

Interview with Walter "Dude" Calvert and Clement "Clem" Spychalski. January 1978. With Laurie Radke, George Schultz, Elizabeth Smith, Bernice Tolchinsky and Kenneth Vanderkamp. Transcribed by Laura Wadsworth.

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Speaker 1: (indecipherable) And of course, across the railroad (indecipherable) catch some crabs, build a fire, cook them.

Speaker 2: Was that..was that Cheney....Rommel Ditch....Cheney Run.

CS: That was Cheney Run...Rommel Ditch...

DC: Was farther North...

CS: Yes, that crossed Lafayette at Allen and Barker Avenue at Maple. This was part of Cheney Run. We called it Dinny's Ditch because the fellow, his name was Stratton, lived on...what was that...Tilden Avenue, South of the railroad, I don't know why they started calling him Dinny, but everybody knew him as Dinny Al Stratton, he was rather dark complexioned, and also, another peculiar thing about him, he had 6 toes and they had a picture of him his uh, his bare feet in the drugstore...

SP2: That was...the drugstore there on 11<sup>th</sup> and Franklin

SP1: 11<sup>th</sup> and Franklin, yeah, that's right.

SP2: He was sticking up there with his feet, nobody...they'd come looking, walk up, and count his toes. Well, I think there's plenty out in the...people are building homes...people building in the Eastport area now, and they can't get that odor, the cesspool odor out of their basements they don't know why, because...but they forget about Rommel Ditch that came through there. I remember that came from way out on the West South yards there, clear down and meandered out, clear out the Brinkman's and Eastport, to Brinkman's (indecipherable) but you had every fifty feet, you had an outhouse that straddled the ditch, remember?

CS: Yes, I remember the neighbor's South of us had one.

DC: Yes. You had an outhouse; I remember that and pretty little bridges that went across if you wanted to go visit the neighbors. But for fifty years you had, how many outhouses were there...a thousand?

CS: Oh, more than that along...

DC: Over a thousand outhouses...

CS: You mean along the creek?

DC: Straddled the creek.

CS: That I wouldn't say...maybe not that many...but there were...

DC: Only 900 maybe. There was every fifty feet there was one for this house and one for the other house, and then you'd, on a nice hot, summer night, we'd be up in the North end of town, here you take the streetcar, or you start walking south on Franklin and you'd hit 11<sup>th</sup>, and you'd get a very familiar odor, and the farther you got...you got around Barker Avenue, it was blue.

CS: I know, we lived pretty close to the ditch on (indecipherable) we lived on Fulton street. But my parents moved there to that house in 1899, that creek was clean, and the neighbors, this was before they had started building outhouses on the creek, that people drew water out of the creek to do their washing, because it was soft water, where all...the other their other water supply was well water, there was no city water out there, but that was clean until the Pier Marquette came through and built their depot and then they ran a sewer from their depot to the creek.

LR: When did the Pier Marquette come through?

CS: Pardon

LR: When did the Pier Marquette come through?

CS: About 1903, I think it was, uh, 19 hundred..

DC: But the people can't realize out in Eastport when they're building that if they built in the valley, in the valley of Rommel Ditch.

CS: It crossed, it crossed Michigan right there about Hendricks Street.

DC: You know, the other night when I was talking down there, talking about the old fire department, I think I brought up the fact that attached to the fire department, was the barn. The stables were right there. And, uh, we, uh, it was like living in a barn, I mean, that dog gone stable odor just permeated, but you didn't find it objectionable because you had to live with it. You had outhouses you had these darn stables. We had a lot of prize odors around town, but somehow, you didn't find them too offensive, because you were stuck in the middle of them anyway. But it's no worse than living over in South Chicago with that oily smell, they're stuck with that and we were stuck with the others, but I mean, it isn't as bad...at the time at least, as you think it was.

CS: Well, it wasn't that...you take now in this area here, you go down some of these alleys and you will still see barns that housed horses and carriages and they had a loft where they kept the hay. There's quite a number of them in this area.

DC: There's an awful lot of them over there. Before, uh, before John Barker moved his factory too close to Wabash Street, apparently all along there were barns, looking at the old maps on the West Side of Wabash Street.

CS: Two of my uncles owned houses West of Wabash on the North side of 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Barker bought them out when he expanded.

DC: Yeah, yeah, well then they closed 6<sup>th</sup> street didn't they?

CS: Then they closed 6<sup>th</sup> Street West of Wabash.

DC: See he had quite a few...what'd he have...he had 6<sup>th</sup>, no, yeah 5<sup>th</sup> it was closed at 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>...

CS: 7<sup>th</sup>...those three. See 8<sup>th</sup> was open and 4<sup>th</sup> was open.

DC: But that was (indecipherable) when they wanted to close those streets, and I raised so much hell that...about Smith Brothers, the city, you know, selling the property down there and everything, and I thought I'll look it up see what... my dad was on the Council at the time. When the city sold the land to the Smith Brothers so I don't talk about it anymore. But, uh...oh, talking about closing streets, now that's pretty hard to do, you know, people raise hell when they want to close the street. But, I've had my dad come home and say well, we're going to do something tonight, you know, we're gonna close 6<sup>th</sup> Street, or we're gonna close 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and I suppose there'll be a lot of hell raised, chances are we're never gonna get it through the Council, or else maybe my dad was against it, and he'd say, well, we got it all set up we got enough folks now to keep them from closing the street or doing this or doing that. The next morning, I'd say well, pop, what happened last night? Well, he said, they got it closed. Well, what happened? Well, he said, John Barker sent John Miller, John Miller was a Councilman at the same time from the West Side, he worked for John Barker, so John sent him out of town for three days so he can't vote, you got a tie vote, the Mayor voted, the Mayor would vote for John Barker and they got the streets closed.

CS: I remember John Miller, he was a very good-looking man

DC: He was a fine fellow, too. A very fine fellow from the West Side. I guess that's the whole history of the town right there, we've come to the end, George!

LR: Talk about the games again.

DC: The games?

LR: Yeah, we didn't get that on tape. The marbles, and the manure throwing, and the....

DC: No, we got....well, yes we did, but only in wintertime, only in wintertime.

CS: Now you started playing marbles soon as it warmed up in the Spring, and you'd played marbles until about oh, May or June, and then, the summer entertainment started, then baseball and swimming.

DC: We had roller-skates, we had a season for roller-skates, and it just was like...I mean you have base...basketball, football season today. I mean all the kids were throwing the football today, now next spring they'll have the baseballs out and uh, or rather we have basketball to go through yet, well, we didn't have much of that, we didn't have any basket...basketballs, we just uh, that's brought up here tonight, the league games around here when you played even from out of town, they started out with two baseballs, that's all they had. I remember playing over...we used to play baseball, where we'd take

on the Degos, and the Syrians and the Camel Drivers from the North End, and uh, we'd play over, into 7<sup>th</sup> Street at the Harbor there, and you'd knock the balls in the Harbor, then you'd have to wait till...have to wait till the ball drifted up close enough that you could get it, and uh, we played a couple times when the old Roosevelt and the United States were still parked...they parked for the winter over there where the Standard Oil is now, you know, they parked there. And we could get ahold of that line, maybe two or three of us get ahold of the mooring lines and we could pull that...we could pull it into the dock, you know, then the kid'd shinny down the line, and we'd hold the line so he wouldn't go into the lake then he'd go down and get the ball, and we could start the game again. I can't think of any crazy stuff around the Harbor.

LR: Dude, where'd you get your baseball bats? Was there somebody in town that made them or did you buy them?

DC: No, we bought the baseball bats, uh, the

CS: You could buy 'em for fifty cents...a real good bat for 50 cents.

DC: Then they had...we had some good ball teams here, uh up where the Waterworks is now, there was a big ball diamond there, there was a big ball diamond there, and uh, we had some good teams.

CS: About, uh, yeah (indecipherable) that's part of the deal right there, and uh, the Armory property. You remember Popcorn John?

DC: Yeah, we were talking about that...I was talking about that, then somebody the other night...oh I was out to lunch with Babe Brown and we got to talking about Ol' Popcorn John.

LR: Who's Popcorn John?

DC: Popcorn John, he had a popcorn wagon on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Franklin, one of those that had two wheels on it you could push if you had to. And, uh, he was there for years and years, and I mean you didn't go to the ballgame, you dad take you down, and you'd only go along so you could have some popcorn. And, uh, but he was at every picnic and every festivity we had, well, Popcorn John was there, and he left town here eventually, a reasonably wealthy man, you didn't know what profit there was...and then uh, several times, thinking about Popcorn John's wagon...remember that he had a beat up roaster with a round little thing, it went around and around and see the roasting was done by steam, I mean you didn't have electric...you couldn't plug into electric thing, you just had to have a little steam on there, well this little thing that roasted the peanuts went round and round and he'd always have a little clown doll on one end of the crank, see, and as this thing went around, the clown would go around and go around.

CS: As he was turning it.

DC: Then you'd always hear that whistle, the steam whistle.

CS: You know, Popcorn John on Sundays during the summer, he had a route that he followed, and I remember every Sunday morning, at about 10 o'clock, he

would stop at the corner of Barker and York and everybody would swarm around there, especially the fellows who were about 16 years old or older and they all had money to spend and they'd buy popcorn, peanuts, and he also had a can of ice cream in there and sold ice cream cones.

DC: But when he left town, he left town a reasonably wealthy man. He was the only popcorn wagon in town that I remember.

CS: Oh, he was, yeah for many years, and he was a rabid baseball fan, every time they had a baseball game down at the North end he was there and he accepted bets and everything else on his team.

DC: Well, I understood that he, evidently, he went from here to Gary.

CS: I didn't know that, I didn't know what became of him.

DC: His son got involved in a murder over there that took every dime he had, so that was the end of Popcorn John.

LR: What year is this (indecipherable) was Popcorn John here?

DC: Oh, he was on 6<sup>th</sup> Street as long as I can remember, he had to be there pretty close to the turn of the century, at, on 6<sup>th</sup> and Franklin, right there where the bank is now.

CS: He was there many, many years. At least from 1910 on.

DC: Yeah, yeah, I don't remember any time that he wasn't there, but everybody liked him, everybody knew him. The girls, since he was so popular, because of all the horse manure. I was thinking about one time, uh, oh John Fent was telling me, he got to be Alf (indecipherable) favorite. John Fent when he was a kid, of course, John Fent's up there at Michigan and Washington, and, uh, so they had a surrey with a finch on top and that was their best carriage, and I mean, for really, if you really wanted to put it on, you'd rent that one, take along. Well, talking about the York Street Hill reminded me of it. There was this woman up on York Street Hill, that'd want to go shopping, she'd call Alf and say send out the surrey. So he put, he was kinda grooming John Fent to be a horseman, I mean...you know Alf knew horseflesh, he really did, and so he wanted him to be his protégé'. So, when this woman called for a driver too, why he'd put a cap on him and the leather gloves, and John would drive this big surrey that had a beautiful team of black horses on that thing. John used to say that he'd come down Franklin Street and people would just stop and look at this... look at this wagon coming, this buggy coming down, this surrey coming down Franklin Street and John was so proud because they'd whistle, you know and everything at this beautiful thing. But John said he didn't find out till years afterwards, this was one of the madams from the houses up on York Street there. So then men were whistling at her, she would tell you. They had a whole group of houses of prostitution on York Street and York and Main up there at one time, it was a regular settlement there. And so, that was why all the boys were stopping traffic, because of her, not because of the horses at all.

CS: I can remember when salesman came to Michigan City and they would first stop at Earl's and pick up their buggy and horse and make their rounds driving around.

DC: We used to, my dad on a Sunday, he'd go down and get a team, and then usually we'd drive out to Monaghan's..out to Monaghan's Farm, which was a pretty good, pretty good trip out to there and have a picnic out there and he'd unhitch the horse and tie it to a tree out there, so...that's a good day.

CS: I remember Clarence Monaghan.

DC: Yeah...we, uh, well, I bought a house out there right across from there, at one time, I never did like it out there, so, uh. In fact, when I went out to California, one of the reasons I wanted to go. Well, that's money and now you know there's a (indecipherable) orchard out there. Well, a lot of those trees could be traced to Johnny Appleseed, he came here from Sauktown, which is over, well, as you drive to South Bend now and go past the old Studebaker proving grounds, you know it's a park now, there's a sign that says Sauktown. And that's where Monaghan, when they came from the East with his father, they stopped there for awhile, and Johnny Appleseed had set out the orchards over there. See what Johnny Appleseed would do, he'd go around where there was a cider gin or something like that and he would get all of the seeds, and he'd get a great big bag of seeds, and start out planting, and so he put in orchards. So it's...it can be believed that they brought those trees over from Sauktown, they had to be some of Johnny Appleseed's stuff.

CS: Any of you people know where Sauktown is in LaPorte County? You don't know?

Group: No..where is it?

DC: Well, right at the end of the proving ground....

CS: No, it's quite...quite a ways from there at least 4, 5 miles from the proving ground.

DC: You make a turn there don't you?

CS: You make a turn to the right, to the place that used to be, place on uh, that road used to be called Puddletown. My mother went to Puddletown School. There was a big hollow in there, and in those days, I guess, there was water there all the time and it was just a little settlement and they had a school on top of the hill. She lived south of there on Sauktown Road.

DC: Yeah, Sauktown, and Puddleville, and Bootjack.

CS: Bootjack is just East of Rolling Prairie.

DC: You know where Bootjack is?

LR: Yeah.

CS: See, she knows.

LR: (indecipherable) the historical museum.

DC: Yeah, that's that thing the...every house had it's piece of wood like this with a notch in it, and a board here so it's up a little bit, and they put it on the floor and put your boot of your...your heel boot in there and pull your boots off. So, these were where the roads came together looked like a bootjack, so that's why they called it Bootjack.

CS: One, uh, summer when the boys were about, oh...10...12, 13, years old we made it a point to visit every little town that was in LaPorte County, everything that was on the map, took us, I don't know how many Sundays. But, we visited some of them that are marked as towns on the map, and nothing but railroad crossings, but we made 'em all.

DC: Well, I think that uh, years ago in the days of the wood burning locomotives, you had to have a town every 8 miles because they could only carry enough wood to go 8 miles, see. So all these little towns, oh I can't think of the names of them all along here. Well, from Log City, from Log City all around down in the Burdick, Otis, some of 'em stayed and some of 'em died.

CS: Log City, Burdick, (indecipherable) my dad lived on a farm there...Otis.

DC: Every eight miles they had to stop and load up with wood again to get themselves enough steam to go another eight miles.

CS: That building, uh, in Northwest corner of the intersection, no, Southwest corner of the intersection, was a hotel in the early days.

DC: In Burdick? Where was that?

CS: No, in South...in Otis.

DC: In Otis, oh.

CS: They had quite a bit of traffic there, uh, people would come from the East on the New York Central, and then they would stop in Otis and wait for the (indecipherable) train to come to Michigan City.

DC: Otis, uh, historically Otis is quite, quite prominent. That, of course, was your big Polish Settlement. And that was the, that was the first church in this area, I don't know what you'd (indecipherable) higher churches.

CS: Yes, it was even older than the South Bend Church.

DC: Yeah, well, see uh, most of them, you know, when you meet a Polish family in town here you can say, well, your family came from Posen, didn't they? And they say, you know, how do you know? Well, because most of the people in Otis came from Posen, in the area of Posen. Then your next question is are you Catholic or are you Protestant? Because Posen from one week to the next you know, the Germans would take it over and it was Protestant, then the Russians would take it over and it was Catholic, so it was changing so, but uh, Otis, the land around Otis is very much like it was in Posen. And, uh, I can't think of some of the other names there in Poland. But anyway, they settled

there. As compared to the Germans coming into Waterford. They settled there, and uh, they made furniture and they were farmers and then, uh, they stayed there until the Rummley Boys came and then they went to work in LaPorte, they started up the parish there. And then when John Barker got going, they started up the Catholic Parish here from LaPorte, from LaPorte.

CS: Michigan, Michigan City, Michigan City was many years before the LaPorte Parish.

DC: And then, and then, uh, the same..an offshoot was the uh, South Bend when Studebaker started, you got four parishes in South Bend now, but they were all really offshoots of Otis.

CS: Uh, course, one of the, here's one of the reasons that they settled around Otis, because back when they came here, they didn't have much of anything and uh, the early settlers logged that area and that land right around Otis isn't too good for farming, and the original settlers started selling that land and the Polish immigrants bought it because it was within their means, it didn't take much money to acquire the land. But the most of 'em, made uh, they scratched out a living there, and a pretty good living.

DC: Yep, yep. Well, when uh, when your Germans were...most of the Germans that came here were Prussians. The first ones were from Northern Germany and Prussians. And they came here directly. A lot of the, a lot of the uh, immigrants would have to stop coming from New York and make a living maybe for one generation before they got this far West. But most of the Germans here came direct and they had a little money. 'Course, they came on boxcars, and when they did, they would be met at the railroad with a...by a man with the name of George Kull. K-u-l-l, that was an old name, and he'd meet them and then they'd take them, he had a wagon and he'd load the women and the kids in the wagon along with their big bundles and this is the stuff they sat on in the boxcars when they came from the East Coast, and then he'd take them out to Waterford. And they'd put 'em up with the families there until ...but the men would walk. But I think, what they, how they got out there, they went out Michigan and then you took a cutoff there at around Cleveland Avenue, and then that cut straight across to Waterford where they wanted to go.

CS: Didn't have to go to Johnson Road.

DC: No, I don't...that'd be cut off...

CS: I wonder if he was uh, father or grandfather of Oscar Kull, the mailman. You remember Oscar Kull?

DC: I remember the name of Kulls. There were some Kulls on 5<sup>th</sup> Street, too. The Kulls, and ooh, uh, one of the girls works down at...Knellers and some of them, I think the Kulls, and the Knellers, and Zorins, they were all involved in that. Zorin...Mrs. Zorin was a Kneller. And, uh, Mrs. Zorin, oh, a story was told me...Bob Zorin sold his father's beer, Phillip Zorin's beer, you know, it was good beer, and uh, well, to make the story longer, which made Franklin Street longer was the fact that they didn't want, the Mayors didn't want any saloons on the second floor. So that's why...they had 80 saloons to spread out so they had to go farther along on Franklin Street. But anyway, it was Bob Zorin's job to go around call on the saloons and sell beer. Well, if you happened to be out at a party some night, and either Phil Zorin or Bob Zorin



were there they'd...if they were having a pretty good time and they thought you were a pretty good guy, they'd say Clem, why don't you open a saloon. Well, I haven't got any money, I can't open...We set you up with a saloon, we'll, you pick out the location or we'll pick it out, build you a building, but you sell only Zorin's Beer. So this is the way. Well, Kneller's Saloon was on 5<sup>th</sup> and Wabash, and one morning uh, Bob went in there to take his orders for beer from Mr. Kneller, and Mr. Kneller says, Bob, I had a new baby last night. And he said, would you like to come up and see it? 'Course they were all born at home those days, right in the same bed as the other kids, and uh, so he went up and cute little girl. Bob said, you save her for me and I'll marry her. And he did. Got married. If you knew Mrs. Bob Zorin, she was a fine, grand woman.

CS: I can't uh, I didn't know her.

DC: Yeah, he saved her. But Bob was a great deal older than his wife, but during the depression, during the depression, when, uh, the Trust and Savings Bank went broke, she could have got out of there scott free, but she stayed in there and it cost her a half million dollars or so. Of course, she didn't have to do it, but she did it and it cost her half million dollars to pay up some of the accounts went that bank went broke.

CS: To protect the rest of the...

DC: Protect it, and of course that was Trusell Vale's Bank, you know, Trusey, you got Trusey and Will well, when Mr. Vale Sr. let Will have the big bank, then Trusey got mad so he had to give Trusey a bank. Well, Trusey was a little bit easy with his money, and....

CS: So that's how that...uh, why the Trust and Savings was started. I've often wondered about that.

DC: Yeah, Will's, if my brother's going to have one, I'm going to have a bank. He was very lenient, very...that was the problem. I mean, Will was kinda conservative, but Trusey was kinda flashy, and, uh...

CS: That saloon at, uh 5<sup>th</sup> and Wabash did quite a business, that was a popular place with the factory, being that near the car factory, the fellows would come in there at uh, ....

DC: Oh, yeah, yeah, that was a good spot. Right at 6<sup>th</sup> street there, you know, 6<sup>th</sup>, that was the gate, the gate was on 6<sup>th</sup> Street, remember?

CS: Sure 6<sup>th</sup> Street, this one was at...what was this one at? This one was at 5<sup>th</sup> and Wabash.

DC: This was 5<sup>th</sup> and Wabash.

CS: And of course another favorite stop was Levi Legesse on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. 8<sup>th</sup> and Chicago.

DC: Oh, yeah, yeah. Levi, he made a fortune at that place there. Well, of course, you had the factory right across there, and they'd always keep either an open window or break a window out there, and then they'd come up to that

window and whistle at Levi for a package of cigarettes or a bottle of pop or whatever you wanted and an awful lot of money went through that window on the North side.

CS: But that was the day of the free lunches. They had, this was before prohibition, about every saloon had a free lunch. They had a counter, one part of the, usually near the back door, and I believe Legesse, I was told that he had hot liver, hot beef and cheese, bread and crackers and many of the fellows that worked at the car factory wouldn't carry a lunch, they'd go over there and get a bottle of beer maybe a shot, and eat their lunch there. But, of course, in those days, liver was very cheap, in fact they almost gave it away, I know they did because my dad came in the store more than once he'd look in the case and see the price of liver, he'd say, that much for liver! They used to give us that!

DC: They did, yeah. Get a nickel's worth of liver for the cat, remember? It was gonna be thrown out anyway...and a nickel's worth of liver for the cat.

CS: And get enough for the whole family. And now, it's a must food for many people.

DC: Again, hanging around 5<sup>th</sup> and Franklin...Maxey Blumenschwack, you remember Maxey Blumenschwack, he had that pennant concession at the bridge down here. Well, he'd have a cart, a two wheel cart full of the Chicago Tribune, he'd park it right out in front of the Orpheum Theatre, then all the theatre goers would come out and get the..get the Chicago Tribune. Sunday morning papers. Well, we all knew Maxey pretty well, and he trusted us, so we'd go over and we'd get a handful of 'em and we'd start down Franklin Street...Sunday morning papers, you know. Then we'd stop in Mathias' Saloon, course we weren't allowed in there, but we were businessmen cause we were selling papers, little kids, we'd go in there...Sunday morning papers, go to all the guys sitting at the bar and then we'd go down to the free lunch place and make ourselves a sandwich, you know, and nobody cared. And out we'd go then we'd go down to 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and you'd turn 4<sup>th</sup>, no matter whose saloon that was over there, we'd go up that three or four steps, walk the full length of the bar...Sunday morning papers, 10 cents, you know, then make ourselves another sandwich because we were starving! Just cause we could get them free, we'd get 'em, you know.

CS: Well, we used to make the one on 6<sup>th</sup> and Franklin with the evening news.

DC: Oh, the Burkehart Saloon?

CS: Burkehart, see 6<sup>th</sup> and Franklin where the telephone office is now.

DC: Yeah, that was a good spot.

CS: See, you'd walk in the front door and we'd...cause we'd do that, with uh, go down with the (indecipherable) sometimes two or three of us would go in with the same bunch of papers.

DC: Yeah. We didn't care about the free lunch, we didn't care...

CS: (indecipherable) The first fellow he would probably sell a few papers, and the rest of the ones, they all had papers, but we'd go past the lunch counter and grab something, and they never said anything.

DC: They never said anything, no, they didn't care. They had a barbershop in the back big case there, with where you had your shaving mug with your name on it, remember? Great big cabinet there, and your shaving mug and shaving brushes right there.

CS: Oh, sure, people had their private mugs and shaving brushes in the barbershop and you went into the barbershop (indecipherable)

DC: One whole side of the glass was just a glass, you know, and very fancy...

CS: Their name in

Side two of tape

Unknown speaker: The tavern was also a barbershop?

DC: No, the barbershop was in back. But you had access to it. And then they'd...saloons usually had family entrances with, you know, you'd go in with your wife, they had table placed in the back, where you could uh, with uh, wasn't used very much. Most wives wouldn't go...

CS: In those days, women didn't go in the saloon.

DC: They didn't go in the saloons, no, but they did have family entrances, but uh, you didn't go into saloons, no.

CS: I can remember a pitiful sight, Rottenthaler had a saloon on the Southwest corner of Barker and Franklin and they all say, all the saloons had a watering trough in front for the horses, and these farmers would come in, water their horses and sometimes they'd tie 'em up and go into the saloon. But I can remember seeing a woman sitting on a wagon or a sleigh all wrapped up there shivering, and the man inside drinking, sometimes they'd stay in quite a while.

DC: Oh, yeah.

CS: And, gee, I'd like to go in there, kid that I was, like to go in there and grab him by the neck and drag him out.

DC: Makes you feel sorry for the horses sometime too. They'd be out there in a blizzard with...usually threw a blanket over 'em, but gosh, it was that was uh, that was another place where we used to get our exercise was on those hitching rods.

CS: Oh, yes, all your acrobatics on the iron pipe.

DC: I had a...all the kids on 5<sup>th</sup> Street had a bicycle, but I didn't have a bicycle cause I was too small. So my dad went off to the Excelsior Cycle Company and had them make me a 14-inch frame. Little 14 inch, looked like one

of those little circus...that the clowns always rode in the circus, you know. So, if I'd yell at some kid, he'd start yellin' back, you know, come after me on his bicycle, I could run down the full block riding underneath the horses. He couldn't do that, you know. (indecipherable) And, then across the street was Hirschman's Saloon. And uh, well, there was, one was a Kneller, too. There's a Kneller works down at the library, must be the granddaughter of this, of these people. She works behind the counter down there, but I didn't tell this story. But this one Kneller, which would be an uncle or something of hers, he used to get lit. When he'd come out of the saloons on Saturday Nights, he was really tanked up. So, we'd go down the alleys, and we'd get a bunch of tin cans, and we'd sometimes fill them full of water and then we'd stack one on top the other, you know, get kinda high, and then put a string on each side of the sidewalk. Stack here and a stack, and then put a string between them, because we knew Kneller, we always called him slippery nuts, and he'd come out of the saloon, out of the tavern, start staggering down towards 5<sup>th</sup> and Wabash, you know, and he'd hit this line over it'd come and get his feet all wet, and then he'd get mad, and he'd try to shake them off. And the more he tried to shake them off, the more they tangled. So finally he'd go back into the saloon, and you'd hear all the men laughing at him. And then old Max Hirschman would come out with a...Max Hirschman would be the grandfather of uh, what's the girl that works down at the library there...uh, got the German first name...what's her name?

LR: Gretchen King?

DC: Gretchen! Is it Gretchen? Yeah.

CS: Is she a granddaughter of Hirschman? That's right.

DC: Yeah, her , her mother would have been, was Anna Hirschman, Anna Hirschman, there was three girls, but old Max, the grandfather, or the father of Ann, be Gretchen's...Gretchen's grandfather, he had a horse whip, you know one of those darn things, so when he'd catch us out there doing things like this, he'd sneak out the side door and come down the alley, and man he'd let us have it across the ankles, jeez that thing really, really, stung, you know. Well...

CS: And, another thing I remember about the saloons in those days, any outlying saloons had sawdust on the floor, and when you walked past them you'd get the uh, when the doors were open, you'd get the aroma of that, well, more stale beer, but most of it was draft beer in those days, I guess a lot of it dripped over on the floor, but you could sure get a good whiff of aroma of that beer.

DC: Well, saloons were, saloons were, they were part of the picture in those days. The stores were open, as you know, Wednesdays and Saturday nights and those two nights everybody in town came downtown, so while, the wife was in shopping, why he'd, the husband would go down to the saloon, you know and hang around there and meet her someplace else. Well, it was really a social, it was a sociable night, I mean most...the Franklin Street would be lined with the husbands, on the curbing, you know, seesawing back and forth with other men while the women were shopping and visiting, it was a visiting night, nights, you know Saturday nights and Wednesday nights were really big, big time nights. Busy, busy times on Franklin Street. I could stand on 5<sup>th</sup> and Franklin there, and I would...I wouldn't know the people's names, but I could

recognize every person on the street. I recognize them by sight, you were just that familiar with them cause you'd see them, every, maybe all day Saturday, you could see them sometime or another and they'd come down in the street cars. You talk about segregation, didn't we have segregation in those days? Oh, I mean you did...you had your Syrian...well, not segregation, per se, but you had your Syrians on the North end and you had the Swedes up on the hill, they all stayed where they....

CS: I told the lady a couple weeks ago, that uh, this was about before the first world war, you stayed in your own neighborhood, if you wandered into some other neighborhood, you had to be pretty good with your fist or fast on your feet, or you got in trouble.

DC: Yeah, that's right, it really was, it wasn't, it wasn't really segregation, but just uh, you just don't go out there. And I know, we'd have trouble with the Catholics on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, they were just as bad, you know, they were all, uh, I don't know what nationality they were, but they were Catholics and they didn't like the Jewish boys from 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

CS: Right in there, that was mostly a German settlement.

DC: Yeah, so it's a...but you didn't, you didn't pick up a girl and walk her over to Canada.

CS: But you wouldn't, you stayed out of their neighborhood. Yeah, over in Canada, I had heard this, I think I told you that (indecipherable) some fellow walked a girl home into Canada and on the way back the boys were waiting for him on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street bridge and dropped him in the creek.

DC: I wouldn't either, I wouldn't have walked a girl, I wouldn't have walked a girl out to the Southeast side, you stayed in your own neighborhood.

CS: That all changed, it didn't change until the graduates of eighth grade from the neighborhood school started going to the high school, then they got acquainted, and that changed the picture.

DC: How we stacking up for time, George, what time is it?

GS: Fine for time.

DC: No, but as I say, your neighborhoods were segregated, I mean they uh, they, uh... you had your Irish out there on Kilgovern.

CS: That West Side was considered pretty tough around Willard Avenue and uh, rest of the (indecipherable).

DC: You're darn right. Well, up and in the North End you got the Turks, a bunch of Turks. I remember, uh, that uh, that John Barker paid off in gold in those days.

CS: And silver

DC: Yeah, gold and silver, but he had that one little wagon, I don't know if you remember, a little black box on the back of it, and then there were trays, just loaded with silver and gold, and they never had a shotgun riding around there or anything.

CS: They had a guy with a rifle.

DC: Did they carry a guy with a rifle?

CS: Yep.

DC: But, jeez the, the money that must have been in that damn thing.

CS: Thousands of dollars.

DC: And he'd go up to different banks and get the money, and I'd see him walk..or riding down Wabash Street to go over to the 6<sup>th</sup> Street to pay off.

CS: Yeah, as long as John Barker was alive, they paid in...in, uh hard money. Gold and silver. Sometimes the banks here were short of money, they'd have to go into Chicago and get enough amount of gold money to meet the payroll.

DC: I know that my dad would have these Turks from the North End would come up there and bring their wives, and uh, wanted their pictures taken, and they'd have a what should I say...necklaces of gold pieces, that had just solid gold pieces, I mean they were draped, they were...they had two pounds of 'em at least on 'em, hanging on , and they'd always want the wife sitting down like this, you know, and then they'd always have a gun, and they'd be standing there like this, you know, and she'd be sitting there with this....draped in gold. I don't know what it signified, but, they save their money and then had necklaces of gold made out of it. Well, it's the first time, all these people we're talking about, it's the first time in their life they could ever own any land of their own. In Europe, you couldn't, it was all feudal, it, uh, you just worked for the lord of the manor and you couldn't own any land, and he come out and took half your, half your, your produce and uh, that's what made 'em so happy, good lord the sky is the limit. You want land? Well, why don't you buy it?

CS: And that was one of the first things that most of 'em wanted to do after they started working, after they got a little more than they needed to eat, they would save that money to buy a piece of land.

DC: Yep. A piece of land

CS: They wanted a house of their own to live in, a little piece of land to farm.

DC: Cause it's something they never had before.

CS: And they took good care of it.

DC: As I say, most of them were painted car factory red.

CS: Yeah, that...a lot of it was.

DC: John Barker said a dollar a day, and all the coal and wood you can carry away.

CS: You, uh, often...these days you hear about slums, uh, and you blame the buildings for the slums, well, slums aren't buildings, slums are people. Take that area, south of Barker Avenue along Buffalo Street, Manhattan and Elston, that was bare sand, you could probably remember when it was just bare sand.

DC: Yeah, yeah.

CS: The Haskell and Barker built little houses out there and they sold them to their employees on the installment plan. And I mean, they were small and plain, and it was right on the sand. And you go out there now, and see those same places. Mot of them have been remodeled, there's been additions made to 'em. And you take a look at those places, they're all well kept, still well kept, with a very few exceptions.

DC: Yeah, um mmm. I don't, I don't really recall uh, well about the worst I can think of is the Patch. But even then, they weren't bad, until...these were the first homes that everybody would move into when they came into town.

CS: They were tiny places, they were tiny.

DC: A little...

LR: Where was the Patch?

DC: Hmmm?

LR: Where was the Patch.

DC: Over where Harbor side, Harbor side. And then, uh, but they moved there first when they came to town, cause they could always get a job, they got a job as then as soon as they got a little money, why they'd start moving South. They'd move South.

CS: That, well that's been true of all the places, throughout the country. The first people settled there, and as they bettered themselves, and their houses got older, they'd move in and then the later comers would take over and it still is going on that way.

DC: I think it is today, have you driven around Wozniak Road and around the back in there and Jungkind Place that's between here and LaPorte, you ought to take a drive through there. Well, if you want to know where the city's tax base is. That's where it is.

CS: I know it, they're building...all building out of town.

DC: I think it's still the same, an extension of what we're talking about. The people now are leaving the town here, uh, where I live, actually I live

in the North end of town now and I'm up behind the high school. This is the North, this is the North end of town.

CS: That's right, that's right.

DC: This Street used to be the....6<sup>th</sup> Street was the original South end. It was the South end.

CS: South end. Well, my dad said, when he started coming in to Michigan City from the farm, the business district extended to 4<sup>th</sup> Street, remember where Kromchinsky had his drug, uh, clothing store.

DC: Well, that's about right, there wasn't much in there, especially on the uh, well where Master's Furniture is down there, Delaney's the big building over there. There wasn't really anything on that particular quarter block, that was the first library in town, there was a book store there and that started the library, uh, that was called the Michigan Township, I think, Public Library, at that time. And Ann Hartwell ran it, so that was the beginning of the, until the Public Library came in of course, then they took over. But, uh, there wasn't anything, I remember there wasn't anything on that particular block and along there where Bodine's are, and we're talking now, Mathias' Saloon, and the rest of that stuff there wasn't much in there except Kromchinsky's building there, and that, uh.. Upstairs there are quite a few apartments up there in those days, because they were all railroaders and they could be called so easily, you know. That was kind of a click of it's own, your locomotive engineers, so..but there wasn't much in there, either. So the city did end, as you say, at 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, then up to 6<sup>th</sup>, Well, 10<sup>th</sup> Street in our day...9<sup>th</sup> Street where the railroads, where the streetcars was about the end of...the end of town there.

CS: Streetcars, yeah. Yeah there was very little beyond 10<sup>th</sup> street. Course in our days' when they started building just south of 11<sup>th</sup> when they built that building, where the Goodyear Tire shop is now, there was a...that building there got put up by Charlie Kinsel, and the South Shore used it for many years as their depot and the building next door was where the drugstore was.

DC: Yeah, that was the South Shore depot, and then you had the Streetcar depot was up on 2<sup>nd</sup>...2<sup>nd</sup> and Franklin.

CS: 2<sup>nd</sup> and Franklin...Northwest corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Franklin.

DC: And all evening long the girls would walk from the South Shore depot down to the other depot and then use the bathroom down there, and come back and use the bathroom, until finally somebody'd pick them up in a car and take them home. That's where you got your dates. You walk long enough, somebody was bound to pick you up, if it got late enough. Well.

GS: Mr. Spychalski, your father was in the meat business, or you were in the meat business, too.

CS: Beg Pardon.

LR: Grocery.



GS: You were in the meat business...grocery business?

CS: Yes.

GS: How is that different from the big supermarkets we have today?

CS: Well, uh, it isn't much different since you had a personal touch with the people who traded with you. And that was one of the reasons that we had a good business up until the time we retired, there were many people who didn't like the impersonal part of a big supermarket. And another thing they didn't like was walking all of the distance that you have to walk in a supermarket to pick up the things, we had just about everything that they had in the supermarket, in fact, we carried some things that they didn't carry, but we didn't have the variety of sizes and things like that. And people could come in there in just a short time, pick up everything they wanted and go out. And of course, another thing, like I said that personal quality. Dealing with the man who ran the business.

GS: You knew most of your customers by name then, I imagine.

CS: Oh, ha, you knew 'em by name, as I said. I'll tell you how I knew 'em by name, I...the last few years, there were several who came in here, and I would just stop and think that I had sold grocery to their grandparents. So it was that way.

DC: That's easy, you knew 'em by families.

CS: Sure, you knew their families and you knew who they married and uh, everything that had happened in all those years. But it made it a very interesting business and a very, well, it was a pleasant business, dealing with with the people that you had coming in there. And I still meet 'em on the street, and ri...we sure wish you were still there, we think that you were entitled to retirement, but we still think, wish you were there.

DC: Used to be almost one on every block, didn't there, used to be a grocery (indecipherable) grocery store.

CS: Oh yes, actually there were two in some blocks, you take south of 11<sup>th</sup> Street on Franklin, there was one run by a man named Debald, before he took over, I'll have to mention this, there was a man by the name of Syples, had a fish store there, and he also had, at one time he was on the southeast corner of Franklin and Ripley. It was Syples' Fishatorium and Oysterorium.

DC: That'd be about, yeah, that's across from Franklin Pharmacy over there, yeah. Syples' Fishatorium and Oysterorium.

CS: And then, uh, to get back to my grocery stores, then there was Frank and Jim Farrell ran uh, a grocery store where the license bureau is now, later, taken over by Gerald O'Bany. A man named Gus (indecipherable) had one on the next corner, Franklin and Ripley, the northwest corner, halfway down...oh, and right across the east side for awhile there, there where uh, McKee's Appliance store is, man named uh, Kai had a grocery store, and he later moved to the West side of Franklin where the Pleasure Inn is now. And then a man named Probilinski had a store at 1703 Franklin, I bought his place, and at

1709 Franklin man named John Kinsel had a grocery store, bought his, too. That's where we finished, we ended, were from 1924 till we retired. And then the next block, Gus Woody had a store, and later on that was taken over by a man named Briarley and bought out. I don't know if anybody else remembers, later that was an A & P Store, with a National Tool Store across the street.

DC: Well, as I say, every, every area had some shopping area, I mean you had groceries almost on every corner, or so, but then you had your shopping areas. South Franklin, here you had everything you wanted, Willard Avenue, you had everything you'd want including the Theatre. Michigan Street you had your little shopping area, and as I say, Wednesdays and Saturdays they all came down to do the big shopping on Franklin.

CS: Speaking of grocery stores, in those days, they didn't have any finance companies, and banks didn't make small loans, it was usually the grocers who were the finance companies. When the chiropractor was running, most of it, most people had charge accounts, those days. When the chiropractic closed, why the grocer would carry them until they went back to work, the people would pay them up, pay 'em and keep paying 'em while they were working, and if they, when they got laid off again, the grocer would carry them until they went back to work. That was the finance company.

DC: Yep, yep.

GS: Where would you get your produce from? It came from the local people in town, right?

CS: Yes, it was, people in the neighborhood who traded, most if them traded in their neighborhood stores.

DC: Where you'd get your...where'd you get your produce, would that come in...the farmers, farmers, you get it from the farmers, or...

CS: Well, we did. Joe Matasa ran the Michigan City Fruit Company, you remember Joe?

DC: Oh, yeah. Yeah, Yeah, Joe Matasa, yeah.

CS: I can remem...one thing I remember about Joe Matasa, first we ran into the store, and uh, this was during prohibition, and Joe used to call on us and take our order, we'd call up, and several times Joe invited me to come and see his store, said I'll show you the banana room. This one time I had to go there for something, and I bought what I wanted and took it out, and Joe said hey, let's come downstairs and I'll show you the banana room, we went down there and he showed me where he kept the bananas, you know you had to have a certain amount of heat and a certain amount of humidity for them to ripen, he got through that, and he says would you like a little wine during prohibition...well, I didn't want to just his feelings, so I thought he'd give us, give his wine away, we used to serve it, in little glasses. Joe poured me a water glass of his homemade wine. Well, I sat there, and I did get it down, but on my way home, I was just a little bit woozy.

LR: What kind of displays for your produce did you...you said before you used to put it out on the sidewalk?

CS: Oh, yes...most of the stores used to display, you remember when they displayed many things on the sidewalk, sure.

DC: I can remember of, a Brinkman's meat market, now they were between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> on Franklin Street at that time and they had a hook outside there, or couple hooks, and I've seen deer hanging out in the wintertime when they were frozen, they'd have maybe a deer hanging on these hooks, you know.

CS: You'd see, you'd see rabbits hanging outside in the cold weather, and the meat...in the early days, you didn't have combination stores, meat and groceries, you had one or the other, and the meat stores didn't have any heat in the wintertime. Remember Dingler's, (indecipherable) they'd have a rack and they'd have a whole cattle hanging there, hogs, and turkeys and geese and all that stuff hanging right out in the open with the door wide open. You'd go in there and the meat cutters would have a cap on their head and they'd have big heavy sweaters on and...

DC: Leather things that'd come up the sleeves here.

CS: Yeah, they had, course the leather things to uh, protect their...

DC: But I wonder how they could use their hands, in that cold all day long.

CS: It must have been cold. I remember going into Dingler's with frost that thick on the windows, and the door would be open...the only place that had heat was in the back room where they made sausage and lunchmeats.

GS: How much would it cost you for a rabbit, or a pound of chicken.

CS: Ah, I think the rabbits sold for a quarter.

DC: I don't remember, I never had rabbit.

GS: What would chickens...what would a chicken be?

CS: Well, chickens were expensive. Chickens now I think will cost you no more or even less than they did in the depression days of the early '30s. Because they raise them and they raise them different and they raise so many. In those days, you'd go in and if you wanted a young chicken, you always called 'em springers. They raised no chickens, only in the spring time, when the hens would get ready to set, they would set 'em and then the chickens would hatch, and then about...oh, you wouldn't start getting those chickens till about June, July. And then, of course, they started getting incubators and you got more chickens, and now, of course, they raise them the same the year round. Just continue to hatch.

DC: Well, those big places, they put out 25,000 a week, those big places, yeah.

CS: Yes, a lot of them do there's some big, big ones. Course most of your chicken hatcheries now are in the South...Alabama, Mississippi, some of the Car...Georgia. That's where most of your frying chickens come from. And eggs now, are, uh, in the wintertime, they are no more expensive than they were then. You couldn't get fresh eggs I think after New Years, when the weather

got cold. Fresh eggs was very, very scarce. At that time people...in the, when the...eggs were plentiful in the summer, they would gather 'em while they were fresh and put them in cold storage, and through out the winter that was what you sold most of was storage eggs. And they were good for baking, and if you got them soon enough, they were even good for eating. But as a rule, uh,

DC: The homes could preserve them too, though, the wives could put 'em that...

CS: They put 'em in what they called a water glass.

DC: Water glass.

CS: Yeah, water glass.

DC: Yeah, that would be a great big crock with the water glasses of fluid you'd put in there.

CS: See, it was, you had 'em covered with that stuff and it was airtight, and it preserved them.

DC: Well, I imagine that when we were kids, that most families had a chicken or two in the backyard anyway.

CS: Yes, yes, many, many people had theirs, yes.

DC: Yeah the chicken coop in the backyard, yep.

CS: Chicken coop in the backyard, that was a common thing, and of course, in the real early days, there were a lot of people that kept cows in their backyard in Michigan City, especially in the outlying areas.

DC: Some of the first, some of the first ordinances in town were to control the cows on the street and pigs. So, get the stumps out of the yard,...out of the street. Alleys, in those days, everything went in the alley, didn't it? Want to get rid of it? Take it out in the alley. Then they guys come around, pulling that wagon, with the bell..rags, old iron

CS: Rags, old irons, rubbers.

DC: I always thought he said rags the lion, I never knew what exactly what he was...rags the lion, and ringing that old bell.

CS: Most of 'em, most of 'em didn't speak English very distinctly, it was rags, old iron, and rubbers, but I remember regs, oldirns, roo-bears.

LR: Would they buy it from you then, or (indecipherable)?

DC: Oh, yeah. Well, I don't know anything that kids would collect, we'd collect iron once in a while, didn't we. And tin foil, we used to buy, you used to buy tin foil, too.

CS: Yeah, we used to roll it up in balls.

DC: Yeah, that was the thing, we never threw tin foil out, we'd always make a ball, and get a ball like that and maybe get a nickel or dime for it. And uh, sell it to the junkman. I've seen 'em come in there, I remember when we sold out base burner, you know, the old, this was the old hard coal burner you've seen, like the one down at the lighthouse, one of those fancy stoves, you know, with the thing on top. When we got rid of ours, it was a beautiful stove, it wasn't that old, it was a beautiful stove. And so we waited for the junkman came around and yes, he'd buy it, and I don't know what he bought it for, but then he sat down and carried it out in the back, summer kitchen and he took a hammer and he chopped that thing in little pieces, cause it was worth more as scrap. That was another thing, we had, we had two kitchens, in your house. You had your regular winter kitchen and then you had your summer kitchen. When it was too hot in the summer, why you'd cook in the other kitchen. My grandmother had that anyway, I remember it. Wood stoves, I remember, my grandfather, he was a railroader, he'd get up when he'd go maybe he might have to go to work at 5 o'clock, and he'd have a fire going there and by the time she got up the great big stove was all ready to cook on. And as I say, she had a...later on I think she had a in the summer kitchen she had a gas stove out there so it wouldn't get so hot in the summer, wouldn't smell the house up or anything, so.

CS: Then for many years people had combination stoves, part of it was gas, and the front had a place where you could burn coal, remember those things?

DC: Yeah, yeah. Then you had your hot water tank there.

CS: That was called a reservoir.

DC: Reservoir, yeah. And I helped my grandfather chop up cherry commodes, you know, and everything else, what are you going to use that old fashioned furniture for. Nice, beautiful cherry, and I'd help him cut the thing up for kindling.

CS: What you wouldn't give for some of those things now. My brother sleeps in a solid walnut bed, and I mean it's massive and it's carved, that my mother bought for 50 cents, somebody on West 6<sup>th</sup> Street there wanted to get rid of it, and through some woman who had been doing some cleaning for them she found out they wanted to sell it and she needed one. Hauled it home in a little wagon. And she bought this walnut bed for 50 cents. I wonder how much over 50 cents you'd get for it now.

DC: You'd get today, yeah, she'll something on her investment. Oh, they had those and the melodians..

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DC: ...says he'll write the copy.

LR: Melodians.

DC: Oh, melo...it was a piano, uh, upright, but it was about, well it was longer than this, longer than this table here about this much longer, about a foot and a half longer, it was a regular piano, but they called them melodians. And uh, but my grandmother had that, and as I say, the horsehair

chairs, and I remember when she remodeled the house, I don't know where all that stuff went, I know she was glad to get rid all of it. And uh, had that fancy carved fireplace, I can't imagine what ever became of that fireplace thing, and that....

LR: Carved?

DC: Huh?

LR: Fancy carved?

DC: Uh, fireplace, just, not carved...it was all white oak, it was white oak, with uh, 'course around here was all tile...tile and then uh, with the railing where you could the things on, you know, it was a beautiful thing. I have no idea, I suppose it was just taken out and thrown out like everything else.

CS: I'm trying to recall who lived in those houses on West 6th Street where they got this, this bed...wasn't it somebody named Hanson lived there? That one...

DC: That was 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Street, you're talking about 6<sup>th</sup> and Washington, you know, between (indecipherable).

CS: Between Franklin and Washington, there were those two, uh...

DC: Yeah, the old Hanson house, yeah, that two-story house there. That house should have been preserved. There was two of 'em there, they had one, uh Hanson's house and then the one on the other, on Washington, Washington Street there, yeah. The Hanson sisters. They really had some furniture in there, that (indecipherable) where she got that, man that whole house would be worth a fortune today, so...well. Let's see, what else was going on down around that area?

CS: I remember Judge Gleason's wife, you remember, May, Meg...Mattie, Mattie Gleason? What was her name? She used to live, her, she had lived across the Street from Barker's there on the East side of...

DC: Belle, was it Belle, Belle Gleason...was it Mattie, uh...was that Jim Gleason's wife did you say? All right, may have been.

CS: Yeah, Judge Gleason's wife. But she often told stories of the Barker Family, you know, things that, the parties that they, and visited back and forth. Mrs. Gleason used to, was quite a talker. I remember Judge Gleason telling this. He wanted to call home for some reason or other and the line was busy, as it usually was cause she was a reporter for the newspaper and she was always on the line. And he tried three or four times and couldn't get her, then he finally got the operator and he wanted her to, to, dis...uh, get her for him, just cut off whomever she was talking with and get her for him. Well, the operator says I can't do it. Well, he says, then you go down there and cut off the phone. So she cut off Mrs. Gleason and so he could get through to her.

DC: I don't know, I was thinking it was Belle Gleason, but anyway, she was one of those that used to go down and get news from the Michigan Central

Depot, the continuation of that story, I had that, part of that was in here and this is a continuation of the one before, but uh. Well, Judge Gleason was a printer's devil to start out with.

CS: That's so.

DC: And uh, Belle, of course, was a reporter, and I guess that's how they got together. So, uh, yeah.

LR: What was a printer's devil?

DC: Uh, just the one that helped in setting type, every...in other words, when these, when these were set in those days, you took every bit of type..you said you want the word come alright you had a great big...you've seen those big trays, you got the c and put it in, in what you called the stick, here, and put it down the line and then the... Well, everything, every letter in that thing was set by hand. And so he was a printer's devil. He may have been a helper around there till he got to be a typesetter and so....

CS: Now, that was quite a process to get a newspaper together until the old line o' type came into being.

DC: Yeah, that it was, I mean you get that type all together and you'd have it in a great big uh, you know, I don't know what they called all those darn things, but, uh. They'd put it down there and they'd hammer it down, you know, and get it all level and then put it on a flat bed press, and then that bed would go back and forth like this, and then the big thing would come to grab a sheet of paper come down like this, and then rurrr, rurrr, boom, rurrr, rurrr, boom, rurrr...single sheet of paper (indecipherable) page at a time.

LR: How often would the newspapers come out?

DC: Oh, it was every day. Well, they were weeklies at first. But as long as I can remember we've had 'em every day (indecipherable).

CS: Yeah, dailies, matter of fact, you had two dailies here for many years, the Evening Dispatch and the Evening News. They're combined now, now they're called the News-Dispatch.

DC: Oh, yeah, you had to have two because one had to be Republican and one had to be Democrat, not had to be, but this is the way. If there was a Republican newspaper there, why you made darn sure you had a Democrats telling the other side.

CS: Oh, how they would roast one another. And they would get very personal, didn't they?

DC: Oh, jeez, how they...I'm telling you, that'd...that'd be a court case these days, I'll tell ya, they'd accuse you of beating your wife and everything else. You know, it's a...they told it like it is. I uh, was looking through the files one day, and I was very glad to find it, because I had written so much about the Blair Family. Well, Lyman Blair, the old, that old Fairview Hotel, uh, not the Fairview Hotel, but that was originally his home. And it was a

mansion, they called it the Blair Mansion. One here, the other one, the other one on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, was Chauncey's. This was Lymon Blair's and he owned that whole quarter block in there.

CS: Oh, there were two Blairs, Lymon and Chauncey. That's...I remember.

DC: Lymon and Chauncey, Lymon was the young one, and uh...anyway, uh, and Lymon's Blair's home, he owned all that area there, and, uh, what was...he had a double outhouse there, brick. Now this was really, you talk about a brick outhouse, he had one there. Out of brick, which was really something, plus a great big brick carriage house and you drove around, you drove into that place around to discharge your passengers. And it was a very luxurious place. And uh, I was going through and I found out that, well, in one of my writings I had I wrote a story about the Blair Family, and somehow, in doing research and everything, I could see him as kind of a moody guy, he just kinda came through as sort of a moody, depressed type of fellow. And I remember I had one scene there where, his daughter, he had four daughters, uh, were coming into the room and Mother kind of jubilant, and he was sitting there, moody, depressed. A lot...I mean, he came through to me as that way. Well, then I, going through the paper, I found where he had commit suicide, they left town here. They got mad at the administration and left town, the Blair, the Blair brothers. And, uh, what I brought me up to this, was the writing of this, of this suicide. He took a shotgun and stuck it in his mouth and pulled the trigger with his toe. Well, the story told about this part of his brain was on the ceiling, this part...the other part of his head was over here, condition of the bed...it was the most minute detail you could have put it together. In the local paper. You could have put it together from that description. But uh, they had every morbid detail you wanted to know.

CS: (indecipherable) remembered. Well, Chaunc...this was Lymon, wasn't it?

DC: This was Lymon.

CS: Yeah, Chauncey, didn't he go to Chicago and become quite a...what did happen to him?

DC: Well, they...I'm not res...I have written down what happened and what I thought happened, is when they took the bridge out down here, see he owned the old, original Franklin Street Bridge, it was a footbridge. Chauncey did. He built that. He built the footbri., the first bridge Franklin Street was built by Chauncey Blair, with a narrow gauge railroad that ran over around the lighthouse up to the where the coastguard station is there. And he had a big wheat elevator there, and up on the top floor was a horse that went around and around and around for years. But anyway, when they wanted to develop the Harbor, they, they were going to take this out and put a turn bridge there. Well, he didn't like the idea, so he said, well, I want you to understand, told the Mayor and his friends that if you take that out you're going to put it back. And so when he went to get the Council, they said it had been up before the Council. Well, when he finally asked the Mayor about it, the Mayor, uh, he had the City Attorney, or whatever it was, tell him, said, you put it in, you've got enough money. Simple as this, see. And Blair got mad. Cause he was a very unlikable fellow. He wore a plug hat, he wore tails, always dressed to the teeth, and a very unlikable guy. This was Chauncey. So he got mad about that and he liquidated everything. And he owns, he owned, the, uh, well, the uh, West Side. The land on which Barker built



was one of Blair's additions, he owned the other side and he owned everything, all the land from the tracks to Tremont. He had 10,000 acres in there. He sold the land to the prison, was Chauncey Blair's. So he liquidated everything, now we're talking about maybe 1840. He sold everything out, he liquidated everything for 2 million dollars. Now, you can imagine was way back in there, and he moved to Chicago, moved the whole deal to Chicago, gave his house to the Catholic Church, and Lymon sold his to old Mose Zutter for a hotel, and uh, took 2 million dollars and went to Chicago. Well, jeez, the town was practically bankrupt, as much money as they had in the banks, and it was all his money. And he started up the Corn Bank. Now, I don't know what that developed into one of the biggest banks in Chicago, whether it's the Continental, Title and Trust, I don't know, but it's still the biggest bank and the family is still coasting along on the money he made here. And these were just two young kids that came here and made it, they really made the money. And uh, during the Chicago fire there was three men that paid cash for everything, all the business they did, they paid cash. After all there was no money in Chicago, it was, well...Well these three men are the ones that really saved Chicago from a panic and everything by paying cash and putting money out and one of them was Chauncey Blair. So, uh, it could have done us a lotta good over here, now that's the Chicago fire. But these three men pretty much were angels, at the fire, so...

CS: Yeah, we used to raise uh, or he probably owned that when they rais...er, no that was after he, where they had cranberry marshes west of Michigan City, they grew cranberries there for many years. You hear...know much about that, Dude?

DC: Well, he would ship as high as 40 car loads a season out of here.

CS: Is that right?

DC: Yeah. Uh, cranberries.

CS: I guess that whole area between the dunes and the highland was uh, water there. I understand that you could go by boat from here to Tremont on that (indecipherable).

DC: Yes, well, that uh, in the spring, I think what you were getting, you're getting the snow off the hills. Because you remember Hoosier Slide never had any snow on it, but it was frozen, it was just like a rock. And, uh, then in the Spring, I know we could go down here behind Hoosier Slide, well there was always a bunch of cars on the siding there. Well, on the freight car, those doors just hung on, you know they slung back...slid back and forth, but they were only hung on. Well, if we got about two fellows on each corner, we could hoist those things off the tracks, then we'd use 'em for rafts, so we could pull ourselves around in that little crick behind the hill there, just pull ourselves around. So, it was that way to Tremont. You had, it was all swampy in there. Mosquitoes and snakes in the same amount, rattlers. Uh, and somebody mentioned prison labor, but I gave you a picture of the marsh, the huck...the cranberry pickers, and it shows families out there doing it, so uh, I don't know who's, who's....I never knew...

LR: Gene (indecipherable) grew up on the Blair Estate, and he said that prison labor was used.

DC: It could have been, could have been. If he could make money on it, he would have done it. I imagine perhaps, he did, because I don't know whether he could depend on the local people to go out and do it. Course they used to pick a lot of huckleberries, the local people did. But, I wouldn't be surprised if he used prison labor. So, but he was a very wealthy man just to come here a couple of kids from Buffalo. Well, they married...they came here from Buffalo, these two fellows, and they stopped at the Western Hotel, which is out where the prison is now, just on the prison curve, they stopped there. And somehow they got in uh, they were roaming around, soon climbing Hoosier Slide and everything. You know that building on all the pictures you see, where it says Molding Company, right at the turn of the Harbor, every old picture we've got here, has got that one building right at the bend of the harbor right where the grain elevators are now. There's that building that's in there. That's a very old building. And uh, they kept the prisoners in there while they were building the state prison here. And either before or after that, must have been after that, but that uh, it was used by a man by the name of Degroff, and he used it for storing produce, he stored produce in there, which he brought in by boat, or shipped out, I suppose he shipped this out by boat, produce mostly went out of here. And these two young boys come in there one day, and looking for a job, but primarily to get warm because they were frozen from being up on Hoosier Slide. And he offered them a job sorting potatoes, because he had a lot of potatoes in there, and he wanted them sorted out. And so this was the first job this Chauncey and Lymon Blair had in Michigan City. And uh, so before a year or two was out, why these two Blair boys married the Degroff sisters. So that started the chain there.

CS: That's how they got started.

DC: And uh, Chauncey Blair had, I think it was four, yeah, four sons and a daughter. Lymon had four daughters. I don't think he had a son, he just had four daughters, Lymon did. So...

CS: It is interesting to take a look at the doorway of the General Construction building, they have a small doorway on the West end, and note the thickness of the wall. I think, that's maybe, I'm not sure, but that's probably one of the reasons that the Urban Renewal didn't take over that building. Those walls must be four feet thick. But, that was a sash and door factory. I'm not sure just who owned that before Kramer and Sons bought it for their warehouse.

DC: Well, it uh,

CS: Culbert? Culbert?

DC: Colburn.

CS: Colburn. Colburn

DC: Although I'm not too sure, it may have been. Colburn owned, uh, Colburn owned all the land, like where the armory is now, around to the railroad bridge. That was Colburn's...A.R. Colburn's, so he may have owned that.

CS: I kinda think this was part of the deal.

DC: But that was, that could have been his, because that was a sash and door company. Now, that burned down once, the old wooden building burned down. And that was, I think the first fireman that was ever burned was in there. He was related to Dalma, to (indecipherable) Bowman, Bowman...Bowman. And his name was Bowman, Shorty Bowman. And uh, course when they uh, they always had great big pits in there, you know where all the sawdust went. Well, he fell into the pit, into that sawdust pit and died. I think, I think that was the first fireman that ever died in Michigan City.

CS: Is that so?

DC: Um hmm. So, but that, but that, later on, it was a frame building to begin with, so.

CS: Next time you drive over to the lake, just glance over at that door, and you'll see the thickness of that wall. Gene Peck told me they had quite, quite a time breaking that door through. Course they bought that from Harry bought that, Harry Kramer was the administrator of, or in charge of liquidating Kramer and Sons, and uh, one night, at least after he started chipping away, he says Harry, why didn't you tell me that wall was that thick.

DC: I don't know what the, I don't know the history. It'd be interesting to know just what the history is of that building.

CS: Beg pardon?

DC: The history of that building, I just don't know what it is, whether Kramer, who'd Kramer get it from or anything.

CS: Kramer? On a sale, I forget whether that Colburn Lumber went broke, but anyway, whoever was running the sash and door factory, they went bankrupt, and the thing was for sale. And Kramer and Sons, when they first came to Michigan City, were in that building on uh, Southeast corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Franklin. And, uh, they had occupied two or three stores there, then they bought that building and they moved their building there. The building that they had been in on the corner of Franklin and uh, 2<sup>nd</sup> was a ship chandler's store. I forget the name of the man who ran it.

DC: Was it...that wasn't Aimes and Holiday was it?

CS: What's that?

DC: Aimes and Holiday?

CS: I'm not sure, I can't, uh remember...

DC: Either that, I get the old (indecipherable) building and that mixed up.

CS: I remember Kramer mentioning the name, but I can't remember it. But the man there had supplies for the sailing ships, sails and ropes and pitch and...

DC: Another interesting note on that, is that uh, also alongside of this grain elevator, I was telling you, by the, before the Coast Guard station was there, they also had a lime house there, that they brought in lime from Milwaukee. And that building you were talking about there, on the Southeast corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Franklin, that was the last building they built with the lime from that building there.

CS: Is that right. Later Kramer and Sons sold that building to Ambrose Yorkie. He had a saloon there, and he had a beer garden to the East. An open garden. And he ran a hotel there, I think he had a hotel, or a rooming house, I don't...whatever it was.

LR: Would you like some tea?

DC: That whole block along there, the whole block right from the end of Franklin Street to this building we're talking about was very interesting. I've got it written down at home, if you want...

CS: That's where the Fairview Hotel was, just ea...uh West of that building wasn't it?

DC: Yeah.

CS: I remember it. You know, I got the surprise of my life, an old fellow lived on the South Franklin Street, what was his name, his last name was Darby, I'm trying to think of his first name. Didn't realize he was as old as he was. When he died, he was 101 or 102 years old, but he never showed it. He told me of coming here. The Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Company, when they started the piers out into the lake, and he said, he was the...kinda the foreman for this Great Lakes Dredge and Dock, and they sent him here and he checked in at the Fairview Hotel, and I started thinking back, he didn't look to be that old. But, of course, I found out that he really was that old. In his last years, he repaired and sharpened lawnmowers, he was quite a mechanic.

DC: Did he live in Canada?

CS: Did who?

DC: He didn't live in Canada, did he?

CS: No, he lived on Barker Avenue, just east of the, of the Church.

DC: Yeah?

CS: Man by the name of Darmon lived in Canada, we used to (indecipherable)

DC: Yeah, that's who I'm thinking, that's who I'm thinking of. What was his first name, it was like Darby, what'd they call him?

CS: I'm trying to remember, I'm trying to think of his first name.

DC: Ummm, he had a nickname, Darmon.

CS: Johnny Darmon, Johnny Darmon was in, they had another name for Darmon, and I can't think of what they called him. I can't really recall this man's first name.

DC: That's who I was think, that's when you said this other one

GS: Excuse me, but there's only about 5 minutes left on this tape. Could we get that little thing about the kids games, just for a minute? How'd you guys play marbles? I want to hear about that, and what'd you do in Springtime, let's get that on tape, we got 5 minutes.

DC: Well, we said that uh, we got to uh, in the Spring, the first thing you had to do was go over and get a slingshot. Tell 'em how we used to dig down and get those slingshots, there.

CS: Well, you'd find a good, a good crotch in the tree and you'd cut it and then you'd shape it, and then you'd go to one place on the two tips where you could tie the string, then you had a rubber band of some kind, usually an old piece of inner tube. For the holder of the stone, you'd have a piece of leather, and you had that tied to the rubberband with a string, too.

DC: Where'd you get that leather?

CS: Well, from uh, Burnham Glove Factory, go out to their scrap pile outside...

DC: On tannery hill. Well, you get the shinny clubs.

CS: Shinny clubs. Well, we got ours south of Greenwood would we, place we called Chadwick's Woods, and there was a lot of sassafras there, and you'd uh, dig down, and they usually grew in clumps from underground, you'd dig down around and you'd get the part underground that was shaped oh, like a small hockey stick.

DC: Then you'd get a tin can.

CS: Usually, and the tin can was usually a milk can because that wasn't, uh, didn't have both ends cut out, it was only punctured, and it was more durable than other tin cans.

DC: Then you took that down the dirtiest alley around, put it in the alley, we always did, and then we'd start playing shinny, I don't know what you'd call it, it was almost like a, like a hockey game, wasn't it?

CS: It's a slight...it's a boy's hockey game.

DC: Boy's hockey and run from one end of that alley knocking that tin can...just

LR: Did it have any rules?

DC: I don't think there was any rules, was there?

CS: No, well, we had our own rules, yes, you had your own rules.

DC: We had our...as we went along.

CS: We played on uh, Barker Avenue, on the brick pavement between, uh, or just east of Lafayette Street. The way that we started, we chose sides and you tried to get an even number on each side, and everybody'd have a stick and to start it, you'd set that thing down, just like they do in a hockey game, uh, but in hockey games, the official drops the puck. And we'd instead of that we'd punch the can on the pavement, and you'd raise your sticks and hit each other's sticks three times, and after the third stroke, then you'd swing at the can. And, of course, the players on your side tried to keep it going just like your hockey player, to one goal, and then...but you had, instead of doing like hockey where they run all around, you shinnied on your own side, you only went one way, or you got cracked on the shins.

DC: Shinny on your own side....shinny on your own side.

CS: In my mind, I can still hear that can tinkling on that rough brick pavement.

DC: Yep, clank clank.

CS: And with all the kids hoopin' and hollerin' that must have been quite a thing.

DC: Yeah, shinney. Well, with marbles, marbles, uh, we, we had different types of marbles. We had twofers, threefers, fourfers. Now, they were made out of clay, baked clay. If they had...

CS: And commons, commons, we called them kimmies.

DC: Kimmies. Actually what they called the common marble was just a plain, oh we used to make them out of clay ourselves sometimes. Then I used to sit in school with my pen and I'd put two lines around it, you know what that did, that made a twofer out of it. It was good for two commons, two kimmies, we corrupted the name common to kimmies, because kimmies, I'll shoot you for two kimmies. Anyway, you line up whatever you were going to shoot for. Now the agates, they were worth 25, they were made out of...aggies, remember the aggies, they were beautiful.

CS: They were beautiful.

DC: Until we put, maybe we're gonna shoot for fifty, well we'd have to get the certain denominations, you know, to make whatever you wanted to, and then...but our shooters, our shooters were made out of..actually made out of marble. And we would, they'd get you'd check it and see how many...you knew it...

CS: Remember, remember the mossies? They were...

DC: Yeah, they were, uh, they were agates, really, agates, they were kinda mossy looking and we called them agates.

CS: They were agates, too.

DC: But our shooters were actually made of marble, and uh, let me...those were rather valuable, cause that was your shooter. And uh, you'd check 'em, check 'em, and they would get little, oh, little stars in 'em, you know, from where you really broke it down shooting. If they were...immies we called 'em. Imitation marbles were made out of glass, and we called 'em immies. Well, uh, as I say, I uh, an immie would break because it was made of glass, but we had the..our regular shooters. I had a, I had a cat's eye, and that was a beautiful shooter.

GS: That was made out of stone, made out of agate, right?

DC: Yeah, yeah, they were made out of stone.

CS: What were the...what were the things that were called stonies, those were...

DC: Those were shooters.

CS: That were, that was the, that was the...marble.

DC: Marble. Yeah, and those were heavy.

CS: Those were some of them were beautiful.

DC: They were heavy. As I said, I had a cat's eye, it looked just like a cat's eye. But uh, as I was saying on the TV the other night, they had some kids that were supposed to be old timers trying to shoot. But they were shooting, I can't describe it with their thumb, thumb and their first finger, you know, and I thought heck you didn't do that, you didn't shoot like this, you laid it down on your side, round the side like this, with your cloth underneath, and boom.

CS: You had a little (indecipherable) called snubbing

DC: No snubbing now, no snubbing.

CS: We had a wonderful place to play on Homer Street, after they ran that sidewalk there between York and Lafayette Street, they had to make a fill to lay the sidewalk because that ground was very low in there. And you had a rise about that much which made it just right for shooting. Made a wonderful way, for oh, quite a few years, that was the place where we did most of our marble playing.

DC: But they finally got it corrupted, they, oh, we if we didn't have a sidewalk, we've done put it in the mud, too, and then use ball bearings for shooters.

CS: Yeah, later on they...

DC: Well, I saw the kids today, they put 'em in there and they'd go down and rrrroom, they'd throw it in there. But it was a skill, it was a game of skill when it started out.

CS: Oh you got, some of those, some of those the kids got to be pretty good with their shooters.

DC: Yeah, I'll tell you, when you lined 'em up there, the fir...the guy that shot first, he may take every one along the line.

CS: And the really affluent kids would play with nothing but these agates, with what we called stonies, and that, some of those, even in those days, cost a nickel, a dime, and some a quarter, and that was a lot of money, but they would play for those things.

DC: You had different sizes, whatever size you like. And no snubbing, no cheating, so...But uh, well what you did, the idea was to knock 'em off the sidewalk, there, either this line or knock 'em off the sidewalk.

CS: You had to knock 'em all the way off...shoot them off the sidewalk.

DC: Like playing uh, playing pool, you know, some of those kids would run the whole line.

GS: What'd you do with the slingshots?

DC: Oh, only shot sparrows, cause my dad told me. Only sparrows, Dude, don't shoot anything but sparrows, but once in awhile a robin would get in the way, couple of cats, couple of cats...

LR: Got in the way?

CS: Well, the cats wouldn't get...

DC: Cats and dogs.

CS: Not only that, but I remember once we had a war. Kids with beebie guns 'd punch kids with slingshots, I got bobbed on the head...

Begin side two of tape

CS: playing games.

LR: (indecipherable) cabin with Teddy Roosevelt? (indecipherable)

DC: Well, no she was diving off the pier out....McClane girl.

CS: Oh, sure I know who, I remember her (indecipherable)

DC: She never, uh, I suppose she played for the North End, she played with all the...

GS: Well, you'll have to tell us some other time what the girls did, ummm...

DC: Well, we don't know, we didn't have anything to do with girls.



LR: You made up for it later, huh?

DC: No, you really didn't, did we...we didn't want the girls hanging around.

CS: Oh, no, the kids there, they had too much...not until, until you got about 18, 19 years old.

DC: 18 then there was something happened, something happened...but...

CS: But before that you always kept...were busy all the time, course now, when you got a little older, got old enough to hang around the pool room, shoot pool.

DC: Shoot pool, but there weren't any girls then either, I mean...

CS: No, they weren't around they weren't in those places.

GS: When did the girls come in?

DC: We discovered them when we were about 18, didn't we? We found out there was something different...

CS: Yeah, 18, before that, why you didn't...you didn't have time.

DC: We didn't have time, because we were shooting marbles. We had a big bag of 'em, (indecipherable) end up with a big bag if you were lucky or a good shooter.

CS: If you were a good shooter.

CS: No, to...get 'em

CS: Well, this had been utterly delightful, we would like to do this again, only we'll be set up for it, next time.

CS: I did have an over coat when I came in.

GS: We'll see you in a littlewhile.

DC: I'll see ya.

LR: Have Ken take your picture before you go, ok...bye.

GS: Do you need a...you need a background, Ken, do you need some background?

KV: I don't care.

GS: I do.

KV: This fireplace?

GS: Uh, (indecipherable) How bout just against this one side, stand...make it a tight shot...over against those...still works.

KV: Still works.

CS: Still works, good, I didn't think it would after that.

GS: I think you have a lot of very interesting information, which would be of interest both to men and women, because uh, everybody's interested in food, especially the crew here, as you can see. But uh, I'd like to think that you'd have a say, and I hope that you'll consent to interview with us again.

CS: I'd be glad to. The thing is, when you get with somebody like Dude Calvert, one thing brings on another.

LR: That's all right.

CS: And things that you don't remember, or you just suspect will bring back something that he remembers quite well. Something he mentions is something that I can remember quite well. Course, he is uh, he has a much better knowledge of things than I, because he has delved into Michigan City's early history very, very thoroughly and he knows a lot about it, he's a good man to have around.

GS: Oh, we loved having him, but you have some special things that you know about, too.

LR: (indecipherable)

CS: Some of the things that probably he does, and I'd be glad to come here, so you call me, you want to get together...

GS: We also think, I'm very serious about having a program some night, where we video tape it, where you and Dude and several of the other old (indecipherable) would get together and reminisce, you know, and shoot marbles, and uh, maybe uh, you know, show us how you made ice cream. You know, we could have a, a thing...the things that would be likely to get lost if you didn't tell us about it.

LR: We'll make you a star. We'll make you a star.

CS: Well, it's fun to recall people like this Popcorn John, with his little wagon, have you, have you seen it?

GS: Yeah, I seen it, is that the same one? Is that the same one?

CS: No, this one, no the one that stood there was, the one he had was different...it was on two wheels and it had two handles, and...

End of recording