I had my stroke, I can't go no more. I just get to go weekends, when he can get off.

[tape turned off and on]

Q: Frances, how long have you been coming down to the senior citizen place?

A: Well, I been coming here since about '72, when we were in a little house on John...right on the...in front of the new building.

Q: The little white house?

A: The little white house. And we had three rooms in there, and they brought meals in once a week, and we had a lot of fun. We had a lot of...lot of parties in there. We...one party I remember, I'll never forget it, we brought rolls of paper, and we had partners, and they wrapped your partner in...in the...

Q: Mummy? Like a mummy?

A: ...like a mummy, and they give prizes for it. And it was lot of fun.

Q: Did you by any chance know my mother? She used to go down there a lot.

A: I think I met her a few times down there.

Q: Good.

A: I...I didn't go too much then, but I...

Q: Mmhmm.

A: ...I tried to get down there once a week anyhow.

Q: Then you saw that move in that first part of this home [inaudible]

A: Oh yes, I was right here when they moved in this...well before...before I went to little house, I went down when the city had it down on Gardenia and John R. And I met Bob [Geddings?] down there, and I wasn't old enough, but he told me to come, and I could visit him and help him, and I used to go down there and help him before we...before I moved in this...in this Center here.

Q: Mmhmm.

A: It was interesting. I enjoyed it.

[tape turned off and on]

Q: Well, Frances, I'm enjoyed talking to you.

A: Yeah.

Q: It's brought up a lot of good, old memories and I...

A: Oh yeah, a long...long time.

Q: [inaudible] years...

A: Yeah.

Q: I just...I...this'll be interesting for other people when we're gone.

A: [I love it?]. [Inaudible]

Q: Well, I have it on tape, and they'll have it in the library [sic] and...

A: Oh well, thank you very much.

Q: ...so forth and so on, use it for history. But every...every little bit helps.

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: Okay, and thank you so much again. God bless, okay?

A: Yeah, okay. Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW