

Transcript of Oral History Tape #63 Transcribed by Patty Rivera 10/1/03.

Interview with Judge Norman Sallawasser February 8, 1978.

Interviewers: Laurie Ann Radke and Jerrold Raymond Gustafson

Sallawasser: You know we had the National Recovery Act. Of course, I...of course you can read history on that. I mean that...that...that's nothing that happened here in LaPorte County just the same as it did in any other place you know. But uh...as soon as...of course uh...Hoover was in office...and uh...Roosevelt ran against him and uh...of course the times were bad and uh the Veterans made a march on Washington you know. And...and of course.

Gustafson: Did people from LaPorte County...were any guys from LaPorte County that were there?

Sallawasser: Yes...but uh...they...they uh...they did...they just went there on their own. They didn't make up any posse or anything like that. But they went on their own...[indecipherable]... But uh...it...it was not very much...but of course some of 'em...now you're taking the bigger cities...why my good gracious they didn't even have a place to live. They were living in the marshes and in the...in the slums and everything else and my good gracious they didn't have anything to burn for heat. And anything to eat. They were begging it all. That's where they got the idea you know for handing out apples and so forth. It got so that they didn't even have the apples to beg for. It...it...it was a...it was a disgrace to the...to the country that we got into that situation. But of course...uh the people have to...well was it aftermath to some extent of the aftermath...it was the aftermath of the aftermath of the first World War you know...[indecipherable]...the uh...first World War was over with in seventeen you know and they had it...[indecipherable]...piles of it over there. Everybody wanted to come home.

Gustafson: What do you think the impact of the Depression times were in LaPorte County? Did it set the County back economically very much?

Sallawasser: Oh, not as much I don't think as general over the whole country. I think LaPorte County weathered it fairly well considering.

Radke: Why do you think it weathered it? I mean what was so special about LaPorte County that it didn't...

Sallawasser: Well. Well I don't know. Uh...uh...you see uh...well it was a...it was a...it was a money...money...[indecipherable]... Of course when...when they got back...they were trying to keep the Veterans over there as long as they could because there wasn't any jobs open. See. They...they were...they had to re-tool. They were all tooled up for uh...war materials. And...and...the old Haskell-Barker Company over here was a big place over here. The Rumley Company over there had been troubling. It was called Rumley Company then. And uh...not Allis-Chalmers. That is Allis-Chalmers now but it was Rumley Company. Advance Rumley and then to Allis-Chalmers finally. And...and they were all tooled up for...for war materials you know...and...and...and uh...of course the war was over, contracts were canceled and...and uh...had no...no work. ...[indecipherable]...they wanted 'em home...tomorrow...see. And they couldn't do it. They couldn't handle 'em.

They didn't know what to do with 'em when they got here you know and of course what...when we went to war...oh they pissed us off and...[indecipherable]...and said oh this is wonderful and there's nothing too good for you when you come back see. And there...and there was nothing for us...that was good to come back see. Oh there was...it was...it was a problem. Now no work but...[indecipherable]...even...even the...[indecipherable]...fellas that stayed here and people had work here and they lost their jobs. There was nothing to do.

Gustafson: What was the mood like in the County?

Sallowasser: Huh?

Gustafson: What was the mood like? Were...were people mentally as well as physically depressed?

Sallowasser: I didn't get that.

Gustafson: Were...were people unhappy?

Sallowasser: Well...well yes. Well in the interim during the war you see we had prohibition. And that didn't help the situation...[indecipherable]...you know. They were making good money during the war and uh...and they were buying everything on time you know. And they were buying uh...investing in...in these bonds made by Strauss and Company and so forth and all these bond investments you know. And they were all first...hardly any first...before they were all gobbled up. Second, third, and fourth mortgages on the same building see. Everybody was taking these things. And after the war was over...the Depression...everybody was papering their house with all these bonds. They lost it all you see. And there was no...there was no guarantee or anything else by the government and I mean there was no insurance or any kind of anything and...and uh...they...those people they just lost everything they had it seemed like. But of course there were a good many good sound citizens...people in this county. And...and uh...they...they could see the handwriting on the wall to a great extent and...and they did uh...they saved their homes and uh...they uh...recovered fairly well. But uh...oh my...[indecipherable]...people would lose their homes and everything else and they didn't have anywhere to go. They just...they were just begging. Soup kitchens and everything else.

Radke: Did the county...[indecipherable]...soup kitchens and bread lines?

Sallowasser: No. Well, of course we had...we were on the go...we were on the WPA and WAP...they...they did a lot of public works and things like that you know. Well, a good many of them were unnecessary. But uh...my brother during that time he became the WPA Director of LaPorte County and then later on he became the WPA Director of the District and his office was in Gary. And uh...but uh...now this...this Kelly...you know they would get the project...the City Engineer they would build...they paved streets and things like that. And...and...and the...it was pretty good here.

Radke: Was WPA accepted by the people here?

Sallowasser: Oh yeah. Anything was accepted. Oh yeah. We...my good gracious...uh...we'd had...when they first started out they had the NRA they called it...National Recovery Act...you know. That was through Roosevelt. That was finally determined unconstitutional after a couple years. Oh everybody was...I mean some of the...the wiseacres you know...it was...it was working. It gave people confidence. That's what they needed. And the...[indecipherable]... And Roosevelt was the kind of guy...[indecipherable]...he'd get...get down with his fireplace you know and make...do those fireside chats you know. And the people just...oh they just idolized that man. Because he was doing something. He was trying something. And they...[indecipherable]...it damn near brought in some money...[indecipherable]...if they lived anyway see. And...and uh it was all right. Of course it uh...it was probably a little cheating going on here and there. It was for a pretty good cause...[indecipherable]... At least those people...they ate. And...and they had big parades. And they had banners. They would put...[indecipherable]... They'd have stars and things like that indicating you know that they were cooperating with this National Recovery Act and they were doing this and doing that you know. Everybody was...was anxious to have so many stars in their window and all those kind of things.

Radke: ...[indecipherable]...

Sallowasser: It bound them together. It's what they needed. They were just all separated you know. ...[indecipherable]...this is the end of the world. And...and...uh parades...my golly the parades that we used to have down the street.

Radke: In LaPorte?

Sallowasser: Oh yes. Sure. In Michigan City, too. Yes. The NRA. Parades. Everybody got out you know. Whatever they had. An old car. A horse and buggy or whatever it might be. They'd get out you know and hoop up...hoop up. Let's go together. Let's get together. We're fightin' together and all that stuff. It...it...it worked. It was all right. And uh...then the...[indecipherable]...they took it over. They had to get the cavalry out there you know in Washington and drive 'em out of the park there in uh...you know where the Washington Monument is there now?

Gustafson: You mentioned prohibition. What...[indecipherable]...

Sallowasser: ...oh yes. Prohibition. Oh my good gracious sakes.

Gustafson: Was that a popular act in this county?

Sallowasser: Huh?

Gustafson: Were people behind prohibition in this county?

Sallowasser: Oh yes. Yes sir. This...Indiana was the first and the last. The first to put it through and the last one to get it out of here. You know in the good times during the war...oh boy...good gracious sakes. Everybody was making beer. Everybody was making gin. And by golly they were...they were drinking their heads off you know. It was...it was pitiful. And uh...yes...they uh...the legislators they uh...they allowed uh...I think they

allowed beer first. And by golly they...they did it. There was a brewery was set up over in South Bend and by golly they'd come down here and deliver beer by the...by the case just like they did years ago.

Gustafson: Was there very much illegal activity and bootlegging in the county?

Sallowasser: Yeah. Uhm-hmm. Well. They were bootlegging...well I was...I handled a lot of bootlegging...I mean as a prosecutor. And uh...we did get a lot of it from Detroit...from Michigan...and to Chicago and back. ...[indecipherable]...was pretty bad too. By golly we'd confiscate the automobile and the cargo.

Gustafson: What did you do with the cargo then?

Sallowasser: I knew you would ask me that. Well...we'd send most of it...but uh...what we could keep would...all right that's as far as we go on that. But uh...hospitals got a lot of it. Hospitals got a lot of it. And we had a terrific flu epidemic during the war. Oh...[indecipherable]...

Gustafson: What do you remember about that?

Sallowasser: Huh?

Gustafson: What do you remember about that? The flu epidemic?

Sallowasser: ...[indecipherable]... Good gracious sakes...they died...[indecipherable]...died overnight. One night I know I was on...[indecipherable]... I was uh...Company Commander of a company down there. He brought in a man from Louisville and uh the next day the...the uh...Sergeant Major came to me and he said..."Captain this man uh...has no one to uh...write insurance for." That's the first thing see...[indecipherable]...he couldn't do it. Says he don't have anybody. And uh...so I uh...we sent him to the hospital. Told the headquarters to get somebody out there to work on it. He was dead the next day. That's quick. They had me to go there...they had me to go there to uh...to identify the body. And I'd only seen him one time. That's when they could tell when...[indecipherable]...sick. And boy they were bringing him...bringing him in to that room and I tell you what. They were bringing him in you know they were stiff but...but hand and feet and they were piling them up right on the side of the wall there. As fast as they could come in and I was supposed to identify him when they were bringing him in. I never did. I couldn't find him. I didn't know him. And we had to give him a military funeral somewhere in Kentucky. Oh that was....oh yeah...[indecipherable]...in LaPorte and over here to. But uh...I know my wife...we weren't married then but she was a Red Cross nurse or something like that. Everybody was something. Oh they had homes and...that they would have the sick people in nursing them. Yeah that was...that was the first time you ever heard of influenza. That's what they called it. Well...flu today too. Yep...[indecipherable]...

Radke: When you came back from the war, what was the atmosphere like in the county then?

Sallawasser: Well...when I came back I went back to college. I was in college when I volunteered. I'd had a...almost two years literary work. I was studying for pre-law. And uh...but uh...when I came back I came back and uh...the last of January and the first of February I went...I went to University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. I went back and uh...I went back into law school at that time then. But uh that was in eighteen. And then I graduated in twenty-one. But I....so I was...away from LaPorte County considerably.

Radke: Did you come back into the county after you graduated?

Sallawasser: Hmm?

Radke: Did you come back to the county after you graduated?

Sallawasser: Yes. I came right back...to my Dad's...in the law business. And he was...he was just finished campaign...the second campaign for the second term of office as Mayor. And uh...he was in his first campaign when I went away...away to school.

Radke: Did you help him in those campaigns?

Sallawasser: Yeah.

Radke: What kind....

Sallawasser: ...I couldn't help him of course in the first one very well. In fact...there was a little incident that happened there. I uh...my mother was very seriously ill too. She had a gallbladder operation. They didn't take it out...which they should have. And uh...she was in Chicago and my Dad all during the campaign would...would go to Chicago almost every day...[indecipherable]...and she...she was all right but she was quite sick. And that's...I went away too. And uh...and then that fall...I...I was twenty-one that fall of seventeen. And uh...I was...I was a Second Lieutenant then. And I had a good record. I hadn't been...didn't get any leave of absences or anything else so I...I...and my mother was home...just gotten home and was recovering...[indecipherable]... And uh...here's my first vote coming up...first vote see. It would be for my Dad see. And I...I put in a...application for furlough home to see my mother who was seriously ill. And then to make it good...also to go home and cast my first ballot for my father. And that...that...took the kabosh out of it see. Went all of the channels all the way up to the...to the uh General's office. Came back about a day before I was supposed to go...disapproved. See. That was tough. So I didn't get to vote for him even.

Gustafson: How was a political campaign run in those days? In the 1920s?

Sallawasser: Hmm?

Gustafson: How would a...how would a man go about getting elected to office....what kind of campaign would you run?

Radke: What kind of activities?

Gustafson: Would you make speeches or go out?

Sallowasser: Oh yeah. Oh more so. More then than now. Yeah we'd just go out to all these little places around my good gracious sakes. We'd...yeah...we would go from one uh...one township to another. You know that's townships then. More or less. Now even schools you know...[indecipherable]...they don't have. But uh...there were communities...[indecipherable]...Township and...and uh Springfield Township and Noble Township and all of those they had their little schoolhouses you know. And they had their little community festivals and so forth and so on. Yeah. Oh we'd fill those places when we'd go out there and campaign. That's the way we'd do it. They didn't have any radios you know. In those days.

Gustafson: Do you remember the women's suffrage movement?

Sallowasser: The what?

Gustafson: The women's suffrage...that women got the right to vote.

Sallowasser: Yeah. I know the Klu Klux Klan too. We had 'em here. We had 'em during the uh...we well...I remember especially during the Smith...the Alfred Smith campaign. Governor Smith. Ran for president? Hmm? I remember...and that was uh...that was the year that Hunkle (sp?) when I was a Deputy Prosecutor then and Hunkle was the Prosecutor and...so that's...he lost that campaign. I can remember 'em coming down Lincolnway in LaPorte with their caps and gowns...caps and gowns all...

Radke: Were they strong in the county?

Sallowasser: Huh?

Radke: Were they strong in the county then?

Sallowasser: Pretty strong all over. They were so strong that uh...my brother was running for the state legislature on...at that time...it was twenty-eight I think. He had been elected. He and Russell Smith. I don't know if you ever heard that name. He was Judge Smith. He was a Smith...he was Judge of the Superior Court over here. And uh...he...he...he was a graduate...both of 'em are graduates of the University of Michigan Law School and uh...I was uh...I graduated in twenty-one...and uh...my brother Milt graduated in twenty-three and so did Russell Smith. They called 'em the twins. And they both...after a couple years...they both ran for the legislature. On the Democratic ticket. And they both won...[indecipherable]...with Martin Kreuger...[indecipherable]...

Radke: Yes.

Sallowasser: Huh?

Radke: Martin Kreuger.

Sallowasser: Martin Kreuger. Martin Kreuger was a...a Senator. They were all...they all...[indecipherable]... And...and...and the Democrats were quite affluent in...right about that time. That's...and uh...that's when

uh...that's when during the Hoover and Coolidge days you know. Boy that's...and uh...and the Klu Klux Klan was pretty strong then.

Gustafson: What kind of activities did they have?

Sallawasser: Well...they would have meetings and they would parade but uh...oh once in a while you'd see a fiery cross somewhere and that's all...they were pretty decent.

Radke: They didn't....

Sallawasser: They was pretty decent about it...I mean...uh...I mean further south in Indiana you know they...those southerners they kinda...kinda got a little nasty and of course uh...when they got into the...[indecipherable]...well then of course it got pretty...[indecipherable]... But anyway...Smith ran against uh...ran against uh Hoover in uh...why that was in...that was in twenty-eight wasn't it? 1928. I guess that was. Smith ran...it was 1928 and uh...the Klu Klux Klan of course would be against Hal Smith. Catholic. First Catholic ever to run for president and uh...he uh...and on top of it...it's the first time LaPorte County ever used machines.

Gustafson: Voting machines?

Sallawasser: Voting machines. The first time. And excepting the counties...the cities...Michigan City and the City of LaPorte used the voting machines. And the people didn't know what to do with them. Didn't know what to do with 'em. They just went in there and...and voted it straight because they didn't know how to...how to split their ticket. They uh...and they just filled Smith. They voted Republican. My brother was on the ticket. But in the country...and of course the country would at that time and it is today some...it...it's somewhat Republican...taken all together. Michigan City is ordinarily generally fairly good Democratic and so is LaPorte to a great extent. But uh...they uh...oh my brother lost...I think he lost by eighty votes. And all...everyone was conceded with the exception of one fella and that was ...[indecipherable name]...Jack and he was running for the Clerk of LaPorte. That was the year in Circuit Court. And the only reason he was because he...he out polled 'em in the country cause that's where he was from and that's where all of his friends were and everything else and they...they could split their ticket very easily out there. But oh my...that was a real....[indecipherable]...of the Democratic party for seven years. They didn't come back until old Roosevelt brought 'em back. Radke: Did the Klan actually have political control? I mean were there people in power in the county that were Klansmen? Cause I know a lot of the state people...

Sallawasser: Yeah. Yes they uh...well...no we didn't feel that too much but I think that there were...we didn't know too many that were...were...but sometimes uh...we'd sit and stand along the side as they were praying and we'd look down at their feet and we'd try to recognize them by their feet and by their walks. ...[indecipherable]...

Radke: What was the uhm public opinion about the Klan? The general opinion I think?

Sallawasser: It was bad. It was bad.

Radke: And still the Klan survived though?

Sallowasser: Well what do you mean?

Radke: Well if the people you know general public opinion was against the Klan how do you think the Klan managed to uh stay in power?

Sallowasser: Well...well I don't know. They weren't that powerful but of course you know there was a lot of...there was a lot of strength in the Klan in Indiana but not too much in the northern part of Indiana. It was...it was central and further down because...because you see we had that DC and it was pretty strong in the State House.

Radke: Oh okay.

Sallowasser: Oh yes. But we...we didn't have any part of that up there. I...I say we...I wasn't any part of the Klu Klux Klan you understand. Yeah that was...yeah...well it was...it permeated to some extent and infiltrated into the prison here a little bit too but of course you see you had that...[indecipherable]...over here. He was trying to run the State House from the prison.

Radke: When you were helping your father in his campaigns and then later on when you ran your own...uhm...what kind of...I don't mean like campaign promises...but what kind of platforms were popular with the people then?

Sallowasser: Well...of course uh...as far as promise is concerned of course...the question...[indecipherable]...the uh...well the city...the city administration would have been an altogether different campaign than a prosecuting attorney or someone that would be running for state legislature and so forth you know. It would be applicable to the particular office that you were seeking. But uh...uh...

Radke: I just wondered what the people at that time wanted in a politician. You know...

Sallowasser: Well...of course you know the uh...uh...I can remember a little further back than...[indecipherable]...more or less as a kid they were talking about the centralization of government you know that was coming in and that the uh...the uh...Democrats were pushing home rule. They wanted to keep all that here. Cause every time we want to paint a...paint a room in a schoolhouse we don't want to have to go to Indianapolis and get permission to get it and come back and get...[indecipherable]...all over the State you know and so forth. That would go over big though when we go over to Pleasant Township you know and tell 'em...tell 'em that see. You don't want to have to go down to Indianapolis and so forth and ask the Governor and everybody else to get a bill through legislature before you can...before you can paper the office of your school superintendent and so on and so forth.

[Side one of tape ends.]

[Side two of tape begins.]

Sallowasser: I said we were criticizing the centralization of government and everything else and that the Republicans were doing that...taking...taking our rights and so forth away. And now...now it's almost the opposite. And that...and then when we got in...when...when...when Roosevelt got in and all and my good gracious sakes. Of course when he got in then the question of social security came along you know and we had to...and they had to sell that social security to the...to the people.

Radke: Was that popular with people up here?

Sallowasser: Yes. Yeah. Uh-huh. They say...they pictured this in a little diary you know it turned out to be. But...uh...they claimed that that would be self supporting. And they would never have to dip into our general tax and so forth and of course...pardon me I don't know whether they're gonna have to do it or not but it looks like they will. And still...but if we'd had social security at that time and if we had had that uh...uh...forty thousand dollar guarantee of investments you know like they have now...and uh...but we had nothing like that...nothing at all you know...[indecipherable]...a person. And if we didn't have any retirement age or anything. And...but uh...Roosevelt came along and talked to 'em about uh...having uh...[indecipherable]...they didn't even know what...what....[indecipherable]... He did a good job. He did a good job.

Gustafson: While you were serving as a Judge, what's some of the most memorable trials that you can remember in your terms? Any outstanding cases that come to mind?

Sallowasser: No. Well...I don't know. We used to...we used to try...I think we used to try more than they're doing today. You don't...you don't have...we...we never heard of plea bargaining at that time. We tried 'em. We...we had no per se uh...defendants have uh...have received many more rights you know under the interpretation of the Supreme Court. And uh...that pendulum swung pretty far the other way you know. It's beginning to come back. But when it started it got too far. It got outta hand I think. But the...that pauper attorney business and everything else is stupid.

Gustafson: In those days that a trial was shorter and...and quicker. When a man committed a crime the justice was served faster?

Sallowasser: Oh yes. Yeah. Very much more.

Gustafson: How 'bout the uh...seeing the Roosevelt era and all the trendsing and political scene that had come since then, do you think that politicians at the County level then were more honest or had more integrity than they do now? Or is there no difference?

Sallowasser: Well I don't know. But I uh...when I was in office I uh...I prosecuted two of my buddies. Sent one...well they both went to the penitentiary. Sent one of 'em well...no. No. Well the one that I said was elected. The only one was elected during that time. The only one that was elected during that...

Gustafson: ...[indecipherable]...

Sallowasser: at that time...[name indecipherable]...Jack. I tried him. They found...before a jury...they found him not guilty. That was the only...that's the only criminal jury case that I lost during that term of office. That was...he kinda...he...he went...he went a little haywire. It uh...he started to playing the horses and see there's certain monies are placed into the clerk's office. The county clerks office. And uh...it belongs to the clerk. It belongs to the clerk. Not the office. The clerk. And he...he...he used to keep that money see. If you have...you were inheriting a thousand dollars. They know where you are. And they...they deposit that in this estate...in your mother's and father's estate or something else and they just put it in there. A thousand dollars. And you get it. It's...[indecipherable]...and you get and give a receipt for it. After seven years if you don't come and get it there's a...[indecipherable]...in the State of Indiana. See. But the clerk. He can use that money to go seven years and he can collect interest on it see. That's...that was a...that was a...it was a pro and con question. But the...the...the decisions were somewhat uh...in favor of the clerk being able to get that...keep that money as far as interest is concerned. And uh...there was a lot of instances that way. Where they...they didn't know what to do with the money. That is...the attorneys and so forth and...and...it was provided by...[indecipherable]...put it into the clerk's office and that would absolve the administrator or the executor from...and then the...well he had a lot of this money. So he...he...he took...[indecipherable]...you know and played all the horses and lose it see. And he didn't have to. He really didn't have to turn that money over. Only when he went out of office or when the...when you come up there to ask for your money and you could identify yourself and who you are and were entitled to that money. And so uh...he...I took it before the Grand Jury and the Grand Jury indicted him. And we tried it and uh...he was...he was so popular that anybody...well not anybody else...but I think the fact that...he was a fine fella...good fella...well mentioned...oh by golly. And...and there was this out for the jury see. So they found him not guilty. But then I had another man who was the uh...Controller of the City of LaPorte. And uh...there was somewhat similar situation but I mean it wasn't...it was...he wasn't entitled to the money. But there was money...that he had in the treasury there in the treasury report come for uh...[indecipherable]...law bonds and uh they would pay them so much. And then when the persons would come in and ask that their bond be paid he had money there to pay these bonds. For the repair or the improvement of streets you know. And..and..it was quite a...three thousand dollars that he...he couldn't reach and all. So I...I...I indicted him too. But he pled guilty.

Gustafson: ...[indecipherable]...

Sallowasser: Cause he...he had been uh...the Controller under my Father. This was after my father went out of office. But anyway...he was a nice fella too. A good fella too...good you know. He spent other people's money you know and uh. Yeah it was too bad but he went to the penitentiary.

Radke: What kind of uh crimes did you try the most? You know...I don't...[indecipherable]... crimes are most popular when you were Prosecuting Attorney but has there been a change in the type of crimes?

Sallowasser: Well, during prohibition we tried a lot of those. Tried a lot of those.

Radke: Bootleggers you mean?

Sallowasser: Hmm?

Radke: You tried a lot of bootleggers?

Sallowasser: Hmm-hmm.

Radke: What about the depression?

Sallowasser: What?

Radke: During the...the...the thirties during the depression. Was there...

Sallowasser: Yeah. You know...well there was uh...a lot of it too. See there were a lot of 'em uh...they were making booze they called it. Home brew and so forth. Now they...[indecipherable]...do it a little better making gin and then they would get...finally they'd begin to sell it you know in their homes even. And we sent out search warrants and get search warrants and bring 'em in and bring all that rat gut in you know. And uh...gee nice people some of 'em...[indecipherable]...old. Good old people you know. Some old. Guys from...in fifty...sixty...seventy years old. Gee. It seemed awful to...[indecipherable]... Well.

Radke: What was the punishment for them?

Sallowasser: Oh it...give 'em a fine and so forth. Like this uh...like this...[indecipherable]...we had. He was a...he was a mayor of LaPorte, too. And uh...when you were mayor...I think I have mentioned this that uh...when you were mayor years ago you'd also be the city Judge see. And those people...those old people would come to him you know and he'd look at 'em and say, "Well now John, I just wanna tell you something." He says, "I'm gonna find you not guilty. But don't you ever do it again." But uh...well...it got so you know that uh...just like this marijuana question today you know. Why goodnight...get a whole five...six...seven years ago if a fella had...I don't know...he'd have a thimble full of marijuana. My goodnight they'd wanna send him away for eight-ten years and now...and now they wanna give 'em a big kiss.

Radke: Was there much of a juvenile crime problem when you were...

Sallowasser: Nuh-huh. Well they didn't...they didn't acknowledge it too much. No there weren't...well there wasn't opportunities in those too much. The kids behaved better...than you did....I mean uh...

Radke: Why do you think...I mean...why do you think...[indecipherable]...

Sallowasser: Well...I don't know. There was...there was more uh...uh...parental appreciation I think...[indecipherable]...than there is today and uh... Well the automobile of course wasn't quite that popular. There wasn't that many and there wasn't those opportunities and uh...you know...just like I read, the father came home and the boy was sitting on the davenport in the other room and the dad said to the mother, "what's the matter with Junior? He looks so mean and disgusted?" She says, "Whenever he wants to go to the corner drug store, he can't get his car started." He

couldn't walk down half a block to the corner drug store see. And uh...geez we walked all over. I used to walk to Michigan City from LaPorte.

Radke: What did you come to Michigan City for?

Sallowasser: Does that include in this interview here? We walked...a friend of mine and I walked to Chicago one uh...one spring vacation. We walked...well we walked to Gary the first day. Then we walked...we decided to walk to a place where we could pick up a streetcar. For a nickel to get where we wanted to get. We wanted to get to uh...an office. Uh..Rumley Company that we knew. A fella used to live in the...[indecipherable]...home and he...he moved their offices back to Chicago. And that's Rumley...that is Allis-Chalmers now. But we went up there...and was gonna visit him for a couple of days...so we sent a shirt or two and so forth to Chicago by mail and started to walk. That's what we were doing. We were practicing.

Radke: Practicing?

Sallowasser: We walked every morning. We'd get up at 5:00 and so we walked. Walk around the lakes and get to the High School and if we got there a little too early we'd hide and then just...you know we'd all congregate in one room in those days. You know to open up the school...our High School. It was uh...and then just as they'd ring the bell...[indecipherable name]...is his name. He and I would walk in the doors.

Gustafson: What was your boyhood like in LaPorte?

Sallowasser: Hmm?

Gustafson: What was your boyhood like? What do you remember about your childhood? Was it a happy time?

Sallowasser: Oh yeah. It was a home loving time. I had a brother and three sisters. We had a...a fine family relationship. Wonderful. Just marvelous.

Gustafson: Did you live in town?

Sallowasser: Hmm-hmm.

Gustafson: What was the town like in...[indecipherable]..

Sallowasser: Well we...well we just lived uh...I went to a parochial school. I'm a Lutheran. And I went to a Lutheran School. And a Lutheran Church. Still do. And uh...that was only four blocks from my house...from our house. And uptown. Lincolnway was only about three blocks from our home. I lived on Madison Street. We lived in Madison Street. Madison Street is where you come over the...the track. That's Madison Street. Of course now...it...it's Indiana Avenue. But we lived there. A nice home. And my father was uh...well he went into business I think when I was...I think probably when I was born but he had been clerk...County Clerk. He'd been in the clerk's office since he was about sixteen years old.

Gustafson: He started that young?

Sallawasser: Hmm?

Gustafson: He started that young? Was that common?

Sallawasser: No. Well my father was lame. He got infantile paralysis when he was five months old. And then he came...with his father...from Germany. And when he was five years old and he couldn't walk...but he uh...and he...he went to the military...militant school and they only had seven grades then and so my...my grandfather said, "Well I..." He said I think he uh...Herman...that's my dad's name...he said, I think he should have a little better education because of his infirmity. So he sent him one more year to public school. He graduated from public school. That was...that was about it you know...for...for anybody. They didn't have hardly many high school students. And then...well my grandfather was...he was a Prussian...he was a German officer in...in the Army over in Germany. And he came over and he got a big uniform and a big sword and everything else. So he uh...he joined the Democratic Party when he come over here. I guess that was usual for...for those people you know...oppressed and so he would...he would lead all these big parades and everything else in town with his big sword. So by golly...and they all had...[indecipherable]...and organizations and so forth. I guess he got my dad a job. And he was uh...he was a runner. Oh just a page boy in the clerk's office. Until I think he was eighteen or nineteen and then he became...[indecipherable]...deputy. He was deputy for eight years and then he was elected for eight years.

Gustafson: How did you travel around say when you were twelve or thirteen years old in LaPorte? Did you have horses? Were there many automobiles?

Sallawasser: Well...well when uh...well before the automobile time we had automobiles...[indecipherable]... We had an automobile as early as 1913. I remember I was the only one in the family that could drive. My dad couldn't drive and nobody else could so I...I was the king bee. No...nobody could go out unless I drove. But uh before that we...we had uh...we had a horse and a...and a surrey and we kept it...we kept the horse down to the livery barn which was only a couple blocks away. It was right uptown. And...[indecipherable]... Those days in nineteen...[indecipherable]...thirteen. I graduated from High School in 1914. That's a long time ago. That's before you were born. I think it was eight or nine boys in my class. I...I think it was less than twenty in the class...the High School class.

Gustafson: This is LaPorte High School?

Sallawasser: Hmm-hmm.

Radke: Were there very many girls?

Sallawasser: Huh?

Radke: Were there very many girls in your High School?

Sallawasser: More girls.

Radke: More girls.

Sallowasser: More girls than boys. Boys had to go to work when they got through with the eighth grade.

Radke: How many girls could go to school?

Sallowasser: Hmm.

Radke: Were there very many girls in the law profession do you think? Women in the law profession?

Sallowasser: In the what?

Radke: In the legal profession...women?

Sallowasser: Not in LaPorte. There's...there's one over here now. Mary Fox...[indecipherable]...

That's the only one that's been here. ...[indecipherable]...she lives half way to LaPorte I think there.

Radke: Was the legal profession one of the ideals of young boys then to go into? Did a lot of kids want to go into law? Or were you just special because you were raised in such...[indecipherable]...

Sallowasser: Yeah...yeah...yeah...my boys entered. Tom...I got another boy Jim...he's in Indianapolis. He's an engineer. He graduated from Purdue.

Radke: I mean like when you were growing up what would have been the goals?

Sallowasser: Huh?

Radke: When you were growing up. What were the goals, you know to become?

Sallowasser: Well we just...we had uh...two or more...two or more doctors. I guess another one was...[indecipherable]... One's a dentist. That's about all.

Radke: ...[indecipherable]...who were your heroes?

Sallowasser: Hmm?

Radke: Who were your heroes when you were growing up?

Sallowasser: Heroes?

Radke: Hmm-hmm...besides your father?

Sallowasser: Oh...oh heroes. You mean...outside our school. I thought you meant going in school.

Radke: Well, a lot of the kids...you know the heroes sort of show a lot of what the kids at that time want to become.

Sallawasser: Well. Well I know I had...I had a lot of uh...a lot of respect for my...for my father. He was...he was a disciplinarian and uh...a kind, thoughtful, and uh...generous...and my mother just like it. She was...[indecipherable]... Yeah...[indecipherable]... My dad lived to be eighty-four. My mother lived to be...[indecipherable]... I had a nice family. ...[indecipherable]... I know I'm the only one left. I had three children...uh three sisters. They're all passed on now. And one brother and he died suddenly. It was...it was a dandy. Oooh. He was about three and a half years younger than I and he died in sixty-two. Just...he was in partnership with me after my dad died. He was smarter than a whip.

Radke: What do you think have been the biggest changes in the political theme in the county. You know I can tell you've been a very acute observer of everything that's been going on since you were a little kid. What do you think have been the biggest changes or any types of events or the way things are done now? What do you think has been lost...[indecipherable]...

Sallawasser: Well...I don't know. It's been kinda gradually over the years. Well I think that...I think generally that people has...have lost uh...a lot of respect...some respect anyway...more respect for their government than years ago. I think that years ago like the President said what they did was it. That uh..

Radke: Why do you think that....

Sallawasser: ...but that...that...that's to be expected I guess.

Radke: Why?

Sallawasser: They uh...communications. And uh...the news media and all that have changed that I think...you know...the President and Congress...they're always having trouble with the news media. They fight all the time. But it's all right too. You have to have...

Gustafson: What's the single most exciting or memorable event that you can recall? ...[indecipherable]...

Sallawasser: Well of course uh...of course I was here when the first World War broke out. I was here when uh...the uh...the Armistice was signed. You know we had...we had two armistices. Armistice was a cessation of hostilities in the first World War. We had that twice. We had one and that was a false alarm. And then the...a couple days later...it was ratified. But uh...then uh..I think uh...what was it...they called it D-Day did they when uh...they had hostilities with uh...Japan. That was...we were...well we were still pretty...[indecipherable]... They were pretty nasty you know. All the way...[indecipherable]...and uh...but that was uh...that was a nice...[indecipherable]...you know all this...caught attention all the time...[indecipherable]... Of course uh...we never expected anything like that. ...[indecipherable]...of course we didn't think that anybody would do that to the United States you know. My good gracious...[indecipherable]...the big boy you know. The big...with the big club...and here's somebody comes along and does that to us...but uh... Those things had quite a..effect upon a person.

Gustafson: What do you think the future for LaPorte County's gonna be? Do you think uh...the County's gonna keep on the same or...what...what do you think we can look for in...in the future? Do you like the prospects for the people living in LaPorte County?

Sallowasser: Well, I don't know. I don't know that uh...I know that we were made up that way. I don't think we really have any precipitous change. I think that whatever it is...it'll be gradual. I...I would say that that would be the history of LaPorte County. I...I...I think we're that way...I think we're just kinda...well let's see...let's think this over a little bit and uh..uh..uh...[indecipherable]...a little better footing. That's what I think. That's the general makeup of LaPorte County.

Radke: Why do you think we're so conservative?

Sallowasser: Hmm?

Radke: Why do you think that...[indecipherable]...

Sallowasser: Oh I don't know...that's just my thought...

Radke: ...[indecipherable]...I was just wondering...

Sallowasser: Yeah well. ...[indecipherable]...I don't think.