

**Interview with Erwin Bloch  
conducted by  
Marian J. Krzyzowski  
for the  
Chene Street History project  
1/28/03**

**Beginning of Side A Tape 1**

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski, and I am here with Mr. Erwin Bloch in Royal Oak. Today is January 28, 2003 and we're here to talk about Chene Street and the Chene Street neighborhood, and more specifically about his memories about his dad's store and other businesses in the area. But to begin with, I'd like to first ask you a little bit about your family. Do you think you could tell me your mother and father's names, where they were from originally, and how your family ended up in the Chene Street neighborhood.

EB: Alright, my father's name was Leo, my mother's name was Jeanette.

MK: Do you know her maiden name?

EB: Banks.

MK: ok

EB: And my parents had four children. First my brother, Raymond, then my sister, Louise, then Erwin, myself, and then the baby was Edith.

MK: And when were you born, what year were you born?

EB: 1924. I was born at Children's hospital, but we were at that time residing at the corner of Farnsworth and Chene, my grandmother owned the building.

MK: What was the address, do you remember the address? Was it a Chene address or a Farnsworth address?

EB: A Chene.

MK: And which corner was it on?

EB: It was the southeast corner

MK: The southeast corner, ok. And your dad and mom, where were they from?

EB: Mom was from Austria. She left the country when she was a young girl--8, 9, 10, in that age group. It was Austria when they left. It was in the early 1900s, like 1908, 1909, I'm not sure of the year, but right around in there. And then World War I broke out and

that part where my mother was from was taken away from Austria and given to Poland. My mother was from the province of Galicia. My father came from Hungary, I don't know what town. He told me one time, but I didn't realize how important it was for me to know that. I realize that now. A very intelligent man, he could speak five languages, fluently, and if you lived or especially if you had a business around Chene Street, you better know how to talk Polish. And they did, both of my parents did.

MK: How'd they get from Europe, you said your mom came over here after WWI or before World War I?

EB: Before.

MK: And your dad, did he come before World War I?

EB: That's right.

MK: And where did they meet?

EB: They met at a wedding somewhere, I believe. I'm not one hundred percent sure of that, but I think that's where they met.

MK: In Detroit?

EB: I don't know.

MK: Ok. Do you know when they came to Detroit?

EB: Well, Mother came directly to Detroit. In fact, she went to high school, Central High School, which is now Wayne University. So where they lived in that area, it probably was close to the Hasting area. That was a Jewish section, originally. Dad was originally from Cleveland. The Bloch family settled in Cleveland. There's some relationship in my mother's family, like my grandmother was related to the Wolf family, which was--

MK: Meyer Wolf--

EB: Yes, and she was my grandmother. There was some relationship with the family. So it probably was at some wedding, and that's where they met.

MK: And they were both Jewish?

EB: Oh yes.

MK: And were they a particular branch of Judaism? Were they Conservative? Orthodox? Were they observant religiously?

EB: They were religious people. Orthodox.

MK: Which temple did they belong to, what synagogue?

EB: I don't know the name of it, but it was on Farnsworth and, just above Hasting. Not too far from, like two blocks, or three blocks from Woodward and about two or three blocks from Hasting, and it was on Farnsworth.

MK: When did they move to the Chene-Farnsworth address?

EB: That was before my time, I don't know, but--

MK: You said your grandmother owned that?

EB: Owned the property, that corner, and we lived above the store.

MK: Where did you move?

EB: Two blocks, to 5444 Chene Street, and that's where we stayed. I can tell you, maybe later on you want to know about the day we moved, what I remember.

MK: Tell me about it, tell me now.

EB: My mother and I were carrying a black shopping bag. That was the big thing in those days. She had one handle, I had the other, my toys were in there, and we were walking. We just crossed Farnsworth, and we were about the second store up, which is where my barber was, when a 1925 black Ford truck went by. There were two men in there, they were moving us, and my dad was sitting like with his feet on the running board, and he was smiling and waving. And I said, "Look Mom, there goes Daddy!" And when I later told that story to my father, he said, "You could not remember that. You were only two years old." I said, "Dad, I remembered." He said, "You heard us talk." I said, "Dad, I remember it," and I remember it! But from that step on to our house I don't remember. But I remember in the old house, the Farnsworth house, going up the steps from the kitchen going upstairs, and I remember crawling up the steps, I remember that. But the rest of it is kind of a blank.

MK: So your grandmother lived above there--

EB: We lived there! We lived above the Farnsworth--

MK: But she owned the building?

EB: She owned the building. And I think my father and my grandmother did not get along too well, especially when he decided to move to another place, I don't think she liked that too much. So--

MK: What was her name, what was your grandmother's name?

EB: Leah Banks

MK: Oh, they owned--yeah, I saw her name in here.

EB: Her son took over the store after we moved, Isadore.

MK: Yeah, Isadore and Leah Banks, I've got them on this list.

EB: Yup, they're the ones.

MK: Let me show you--I was going to ask because I just added them on. Yeah, Isadore and Leah 5146.

EB: Alright, that's the address then.

MK: Chene, so you originally lived at 5146.

EB: Yeah, ok, I didn't know the address until now.

MK: Yeah, ok, so that was Bank's Tobacco and Novelties. So then you guys moved in 1926 to 5544.

EB: 5444.

MK: 5444.

EB: Right.

MK: Ok. Can you describe either of those businesses? Let's say I'm standing in front of 5444. You know, what do I see when I walk inside? What do I see--where are the counters, where's the cash register, what's where, what colors are things?

EB: I can't remember the Farnsworth store. That's a complete blank. As you walked into 5444--

MK: In front, what would it look like?

EB: I gotta picture!

MK: That's ok, for the record I want to have it on tape too.

EB: Alright, it had a brick front and the rest of it was frame. The brick front was added in the thirties.

MK: What color brick?

EB: I don't remember.

MK: I'm gonna ask you all these questions--

EB: Yeah, that's ok. Uh, and as you walked in the door--

MK: Was it a two story? One story building?

EB: Well we lived above the store--

MK: So it was a two story?

EB: Two story.

MK: And were there show windows out front? One show window? Two show windows?

EB: Two.

MK: So the entrance is going to be in the middle.

EB: Yeah, right in the middle. And there was a row of seats to your right as you walked in there, and there was a row of seats to your left. The shoes, and it was all shoes, were stacked around the store...along the walls. And the register was, ok--where the store ended, our kitchen started. There was a kitchen downstairs, where my mother did her cooking, and where when we weren't busy in the store, my dad would sometimes relax in the kitchen with a cup of coffee. Then upstairs we had a living room, dining room, and bedrooms. The register was, as you're walking from the front of the store toward the back of the store, it was on the right hand side, and we had a Mail Pouch radio, I remember that. Mail Pouch was a chewing tobacco and for some publicity they made radios to advertise their product. And my dad got this radio from my Uncle Iz because he was in that business, in the tobacco business and novelties. That's what he did, but somehow he got the radio and he asked my dad if he wanted it and he said absolutely. And we had that radio for years and years and years. And I don't know what else to tell you.

MK: Was it a wood floor? Did you have rugs or carpeting in there?

EB: It was a wooden floor.

MK: And where you had the shoes stacked up on the side, were there shelves or not?

EB: Shelves, yes.

MK: And where did the shelves go? How far did they go?

EB: Oh they would go up about as far as we could reach.

MK: And do you remember what kind of shoes you sold?

EB: There was Endicott Johnson, I remember that. I remember there was a man, a salesman for some shoe company--his name was Mr. Stricks. He sold--Endicott Johnson. They were number one with my dad. And the salesman for Endicott Johnson was Mr. Hood. And I remember there was a Mr. Stricks; he was also a salesman. They'd come in with their suitcases and show us the new shoes, and my dad would pick what he thought would be a winning style. And I don't remember any other shoes.

MK: Were there any work boots that he carried?

EB: He had work shoes, dress shoes, and later on, he tried some hats later on which were not too successful. But he was very well liked by the shoe companies, always paid his bills, and I'll tell you a funny story that happened with a customer, if you want to hear it at this time.

MK: Yeah

EB: Two people, a man and a woman, came into the store and my dad was waiting on them, showing them shoes. They asked my father would he excuse them for one moment, they want to discuss the shoes. And he said sure go ahead, and they start talking Hungarian, which is my dad's favorite language. He didn't say a word. She wanted to know, I think it was, do you like the black ones better or the brown ones--and my dad answered in Hungarian, "If you've got a dark suit I would get the black--" you know, like that. And they all burst into laughter. There is nothing a Hungarian likes better than to speak their native language. And they talked for maybe an hour, you know, the sale was already made. But I thought that was a very funny story.

MK: Were they all men's shoes or women's too?

EB: Oh no they had women's shoes, and children's. We also had tennis shoes.

MK: What were the business store hours for the store?

EB: Oh they were opened about nine o'clock and they'd close whenever. He was the boss, whenever. There were no set hours, but usually he'd stay open until 8-9 o'clock at night, and later if it was necessary, he would do it.

MK: And, how many days a week were you open?

EB: Six days a week.

MK: Six days a week, ok. Can you describe for me the upstairs of the residence area. How did you get up there? Did you go up from the inside of the store or was there an entrance from the street also?

EB: No, No. From the kitchen, there's a back door we used. And that door led directly upstairs. So there was like a utility room to the right as you come in from outside, and we had our telephone in there and my mom used to keep--when she had nowhere else to store stuff, that's where she stored it.

MK: And that's in back of the kitchen?

EB: No, alongside the kitchen, and the other side.

MK: What side? If you're looking from the front of the store, is the utility room on the right or left?

EB: The utility room was on the left. And as you go up the steps, there was a vacant bedroom on the right, and we also used that for storage, there was nobody using it. We kept extra furniture and things like that in there. And I remember on the wall we had a gas light. It was no longer working, but in those days you had, that was previous to us moving in there, they had....the lighting was gas. Ok, then you walk down a hall to the right was my bedroom and my brothers, we shared that bedroom.

MK: This is Raymond?

EB: Raymond. And further up to the front was a dining room. Left was the living room. Now we've turned and we're going back towards the rear of the house. My dad's bedroom, mother and dad. And then there was one more bedroom, and my sisters had that bedroom. And between the stairway and the girls' bedroom, it was a bathroom.

MK: So upfront you had the dining and the living room, they were facing on Chene Street

EB: Right, and also we could throw open the windows, we could go out the window and there was a flat roof. In fact, on hot days in the summer time we used to put a mattress out there, and sleep out there because it was so blazing hot. In front, it was an overhang, The house set back, it might have been about 8, 9, 10 feet. And I know it had gravel on there, it was a flat roof, and we would use that many, many times, not my mother and dad, my brother and I.

MK: Was, so the building was owned by your parents?

EB: Yes

MK: Okay, and how long were you and the store there in that building?

EB: Well, as you know, my brother got killed during World War II. And that broke my father up very badly. My mother was suffering from a brain tumor at that time, and there were a lot of things she didn't know, so we kept my brother's death from her. She never knew.

MK: What year did your brother pass away, what year was he killed?

EB: April 18, 1945, so when I got out of the army--

MK: When were you in the army?

EB: 1943-1945

MK: When did you get out in '45?

EB: I think it was in July, something like that. So my dad had a talk with me, and he said--we didn't talk about my brother. I knew that if I mentioned him, that he would crack up, and I didn't want to see that. But I know how he suffered. So he said, "What are we going to do?" He said, "You want to stay in this business here? You want to close it, move somewhere, what?" And I wasn't too bright. I was about 21. I never did like the shoe business which was a big mistake. My dad wanted me to get into it, but I never did like retail, and later on I turned out to be a retail salesman, later on, and I was pretty good. If I could do it all over again, I would have said, "Dad, let's fix up the store, and let's see what happens here." I didn't think he kept a modern enough store. I would have liked things to be more fancy. Maybe a tiled floor, the floor covered in some way, carpeting wasn't that big in those days. And other things, that's what I would have done. But we decided, no let's close it, and my dad sold the stock, or the stock buyers came over to buy, and they gave him a price, a flat price for all of the shoes, and he said he wanted to think about it. And they said, ok, when you're ready let us know. So a few days later he decided ok, let's take the offer. And when we called the stock brokers, they were not buying at the original price anymore. They were really cut-throat, that was their game. If you didn't want to buy it the first time, now this is what you get. They all knew each other. You couldn't win with that bunch. So he sold it, he didn't like it, but they had us over a barrel, and we moved to Hazelwood between Woodrow Wilson and Twelfth Street, we bought a house. In fact, a baseball player used to live across the street from us, Dizzy Trout--

MK: Oh, sure

EB: Ok, he lived there, and I used to see his luggage piled up on the porch when they were getting ready for spring training. Yup, he lived there. I never got to talk to him or anything, but that's where we lived. And we sold after, oh, maybe three-four years. And we moved to Carter, right off Dexter. There was a football player who was famous at the University of Michigan, lived on the corner of Dexter and Carter which was four or five houses from us, Germany Schultz, he was big time at Michigan. And then at that time, my father got sick, after being at Carter for a couple of years. He had lung cancer. And

he passed away, and shortly after that my mother--sometimes she didn't know who she was from the brain tumor. We took care of her until we couldn't handle her anymore, we put her in a nursing home. That was in the Wayne University section, and she passed away in less than a year.

MK: So, what year did your dad pass away?

EB: 1948

MK: So she passed away in '48-'49?

EB: Uh, yeah. Right around then, yes.

MK: Then what did you do from that point on?

EB: Well, I got married while I was in the service. A girl that worked on Chene Street. We got to know each other and I went into the army. Without my parents knowing it, we got married.

MK: What was her maiden name?

EB: Olinick. She was from Pennsylvania originally; her father was a coal miner.

MK: And her first name was?

EB: Julia

MK: Julia Olinick, and you said she worked on Chene Street?

EB: She worked at a restaurant as a waitress.

MK: Which restaurant, do you remember?

EB: Greenwich.

MK: Oh, right on the corner [It was in the middle of the block 5339 Chene – MK].

EB: Yes, that was a very popular restaurant.

MK: Well tell me about the Greenwich restaurant.

EB: Well everybody in the neighborhood went there.

MK: Was it Greek owned? Polish owned?

EB: Greek

MK: Greek owned. Do you remember the owner's name?

EB: Chris, I don't know his last name.

MK: And can you describe the restaurant, what it looked like inside and outside?

EB: Well, when Chris and his partner, I forget his partner's name, Chris got this restaurant and his partner went somewhere else and Chris changed it completely. It was like a wall in between. They had booths on each side of the right wall and booths on each side of the left wall. And there was a soda fountain at the end of the store, with the kitchen behind. And when Chris bought the business, bought his partner out, he took that middle wall out and opened up the restaurant which was very nice. And he served very good food, it was a good neighborhood restaurant. Most of the business people either went there, or the Polish businessmen went to Martin's Restaurant which was very Polish, and good.

MK: So Greenwich is right on the corner, or is it in between?

EB: No, it was--.

MK: Next to People's Bookstore?

EB: Exactly, Zukowski's, yes. And on the other side was Sophie's Beauty Parlor. Chris was there many, many years. In fact, my brother and Chris were very close friends. Now, that was my brother's hangout. They used to have a pinball machine there, he just loved--

MK: Where was the pinball machine?

EB: It was right in front of the soda fountain

MK: In the back then?

EB: Yeah, toward the back.

MK: When you looked at it from the outside, at the restaurant, was the sign for the restaurant flat against it? Did it stick out? Do you remember, what'd it look like?

EB: No, I don't remember....

MK: You don't remember, ok. And did Chris live in--?

EB: No, no. Chris was a single man, and my brother really liked the other partner better but he got along with Chris very well. And later on, like a kid brother, I followed him

there. A lot of the people used to go there, and he treated his customers well, and the food was good.

MK: What kind of food was it?

EB: Just, uh, he didn't have any--if he had Greek food, I don't know. You could get chicken, they had soup, they had veal chops, hamburger.

MK: Was there beer too? Beer and wine?

EB: No, no--

MK: Strictly food?

EB: Yeah. And Chris, later on, got married. Like after we came back, everybody came back from the war, it held out pretty good for a few years, but it started going downhill. All the businesses were going downhill then. But I didn't know too much after, because we moved away.

MK: Let's back up a little bit. So in 1926 you moved into the 5444 address. Where did you start going to elementary school?

EB: Ferry, Dexter M. Ferry. It was named after a seed company, or did they donate the land I don't know. [I'm not sure. There may have been a person named Dexter Ferry after which it was named – MK] That's why they got Ferry Street, that led you right into Joseph Campau and Ferry is right where the school was located.

MK: And you were there through the entire elementary school years?

EB: Yes.

MK: And then after elementary school where did you go?

EB: We went to the intermediate school which was on Moran just north of East Grand Boulevard. It was called Greusel School, and we went there for one year and then I went on to Northeastern High School.

MK: Did you graduate from Northeastern?

EB: No, I dropped out.

MK: What years were you at Northeastern?

EB: I was there like two years.

MK: Then what? Then you went into the service...

EB: No, I, I wanted an automobile, that was my mistake. Ha ha ha. And I did buy one from a man in the neighborhood, and went to work at Fort Wayne along Jefferson Avenue. It was an ordnance depot and we used to pack cases and send them out to army bases and things like that, that's what I did. And I lasted there maybe about a year or so, then I went to work in a factory in the neighborhood called Detroit Transmission which was on, I believe, Farnsworth and Riopelle. They had a bunch of old factories there that GM owned, but a lot of them were closed down during the depression. They opened up this transmission plant, and I went to work there. And from there, I got drafted.

MK: Was your family observant when you were growing up? Did you follow Jewish religious practices? Did you do a Shabbat? Did you go to--

EB: They did all of that, and--

**[Break]**

MK: We're switching topics right now, and we're going back to your Uncle's store, and his name was--

EB: Isadore

MK: And he was on Farnsworth and--

EB: After we left, he moved in there.

MK: So what kind of store was this?

EB: He had novelties there. Like tricks you want to play on people, also tobacco. I couldn't really describe the store. I don't ever remember going into it after we left. Oh, and then when he went out of business--

MK: What year was that?

EB: I don't know. I would say it was somewhere in the late '20s or the early '30s. He was a very stubborn man and he couldn't get the price he wanted for his showcases so the end of it was, he never got to sell them because he wouldn't take what the market would bear, he wanted more. So he asked my mother could he store them in our garage because we didn't ever have a car. And she asked my father, and he said ok we'll let him do that. And a lot of his stock that he never sold was also in there. And it was never going anywhere, so my uncle got a job at the city hall in Detroit. Things were very hard. And I know he used to campaign for politicians. I guess that helped you keep your job. But whatever he did he was very good at it, I'll tell you, he was very dedicated to whatever he did.

MK: What was the relationship to your uncle, what was the relationship?

EB: That was my mother's brother.

MK: Brother, okay.

EB: And in the meantime, my grandmother went to live with my mother's older sister Freda Shiffman, in Highland Park. My uncle got married in the meantime somewhere along the line and he moved out to northwest Detroit. I've got a leaky eye; I'm not shedding any tears. So, anyway--

MK: So who was Leah, though?

EB: Pardon me?

MK: Leah was who?

EB: Oh Leah, that was my grandmother. That was my mother's mother.

MK: Oh that was her mother.

EB: And she was a hard nose from Europe, I mean hard nose. This was a tough babe. I mean tough. The only time I'd see her smile is when she found a fat chicken. They'd go out to the Chene-Ferry market, get a fresh chicken, get it killed, and they--my mother and my grandmother would be taking the feathers off the chicken and when they saw it had a lot of fat in Jewish she would say *Schmaltz*, that's fat. She'd smile, the only time I'd see her smile. She was hard as nails, stubborn, and I've got a lot of that in me too. I can see her faults. I can't see the faults that are mine. So anyway, I used to sneak out some of those novelties, and one of them was imitation dog feces, and it looks so real you wouldn't believe it. And we'd go on the corner. I remember, I was very popular with that dog feces; the boys all loved it. And we would put it on the corner because there was a red light there and then we would get behind cars and watch whatever was going to happen.

MK: Which corner was it now?

EB: It was on the southeast corner

MK: Of Farnsworth?

EB: Yeah. There used to be--no, no, Chene Street.

MK: Chene and what?

EB: Ferry, Chene and Ferry. There used to be a Florsheim shoe store right on the corner there. And we'd watch these people step on the dog feces, and look down to see what they had stepped on, because we would do it at night, not in the day time, we were very

clever, and the victim would hop on one foot, ha ha ah, so he could wipe his shoe off on the curb. And we would crack up, it was so funny, and we did that for hours.

MK: How old were you then?

EB: I was about 12, 13 years old.

MK: Was that Florsheim shoe store, was that Rosenberg's shoe store?

EB: I think so. And after they moved out after the war, a Polish family got that business. They had infants' wear, and the name was Kukawski. And I knew the children, I didn't know the parents, but they were nice people. And there was a Helen and she got shot, in a hold up in that store. Then she had a sister Wanda, and she had a brother, I never knew his name; it was Junior, named after his dad. Nice people, I liked them all. And the last I saw of Junior, I was working in a carpet store and he was a customer. And I looked over and said, you know, that looks like Junior Kukawski, and I interrupted the sale and said, "Is your name Kukawski?," and he said, "Yeah," and I told him who I was and we got to talking. He was a steam fitter at that time, or training to become a steam fitter. And that's the last I saw of him. I know I said, "How's Wanda?" He said, "She got divorced." I said, "How's Helen?" He said, "Helen's ok." Helen was a nice girl, so was Wanda.

MK: But the store was originally set up by their mom, or who owned the store? The Kukawski infants wear.

EB: Well, I'll tell you it was jointly owned by mother and father, but mom I guess would be the brains of the operation, not that the father was not--

MK: Do you know what her name was, her first name?

EB: No, all we knew in those days was Mr. or Mrs., we never knew their first names. Jr. was maybe about ten, twelve years old and we were a little older, the bunch, the boys in the neighborhood. And he wanted so badly to become one of us and we put him through all kinds of tortures, but he took it real well. He was a good kid, he was.

MK: When you say the guys in the neighborhood, the kids in the neighborhood, who were the kids that you hung out with?

EB: Well, Charlie Murz, there was a kid named Dan Hodak, Ed-I don't know if I pronounce it right, Izuluk--

MK: How was that spelled do you know?

EB: I've got it here somewhere, I don't know if I've got it spelled correctly, it was I, something. I-Z-U-L-U-K. And there was a fellow named Arthur Michalski and Ray Bealo, and that just about covered all the...you might call them the gang there, but they weren't a gang.

MK: Right. These were not Jewish kids though, were they?

EB: No, mostly Polish.

MK: I'm curious about the interaction between--

EB: These are mostly Polish.

MK: Right so, were there other Jewish kids your age on the street in your neighborhood?

EB: No, well my cousins, Wolf, they lived at the corner of Farnsworth and Chene, they were younger than me but they were like my second cousins or something. They never came up our way. I used to go see them. If we played, I went to see them. And let's see, there was a bakery, Modern Bakery, the second house, store from Frederick, I forget what their last name was, but it was Modern Bakery. His name was Jack, we played together a little bit. And they're still in business, but not there, they're at other places.

MK: Were they Jewish?

EB: Yeah. Oh, and there was my brother's best friend from Kovitz Department Store.

MK: Abraham Kovitz?

EB: Yeah

MK: What was his name?

EB: Harry

MK: Harry Kovitz?

EB: Yeah, probably the truest friend. He was my brother's friend. I knew him for years, but if you're 2-3 years older than somebody else, you have nothing to do with them. I mean that's the way it was. But we bumped into each other years later, and I recognized him, and we got together. We got to be very good friends. But one of the truest, most loyal friends you could ever have. He and my brother were very close. He named one of his sons "Raymond."

MK: Do you know if he's still alive?

EB: No, Harry died about 3-4 years ago.

MK: Was there anybody else in that family, the Kovitz family?

EB: Harry was not, he was adopted. There were no children in that family. And the mother and father, very, very fine people.

MK: Can you tell me about the Kovitz store, do you remember the store at all?

EB: Sure, sure.

MK: Tell me about it.

EB: They had, like if you wanted drapes, bed sheets, pillows, ladies clothes, and a nice quality. But you see, they used to live above their store, then they decided they're going to keep the store, rent out the upstairs, and they bought a beautiful home in northwest Detroit. I remember Mr. Kovitz used to drive a Buick all the time. He never talked to me, but he was friendly.

MK: Were they Polish Jews?

EB: I think so. Because I tell you in that neighborhood, you had to talk Polish.

MK: What was she like? Can you describe her, what she was like, Mrs. Kovitz?

EB: A very classy looking lady, a little--

JB: They dressed very well and lived very well.

MK: Were they observant, religiously?

EB: Yeah. My family was religious enough. This was--you gotta remember in the early '30s, refrigerators were just coming out. And we had an icebox, we had a man delivering ice to our house.

MK: So it was in the back of the building? Where was the ice box, built into the wall?

EB: No, it was like a refrigerator, only it was made out of wood and it had a drain pan on the bottom because when the ice melted it had to go somewhere. The ice man was very important in those days.

MK: Do you remember who it was?

EB: No, they used to have a big, like rubberized cloth over their shoulder and--

MK: It wasn't a black guy was it?

EB: No.

MK: Ok, because I had people tell me there was a black ice man in the neighborhood.

EB: I don't remember that. So I know we'd follow him. When he was busy delivering the ice, we'd be picking up pieces of ice from his truck. Or if it was horse-drawn, it could have been horse drawn too. I don't remember. Later on it was all trucks. But, my parents would not eat pork; everything had to be kosher, so therefore shopping was very limited. My dad didn't have a car, but would have to take the Baker streetcar, transfer off at Milwaukee and that street car went down to Westminster Avenue which was below Brush--if you went in from East Grand Boulevard. Oakland Avenue, that was a side street, and that's where you had all your kosher meat markets and your poultry. And he'd go like once a week. That was his job, not my mother's job. Apparently we had a butcher shop across the street we couldn't use.

MK: I'm surprised because it seems that in the '30s there were a few Jewish owned businesses with families living in the stores, and yet there was no kosher food on the street.

EB: If they had a car it wasn't far away. They could go to Hastings, there were kosher meat markets there.

MK: What about the Chene-Ferry Market. Somebody was telling me that there was a rabbi there in that market and that Mrs. Silverman, Esther Silverman, sold poultry.

EB: Who?

MK: Esther Silverman.

EB: I know Esther.

MK: You do?

EB: Oh, Murz was with her.

MK: He worked for her--

EB: Charlie Murz, yeah.

MK: Yeah-and he said that they had a rabbi in the market.

EB: Was that the one--

JB: That's what they call a shoychet; he used to do the killings.

EB: He'd cut their throats. There was a special thing they had to do, then they'd drain the blood. So, a chicken was available for us. I think his name was Sam Klafish, Klafish, K-L-A-P-fish, and he was a nice man, he was alright. He used to give me my Hebrew lessons.

MK: Where?

EB: At my house.

MK: He'd come to your house?

EB: Yeah, but I was not a good student. I could never, I'm good at languages, I just resisted--

MK: Were you Bar Mitzvad?

EB: No. Mainly because I had no interest in the Hebrew language. Finally my parents sent me to B'nai Moshe. That was the Hungarian synagogue. Cantor Rosenthal was my Hebrew teacher. I wasn't doing much better with his classes. We had about five or six kids in his class. Jennie Levenson (The lady who owned the wallpaper and paint store next door to our store) had her nephew in my class. His name was Alvin Gorin. He was brilliant with Hebrew. I was just the opposite. I made mistakes, I hesitated between words. I drove that bastard Rosenthal crazy. Our relationship grew steadily worse. He stopped insulting me and started hitting me. His favorite weapon was a slap to the head. I think I would have been black and blue if he hit my face. That's probably why he hit me in the head. I'd get beat up every day. One day I made a mistake and I knew what was coming, so I ducked and he hit poor Alvin behind me. I was too young to realize that when you get hit in the head, you learn faster. I had dreams of getting even with that bastard Rosenthal. This was the dream. During the high holy day services when he was singing, I would run up to the altar and hit him with a couple of haymakers. As he laid on the floor, I would empty a box of Vick's cough drops in his mouth. That was to protect his beautiful voice. I was to pay him a dollar each week to get beat up. Instead I kept the money and went across Dexter Avenue to Nate's Deli and ordered two hot dogs with mustard. I loved those kosher hot dogs. This was in the mid-thirties. I also remember riding double deck busses on the Dexter Line.

MK: So you took the bus from Chene Street or the street car?

EB: I took the Baker streetcar going north to East Grand Boulevard, transferred to the west bound boulevard bus to the Fisher Building then got on the Dexter bus to Rosenthal's torture chamber. I loved riding the double deck busses. I'd sit on top of course. Many years later I was talking to somebody about the double deckers. This person said, "There weren't any double deckers in Detroit." No one seemed to remember them. So many years later I was attending a family wedding. I sat at the same table with a distant cousin of mine. We were talking about the Dexter area. I asked my cousin if we ever had a double decker on the Dexter line. He said, "We sure did." I couldn't believe it. It was like I got my sanity back. One more thing about Cantor Rosenthal. If any of his grandchildren or great grandchildren should happen to read this book, your dear, dear grandpa was a first class son of a bitch.

MK: Let's go back to the Kovitz store. What was it like outside, what did it look like?

EB: It was a neat looking store. Both inside and out. They had a marbled front. The windows were always well decorated. If you walked into the store you knew you were walking into a quality place. Because Mr. or Mrs. Kovitz wouldn't have it any other way, they wanted good quality.

MK: They did the sales work themselves or did they have somebody else working for them?

EB: They had people working for them too.

MK: And do you know--they were there after you moved out of your store, right? Because they were there quite a while/

EB: Yeah they stayed there for a number of years. Both parents eventually passed away. Harry took over the store at that point. Harry was a good businessman. But things were changing on Chene Street. The younger generation was moving to the City of Warren and other suburbs. A lot of the old customers had died. So Harry closed the store and went to work for United Shirt.

MK: Did he get married?

EB: Yup.

MK: Does he have children?

EB: He got married and that marriage didn't work out. Then he remarried and he had children. Was it two boys? One looked just like the father, Harry. And the fact is, Harry died and his wife remarried.

MK: The reason I'm asking, is I'm wondering if there is anybody in the family that would remember their store that I could talk to.

EB: Well the kids might be--his kids would be too young I believe.

MK: Yeah, they wouldn't have any pictures of the store, stuff like that. That's what I'd be looking for. Do you know any of the kids' names?

EB: Not really, but we could find out.

JB: I have the mother's phone number, I don't know if it's any good.

MK: If you could leave that with me, it would be great. I really would appreciate it. So tell me about Esther Silverman, what do you know about Ms. Silverman?

EB: If there was a school to teach truck drivers how to swear, she would have been a professor there. WOW! Was she tough. She would back off to nobody; she was a tough woman. And I remember her husband had a Packard Clipper, I remember that. Because in our neighborhood, Packards were considered like Cadillacs, because most of the people in my area worked at either Dodge Main or Packard because we were like at the half way point for both of them. And they didn't have Packards because they were an expensive car, but there were a lot of Chrysler products in our neighborhood, a lot of them.

MK: I think Charles Murz told me that Ms. Silverman's husband also owned a store?

EB: A liquor store.

MK: Where was that at?

EB: Oakland Avenue, that was near Westminister. It was a Black section.

MK: Do you know if she's still alive?

EB: No.

MK: And what about her husband, is he still alive?

EB: I don't know.

MK: Do you know if they had any children?

EB: I don't know.

MK: Do you know any of the other merchants or vendors or any of the farmers at the Chene-Ferry Market other than the Silvermans? Do you remember any of them?

EB: Well, my sister in law, the one that married my brother, he was killed in the war--she had a baby girl, my brother never saw his daughter. She was a Rosenman, and they're florists, and she used to sell flowers there. I could have walked past her on a couple of occasions at the market, because it was a big thing, Wednesdays and Saturdays, at the farmer's market. And she used to sell flowers there, although I don't remember seeing her, I probably walked past her a couple of times.

MK: What was her first name?

EB: Rhoda.

MK: And her last name was Ose--

EB: Rosenman.

MK: M-A-N-N or M-A-N?

EB: R-O-S-E-N-M-A-N. They're still florists, there's one on Coolidge.

MK: So, is she still alive?

EB: The last I heard she was very sick, but she was living in Florida.

MK: Oh I see, and the Rosenman florist that you mentioned, was it related to her family?

EB: That was her family, and there were other ones too. They were big in florists, flowers.

MK: And, so her name was Rhoda, right? And you said they had a daughter?

EB: Yes.

MK: And what was the daughter's name?

EB: Uh, let's see—Lynn.

MK: Glen?

EB: Lynn, L-Y-N-N.

MK: Is she living?

EB: Yes, she's living in Massachusetts, married to a lawyer named Smith, a Jewish Smith.

MK: Do you know any phone number or how to get a hold of her?

EB: We've got an address.

MK: If you could share that with me, that'd be great. I'd ask her again, I want to know if she remembers anything about her mom and the market and what her mom did.

EB: The market was before she was born, then once--

MK: Once they got married?

EB: Her mother used to do some kind of office work. Rhoda remarried after World War II was over but that didn't work out.

MK: Well then maybe I'll let it go. Well then Rosenman, Silverman was another one we talked about. Anybody else you remember from the market?

EB: I might have known a couple of peddlers, one of them used to leave his truck in one of the neighbor's garages. They had a big garage, he used to rent it. He was not a farmer, he would buy the stuff and sell it at the market. I don't remember his name, but I didn't know too many people. I used to go with my mother and grandmother and I enjoyed going to the market.

MK: There was, I heard from two other people that I talked to about the market, probably in the 1930s, late '30s, there was a guy they called Banana Man. There used to be a big scale there you could weigh yourself on. And right next to it there was this guy that sold bananas that was real popular, at least a couple people remembered him.

EB: No, I don't remember him. What I remember from the Ferry Market was blood oranges. They were red inside, instead of being orange inside, they were red. And the name it had was blood oranges, and they were good oranges, and all of a sudden you never saw them anymore. They just like disappeared, and all of a sudden they're making an appearance again, I've seen them. Maybe they can't think of a better name, but they were red inside, like a red grapefruit, it was red inside like that.

MK: Let me ask you about the other shoe stores, your competition on the street. Who was the competition, who do you remember of the other shoe stores?

EB: I remember almost all of them.

MK: So why don't you kinda tell me about them.

EB: Well, Rosenberg was on our block, sold Florsheim, they ran a very classy store.

MK: Can you tell me about Mr. Rosenberg? Mrs. Rosenberg?

EB: I didn't know them all that well. I don't know was he a manager there or did he own it, I don't know. I never had conversations with him. I'd see him as we hung around the corner doing things. He was right on the corner, but it was very nice, a very nice store. And then kitty corner on the other side of Chene Street on the other side of the street was a man named Kremen and he had a shoe store. And the Chene-Ferry Market was right behind him, so on market day a lot of the customers would come through the back door. A lot of those places had back doors because of the market.

MK: So Kremen was on the corner of--

EB: No.

MK: He wasn't on the corner?

EB: He was like the third building up.

MK: From which street? Ferry or Palmer?

EB: I have a map.

MK: Sure, why don't you tell me with the map.

EB: [fiddling with map]

MK: Ok so why don't you describe the stores here. We're looking at Chene Street between Palmer and Ferry, so--

EB: Behind Kremen shoe store was the Chene-Ferry farmer's market.

MK: So he was closer to Ferry Street.

EB: Yes.

MK: Can you tell me about the store and Mr. Kremen?

EB: It was not a neat store, but it was well-stocked. And he'd come over to visit my dad every now and then, probably to check up on business. My dad would never go there, but he always seemed like a very friendly man and he and my dad got along pretty well. Ok, that is Kremen's, now there was a Polish guy that owned a shoe store, Jaglowicz?

MK: Jaglowicz, yeah.

EB: He had a nice store. That was near Forest, on Chene near Forest, and there were other shoe stores--

MK: There was one called Ustarbowski. Do you remember Ustarbowski? It was further north, up there by Medbury and Hendrie.

EB: I don't remember that.

MK: Ok.

EB: I don't remember another shoe store there.

MK: It was between Harper and Medbury, on this side of this side of the street.

EB: I don't remember.

MK: Okay.

EB: That's all I remember on shoes.

MK: So what about the other stores you've got here, why don't you tell me a little bit about these stores. You've got a nice map out here.

EB: I've got a lot of maps here.

MK: Ok, well let's go through them.

EB: Okay, what do you want to know?

MK: Why don't we begin here and just keep going down the street. Tell me where we're at now.

EB: Okay, these were run by--

MK: But we're starting, we're going...

EB: There was the Kowalski sausage and lunch meat store on the corner.

MK: Of what?

EB: Ferry and Chene.

MK: Okay, and what side are we on?

EB: We're on the west side.

MK: Okay, so starting, okay.

EB: And we used to have a famous news boy here. Everybody had nicknames, and his nickname used to be Soup Bones. He sold the *News*, *Times*, and *Free Press*, and that was his corner. And people would stop, there's a light here they'd stop for the light and he'd sell them a newspaper. He was a hustler. Ok next door they had a bar. In fact, there was an entrance from here, it was a very noisy bar and a very jolly bar.

MK: The Mazurka.

EB: That's the name of it, I couldn't think of--I wracked my brain trying to think of it, but a nice bar. Then comes Kremen shoe store, then Polonaise cleaners, was run by a very pretty woman who had beautiful daughters, I remember the daughters very, very pretty. And the Sleder's Drug Store was next. Now, where I got blanks on this map, I think Martin's Polish restaurant was probably the finest Polish restaurant in Detroit, it might have been some around Michigan I didn't know about or in Hamtramck I didn't know, but these were really, really good. And some of these stores I don't remember so there are some blanks.

MK: There was an A&P or a Kroger's in here for a while.

EB: Ah, you're right, A&P. A&P. And then comes Max's Jewelry which was very big in the neighborhood.

MK: Did you know Max Rosenbaum?

EB: No, I bought a couple items there myself. And then, I don't know how to pronounce this name but O-A-Z-A Bakery.

MK: Oaza, Oaza Bakery.

EB: Yeah, and then there was a standard gas station at the end of the block.

MK: What about the other side of the street then?

EB: Okay, used to be Central Appliance right on the corner, that's the eastern corner, no it was the northeastern corner. And behind it was a big garage, it was National Grain and Yeast garage, they used to park their trucks in it. And the gang used to hang around on top of the roof. We used to climb a telephone pole. Kukawski's was across the street and we'd harass them from there, although in a friendly way. I don't think Kukawski thought so--

MK: Tell me about Central, who owned it, do you know?

EB: I don't know.

MK: Was it Sam Raimi?

EB: Could have been, I don't know.

MK: I think it was, because there were three Raimi brothers and I think he was the one who--

EB: Well I never knew them. I knew of the Raimis but I didn't know--

MK: Okay.

EB: And then there was a men's work clothes store here. A couple different people owned it, I never got to know them. And the big furniture store around here was Maliszewski, they were big. And I think to this day, they're near the Grosse Pointe area, but they now sell carpeting.

MK: Right, I interviewed Ed Maliszewski on Saturday.

JB: Did you really?

MK: Yeah, I tracked him down, he lives in Grosse Pointe. His sons own the carpet store. He's in his 80s you know, he's on it, he's an older guy, but it was fun talking to him. Yeah, his father--

EB: They had nice furniture, and behind the store across the alley was their warehouse. And then came some private home, I knew the people who lived there because--let me find the map that has to do with this house. Here's the map of my block, here's our shoe store, and here was Mike's gas station, and behind this gas station he built a huge brick garage to work on cars. I remember he had big iron doors that would open up, and the gas pumps were at the curb, I remember that. Anyway, when Mike died he had maybe three, four children, they sold this place and put--and this is the home they moved to temporarily and then they moved and I lost track.

MK: Next to the Maliszewski store.

EB: Yeah, between Lendzon's which they had a warehouse in the back. And then Three Star Cleaners and a stamp store and then Margolis furniture.

MK: Do you remember when Margolis moved in there, because they used to be further down the street, the original store.

EB: Might have been.

MK: It was over there on Warren, on Forest I think, on Forest and Chene.

EB: I don't remember, I remember them here because when we were moving away from Chene Street, my dad said we're going to get some new furniture. He bought from Margolis, I remember that.

MK: Did you know Herb Margolis at all?

EB: I went--there was a post named after my brother. Jewish War Veterans, the Bloch Post. He was a member, one of the Margolis boys was a member and I forgot his name.

MK: What kind of store was it. How would you compare Central, Maliszewski, and Margolis'?

EB: Central's appliances.

MK: Oh, appliances.

EB: Maliszewski I think had a better grade of furniture. These people thought well of the working class. I didn't say he had elegant furniture, but it was a good grade. The man that used to repair their furniture that got damaged in shipment, he used to work out of

the warehouse, a real nice man. He used to kid around with all the boys in the neighborhood, he was a very friendly man. Not Maliszewski, that was the man he had working for him.

MK: His name was Joe? Joe--Ed told me what his name was.

EB: Nice guy, all the kids liked him. So, anything else you want to know about Margolis? I really don't remember too much. But there was a bar on our corner, and I remember this bar.

MK: Why do you remember the bar?

EB: Because it was Halloween one time and we went and we hit the stores and we got to the bar and one of the customers took a roll of pennies, cracked it open, and threw 'em. And that was like a riot, I remember that. But an important thing here, I can't remember the guy's name and I think you're going to know it. Behind this, was the Congressman from this district lived here. I can't think of it, I've racked my brain.

MK: Sadowski?

EB: It was Sadowski.

MK: George Sadowski...

EB: They lived in this house when Congress was not in session.

MK: So it's on Palmer?

EB: Right.

MK: Right past the alley across from the bar.

EB: Right.

MK: Okay, great. Why don't we go down back towards your street go back towards Kirby. Let's go this block here, going south now. Let's start with the west side; who do we got?

EB: Used to be General's Tobacco Company; it was wholesale.

MK: And that was on the corner of what and what?

EB: That was Kirby and Chene. That was the northwest corner, side but later on they moved to Wrubel's Hardware Store.

MK: Across the street?

EB: Yeah. I think it was, Wrubel had a big store. But later on that's what they did and later moved to Wrubel's Hardware. And then came--Where's my little envelope, Julie.

JB: I don't know. I gave it to you.

EB: This bakery, this Polish bakery. I knew the girl whose parents owned it and I had no opinion of her until I got to high school. And she turned out to be a, very, very nice girl. They lived upstairs from the bakery.

MK: Niebrzydowski.

EB: Huh?

MK: I think that was her last name.

EB: But she was nice.

MK: So this is a picture from Northeastern.

EB: Yes, this is Northeastern High School.

MK: Are you in this picture?

EB: This is me right here.

MK: Right here on the end? Okay, great.

[Pointing to people in the picture]

EB: I don't remember her, but I remember her. Her parents owned the 5 & 10 cent store on Van Dyke, Jeannette Sherman. This guy's name was Palumbo. I think her name was Lewenberg. Her parents had a furniture store.

MK: That's great.

EB: But I can't even remember the name of the bakery. But when I got to know her in high school, not romantically.

MK: Wasn't Modern a bakery?

EB: No, Modern was a Jewish bakery; this was a Polish bakery.

MK: Okay.

EB: When I got to know her in school, I say it wasn't romantic but I respected her. When you talked to her she was a decent person to talk to. So I always liked her, I say not romantically. Here's another picture while we're at it. That's me with the crazy hat. That's Ferry School right there. His name is Archie Michalski. Here's the store with Charlie Murz and me in front. It's not a good picture.

MK: Which one is you?

EB: The one in front. The one sprawled across by the door is Charlie Murz.

MK: Okay.

EB: And next door on the other side of us was a wallpaper and paint store. I got all kinds of stories to tell you about this nice lady. And this is where Kukawski lived and the store was in front. And the back door was right by the alley; there was no backyard.

MK: Okay so tell me about the shade store, Eastern Shade, right? Isn't that what it's called? Eastern Shade and something or other company.

EB: Are you talking about Hogan's window and window shades and venetian blinds?

MK: Right.

EB: OK, well I'm not sure if it's Hogans. But that's the name that came to mind. It could have been Hoganowski. I remember Hogan but I'm not positive that was the name. I couldn't tell you anything about them. They minded their own business. And there was no one my age there. But next door there are a lot of stories here. There was a couple who owned the bar.

MK: What was the name of the bar?

EB: I'm not sure but I think it was--

MK: Was it the Welcome?

EB: No I don't think so.

MK: So what was it again?

EB: It was a mother and father that before my time that I can remember they were dead and the bar was left to their son and I think his name was Henry. He got killed in an automobile accident somewhere on a highway and the bar was left to two sisters. There were three sisters but one was just a little girl. And I think their names were Aurelia and Adelaide [It was Aurelia and Adeline – MK]. And I never knew their last names. But the younger sister was a little younger then I was but we played together. Helen, they called her Helenka. And she was a nice girl. And these two, they were nice. But I'm

giving you gossip. Upstairs in the Ferry Wallpaper and Paint, Dr. Lipski had his office in front and the family lived in the back. They had a daughter named Joanne, very pretty girl. She was older than I was. But was very close to these two girls. But the mother didn't want her daughter hanging around with, what type of language that happens in the bar, and she was discouraging being friends with these two girls. I don't know if it was fair or not but she was watching out for her daughter. So that's the gossip over there.

MK: And the name of that bar again, you remember it as being what?

EB: Bristol.

MK: Okay, Bristol.

EB: But they as far as I know they did a decent job, the two sisters. And I personally liked Aurelia and Adelaide [Adeline – MK]. They were both friends, older than I was but they were very nice. I guess they knew I played with their sister. Who happened to probably be the prettiest one out of the whole bunch, this young girl. So that's all I can tell you about that. Then comes Kovitz Department Store then they had an empty lot here. There used to be a lot of fun here. There used to be weeds growing there. So we take a popcorn box, an empty one, put a brick in it and leave it right in the middle of the sidewalk and some big shot would be coming by with his girlfriend and show how far he could kick that popcorn box. I have to tell you they, ha ha ha, were doing a dance on one foot. We did that quite often. Later on Hoffman Studios rented this lot so when they came for wedding pictures he parked the cars there. And Mr. Hoffman asked me if I wanted to a job to drive, park the cars. He was going to give me a job. But I said I didn't know how to drive. But I had the job if I wanted it but I never did. And they are very high class nice people. Okay, then there was Three Brothers Department Store.

MK: You remember them at all?

EB: Schneider was their name.

MK: Right.

EB: And there were three brothers. They gave me a job to take their, they had canvas over the window so the sun doesn't stay there and there was clothes in the window. It was about that high and it hooked on they had a middle section. And you could go into the store this way or that way. There was like a middle section they used for display. And they gave me a job but they never paid me. They gave me clothes that got soiled or -that was my pay. And my dad used to get on me and say, "Son, it's time to put the shades up or the canvas over the windows and crank up the awning." I said, "Dad, he doesn't pay me. He just gives me a big smile; he give me a t-shirt or something else." Dad says. "Look you got a job." My dad did it half of the time because he didn't want his son to be dishonored. But the hell of the kind of job to get where you don't get paid you get shirts or things like that. Anyway they weren't all that bad.

MK: What kind of store was it?

EB: Similar to Kovitz, very similar. I think Kovitz had a little higher grade. And next there was Wrubel Hardware Store. A man, his wife, and they had a daughter. And they lived above the store and I didn't know too much about them. He never bothered anybody and nobody bothered him. They were good people. And I got to know the daughter a little bit.

MK: Okay.

EB: The daughter got pregnant. And the guy who did it lived on the other side of Forest so she asked me and another girl in the neighborhood would we deliver a note to somebody. We said sure. So she told us the address and the man's name was this and give it to him and nobody else. Well, we didn't read the note but he was the guy that made her pregnant. And he was not about to marry her. It was a shame because she was nice Polish girl, she was. And his name was Mike, he was a son-of-a-bitch; other than that they were very honorable people. But he used to sell Dutch Boy paint, I remember. He had a big sign, Wrubel's, no no Wrubel's Dutch Boy Paints. And here was this gas station. Which became other things too. Upstairs, the place was sold to an optometrist, Dr. Mackiewicz.

MK: Mackiewicz.

EB: Okay, I didn't say it the right way. That's the Polish way. We use to call him Dr. Mac. He had his business upstairs there. He repaired the whole building. That's after Mike had died. And he had a successful business. And then later on underneath that's where they had the gas station. I'm trying to think. A Hungarian family opened up like a hat shop, women's hats and all that. And I used to play with a nephew of theirs. I'm thinking H-A-R-T-Z something Hartzull or something. [It was Elsie Herzog – MK]

MK: So we're between Ferry and Kirby?

EB: Exactly in the middle of the block.

MK: I don't know.

EB: That's like getting into the '40s.

MK: This is in the '40s?

EB: There was a ladies hat shop. My wife bought a hat there.

MK: You're not talking about Dobiesz?

EB: No, that's next to Kukawski.

MK: That's further down the block.

EB: But I didn't know too much about them.

MK: Okay.

EB: But there are a lot of stories here in the gas station. The guy was a drunk. Mike was a drunk. I'll tell you his name but I couldn't spell it. Szczepkowski but it isn't S-H-E-P, its S-C-Z or something. I used to play with these boys.

MK: Yes, Szczepkowski?

EB: I used to play with these guys. And he was probably a very good mechanic but he had a drinking problem. And they used to take him to the hospital to get his stomach pumped, I remember that. His wife was a very nice lady. And the kids were very nice. He used to beat the kids. Our houses were just that far apart [Mr. Bloch shows with hands – MK] and I could hear, and I learned my first word in Polish. *Pasek* [belt – MK] and the kids would be screaming and the wife would be trying to hold the husband but she couldn't control him. She couldn't; he would beat her too. So, I could hear all that going on, the commotion and I liked those boys. I think--I don't know if there were any girls but there were at least three boys. And one day I went outside and a wreath was on their door and he had died. So we were outside and the boys said, "My dad is dead." And I said, "Aww, I'm sorry to hear that," or whatever. And they said, "Have you ever seen a dead man." I said, "No" and they said, "He's upstairs in the living room laid out in a casket. You want to go?" "Yeah." Now, I'm about eight years old and they're--one of them maybe my age but the little one, the tiny, the smallest boy I don't remember his name, except it was Szczepkowski and I had to really rack my brain to come up with that name. And we went upstairs and went to the living room and there he was laid out in the casket and there was where you could kneel in front of the casket. The little one stood up on it and hit the old man right in the nose. And I was shocked; he use to abuse that boy and I could understand why the boy hit the father. And he felt better because he knew dad couldn't get up to get him. He knew that. And the thing I know, the place was sold and the doctor Mac got it. Although, there was another family that moved in there, though I don't remember their name. I remember the girl was crippled. Virginia's brother had a 22 rifle. They used to shoot the rifle constantly in the house. They lived in the front section – the rear section was where they shot the gun. The rear section was riddled with bullet holes. The brothers were having target practice this one day. One of the bullets went through a window and hit a man in the shoulder, It was an accident. They kind of tore up that building. Then Dr. Mac got it and repaired the whole place and it was a nice place after that. But I often wonder what happened to the Szczepkowski boys. And then the nicest family on the block. We can talk about me later on. It's more important to tell you about the stories of wallpaper and things. But first to get it out of the way I'll tell you about Dr. Lipski who owned the building.

MK: It was next to you?

EB: Next to us. And later sold it to the lady Jennie Levenson, sold it to her and I think they moved away. [Note EB: Jennie Levenson rented the store below Dr. Lipski's office. Years later Jennie bought the building. The Lipskis moved away.] But how do you say ashes in Polish?

MK: Popiol

EB: Right, I didn't remember. Their son Arthur ran for office. Arthur Popiel P-O-P-I-E-L now that you told me. And he didn't get elected but he was a tall good-looking guy. He had a sister name Joanne who was very beautiful.

MK: Who son was he now?

EB: Lipski.

MK: Lipski's son.

EB: Dr. Lipski never talked to us. Mrs. Lipski did and she was a very talkative woman. She was alright.

MK: Why was the son name Popiel when they were named Lipski?

EB: When he ran for office he just changed his name for whatever reason, I don't know. But I remember they used to say Arthur Ashes; when you said it I remembered it. And they were nice people, classy people. I remember we used to go out behind the building in the alley. Dr. Lipski used to have teeth laying out there for trash.

MK: He was a dentist?

EB: Yes, he was a dentist.

MK: Was he Polish? Was he Jewish?

EB: He was Polish. After the family sold the building and moved, I never saw or heard from them again. I have good memories of their daughter Joanne. She was always friendly towards me. She would always have a hello for me. I had a nickname my mother gave me. It was "Noonie." I have no idea what it was supposed to mean. Joanne always called me Younyee. So did her mother. One day Mrs. Lipski asked me if I know who broke her attic window. "I don't know, Mrs. Lipski" If she thought I did it she was wrong. I thought it was funny she would ask me that. I was full of mischief, but I would never do that to my neighbor. The Lipski dog was a small bulldog. Our dog was a German shepherd. I could never figure out how they made connections. I knew when our dog came home soaking wet that I was going to be a godfather again. From the second floor Mrs. Lipski would throw a pail of water on the dogs when they got hung up. Our dog mothered dozens of pups. We gave them to our neighbors. Lipski's dogs must have had weak sperm because every pup looked like a German shepherd. All this was about

the Lipskis who lived upstairs. Downstairs was where Jennie Levinson had her wallpaper and paint store. Jennie was my favorite person on Chene Street. She had bright red hair and a good sense of humor. When I had nothing to do, I'd go visit Jennie at her store. I knew Saturdays she would be listening to the opera. She liked stage productions. She was a classy, intelligent person. Whenever Jennie would go out to lunch or tea, she would ask me to watch the store. I would gladly do this for my buddy.

MK: Her name was?

EB: Jennie Levenson. Her name became Perla. Jennie went to Poland for a visit. While she was there she met a teacher, they fell in love and got married in Poland. I don't know if he was a Hebrew teacher. He was Jewish. Jennie came back to the U.S. and was making arrangements to bring her husband to the U.S. That was never to be. In the meantime, Hitler invaded Poland. She never heard from him again.

MK: Where was she from?

EB: I thought she was from Russia. I always thought she was from Russia. It must have been Poland. She could speak fluent Polish. I used to hear her speaking to her customers, she really could rattle it off in Polish.

MK: So her maiden name was--

EB: Levenson.

MK: So her married name was Perla?

EB: Yeah, P-E-R-L-A.

MK: Which in Polish means pearl.

EB: Whenever I had time I'd go visit Jennie. I was present a number of times when two brothers who worked for Jennie as painters and hangers. Their names were Johnnie and Bruno. They had a drinking problem. They would be on a job for Jennie. They would be out of money but the job was not complete. They would be in the store asking for money before the job was done. They wanted to go out and drink. Jennie said "I'll pay you when the job is done." Jennie knew they would get drunk and not show up to complete the job the next day. I want to say that John and Bruno were really nice guys. I liked them and so did Jennie--but they had to have a few drinks. The battle went on and on. Finally Jennie would say, "Get out of the store now or I'll call the police." Finally they would leave. Bruno and Johnnie really liked Jennie. They would drive her crazy. This happened every once in a while. After the brothers left the store Jennie would say, "I'm pretty tough" and we'd laugh about it. Johnnie would tell me, "That redhead is a fighter." That's when they were sober. About this time Jennie bought the building from Lipskis. I can't remember if the Lipskis moved out or stayed a while and paid rent. Her father owned a wallpaper and

paint store on Piquette and Chene. Mr. Levenson helped his daughter to open this store. He was a hard working businessman.

MK: Do you remember his first name?

EB: No

MK: On Piquette and Chene? [It was Louis Levenson at 6059 Chene– MK]

EB: Right on the corner on the eastside, southeast corner.

MK: I don't have it down here. Let me write that down. And her address would have been what?

EB: I don't know, I don't know.

MK: Next door to you.

EB: We were 5444.

MK: So there would have been another store in here because her name was--

EB: Jennie.

MK: Levenson.

EB: And Perla, later.

MK: And the name of the store, do you remember the name of her store?

EB: Ferry Wallpaper and Paint

MK: Ferry Wallpaper and Paint, okay great. So was she there when you guys moved out?

EB: Yeah

MK: Do you know what happened to her?

EB: Oh Julia and I went to visit her on a couple of occasions.

MK: She's not alive is she?

EB: No, Jenny died a couple of years ago. I saw it in the paper and I really feel there's a hard working woman that found love and she never got her husband here. He died. They killed him.

MK: Did she ever re-marry?

EB: No.

MK: Do you know what year she died? You said you saw it in the obituary.

EB: Two, three years ago.

MK: Oh, where was that? The *Free Press* or the *News*, what paper?

EB: The *Free Press*, I check it over very well, I read the sports section, then I read the obituaries.

MK: So it was Levenson Perla, that was how it was listed? Or Perla Levenson? If I wanted to do a search.

EB: No, I think it was Levenson, really.

MK: Okay, okay. Jennifer.

EB: Jennie.

MK: Oh she went by Jennie.

EB: Was that Jeanette, Jennie. We don't know. We just called her Jennie.

MK: Okay

EB: And as red hair as you could get.

MK: Do you know what part of Poland she was from?

EB: No.

MK: Did she speak Polish?

EB: Sure! She used to talk to the wallpaper hangers, that's a lot of Polish. And they'd say ziu ziu ziu don't say that. Ha ha ha. It was kind of a cute thing, but they used to drive her crazy. And I liked them--Johnnie, Johnnie, and what's the other one's name? Bruno! I didn't know their last names, and they were very nice to us kids. You know they'd see us in the store. A lot of times I had nothing to do, I'd go into Jenny's, I'd sit down and we'd talk.

MK: How old was she then, when you knew her?

EB: She must have been 15-20 years older than I was.

MK: Okay, great.

EB: Hoffman Studio.

MK: Tell me about Hoffman Studio.

EB: He was a quiet man, big guy, very good photographer. And his wife was a beautiful woman, and she especially liked me--I used to play with her daughter.

MK: What was her daughter's name?

EB: In Polish, Henia--Henrietta.

MK: Uh huh.

EB: I don't know what it was but she was short and fat, I mean--bigger than a midget.

MK: I remember other people telling me about that.

EB: You remember that?

MK: Yes, Yes.

EB: And I used to play with her and Mrs. Hoffman was so grateful that I would play with her daughter because a lot of kids wouldn't. I had two retarded sisters, so things like that didn't bother me. So she was always nice to me. And when Mr. Hoffman offered me the job to park cars, he was sincere about it, but you know he wanted to pay me back. I remember they had an apprentice in the back room learning to be a photographer, his name was Casimir if I remember correctly, and he was very nice to me. And we used to play, Henia and I used to play, and we'd go in the backroom where they had the frames, and they were busy doing things with pictures. Oh, they would color them in, they didn't have color photography then. But I remember Mrs. Hoffman, did you ever meet her, Julie? Mrs. Hoffman was a very pretty woman with a lot of class. And Mr. Hoffman belonged to the Polish Legion. I remember seeing a picture of him in his Polish soldier's outfit. And I think that's what the Polish Legion was, now this is only a guess, is after World War I Poland took some land away from Russia and Russia was weak from all the nonsense that went on in the Russian government--they were weak--the Germans just blew them away. And either just before the war, or when the war ended, Poland grabbed some land and Russia never forgot that. And I think payback came when the German army, no, when the Russian army was on the other side of the Vistula River, Warsaw was on this side, and the Polish fighters--because there was no army, it had been wiped out--the freedom fighters wanted to know should we wait until you come across the river or should we attack the Germans now. And the Russians said go attack them now, don't worry we'll be there, and they never came. And the Poles got wiped out. I think that was

payback for what happened after the war, and Russia said you know you got us at a weak moment, now we're going to take it back and we will never forgive you. I know there was no love between the Poles and the Russians; there was NO love. So I think that he belonged to that Legion, and I'm not sure of this, but Maternicki might have been with that bunch too.

MK: Yeah I think they were, in Pilsudski's legions, yeah.

EB: Did you know of the Polish legion?

MK: Yeah, yeah--

EB: Okay, then--

MK: You're on track--

EB: Well I won't say it. If I'm not sure I'll tell you I'm not sure.

MK: No, no you're okay.

EB: That's why I didn't know like Bristol. Was that another bar? Or was that--but that one kept coming back to me. And I never knew what happened to these sisters. I never knew. Because I never went back to Chene Street once I left.

MK: I actually met one of them, Constance. Her name, there was a Constance up there. It was a niece.

EB: Were they related to them?

MK: Hojnacki was the name of the people running it.

EB: The venetian blind place?

MK: Yea, the venetian blind place. It was called Eastern Shade or something like that.

EB: Alright, but I came up with the name Hogan.

MK: There might have been, I met the woman

EB: But that's close to the Polish name isn't?

MK: Yeah, but they had a son who was injured in an elevator accident and became completely disabled you know; he had brain damage and he lived up there with them. So I know a little bit about the history of that store. Okay so we're on the Hoffmans?

EB: Yeah, so I wanted to say, if I ever met Mrs. Hoffman again. I don't know if she's still alive, I would give her a kiss. She was sweet to me and some people were not sweet to me. Now another story Bruiser's Cafe which became a lady's hat shop or something later on. [Note EB: I don't know his real name, his bar was called Bruiser's Café]

MK: Dobiesz?

EB: Bruiser had this originally, this was in the early '30s. He had a bar. He took a liking to me; I must have been four or five years old, not long after we moved into the store. He took me over with my parent's permission to Lenzon's Department Store and bought me a bus. That was about that big, it was gray and I played with it for years. You couldn't destroy that bus. But he liked me and he wanted to do something for me. But the friendship ended when I walked--behind his bar, it was like a courtyard, where the garage should be there was another little house that they rented out. So I walked, there was a little walk way and I walked behind it and saw a cat with kittens and I wanted one of those kittens. I was just a kid I didn't know anything. I didn't have any brains. So I took a kitten and brought it home. And my mother and father said where did you get that cat? And I said Mr. Bruiser I called him Mr. Bruiser and they said you can't have that cat. And I said why? And there was a big argument but I had to take the cat back. And when he saw me bring it back he was done with me. You know--he never said this. But it was like for all I done for you I went out and bought you a bus and you stole one of my kittens. Never had anything to do with me again and he was wrong, but that's how it was. And then later on it become that hat shop. I don't know what happened to Bruiser. So then we had the Florsheim Shoe Store which I never had much to do with. I want to tell you when we get back to Kukawski later on, these people here for the record, right behind me, the alley on Ferry Street lived Lou Smolinski. His brother lived next door to Lou, Phil Smolinski, and I don't know if *Dziadzia* was there, that was their father, old, old man. When this was all farm land he was the farmer, grandpa was. And Lou worked for Dodge Main. He used to bump out cars that got damaged on the line. He was a bump and paint man and apparently very good. And I guess his brother Phil worked there too. And somewhere along the line they decided to go into the bump and paint. This was a barn. I don't know if it's from the farm.

MK: So the barn was behind which guy's house?

EB: Behind Lou's house. And they had the bump and paint shop and they did good work. And I knew their daughter, Violet, a very pretty girl and they also had a little sharp son, called Bobby. And over here they had a little cottage and I don't know if grandpa used to live there or did grandpa live here or there. But they rented the cottage to a Polish immigrant family. Now I tried to spell it the way I pronounce it, but it was Cwieplakowicz was the name but I don't know if it was spelled like that [It wasn't. The name is Cieplechowicz according to the 1940 Polk Directory – MK]. I don't know. There was a mother and father. They were nice people. And we use to play with the sons. One of them was younger than we were and one of was older. And the older one I don't remember his first name but the younger one Chester was a comedian, nice kid though. We liked him. I remember we used to go out and buy Pepsi together, but if you

bought a six pack you got a better price on it or something. So the older son who ended up working in the bump shop over here was a nice guy. He didn't bother anybody. We all liked him. So anyway the brother Phil had a daughter named Lorraine. The Smolinski family were so smart they knew there was a little gang in the neighborhood, or clique, and I was one of them. Bobby was liable to suffer. They were nice and oh were they smart. Lou used to play baseball, Phil used to play baseball right in the alley with us and they treated us like we were family. They were smart; they didn't want their kids pushed around any. I didn't know that then, I know it now. And the mother was a very pretty woman, both of the--I don't know if they married sisters, I don't know. But Bobby is still around. He lived around the Piquette area somewhere, not toward Woodward, east. And he had a write up in the paper but he had a mother and father to be proud of because these people were very smart and were liked by everybody.

MK: When you talked about the clique you had this wasn't related to the Kirby Street gang?

EB: No, I knew some of them. In fact I mentioned--there's one of them was a complete thug.

MK: What was his name?

EB: Bobby Williams, a complete thug. Ray Smith, that's a friend of mine, and I were walking right near the Modern Bakery that's just the other side of Frederick. I still remember Bobby Williams and he and another guy, Williams and another guy they started slapping us for no reason we didn't even look at them and they attacked us. We were 14, 15 years old and they were like 18, 19. And I went to school with Williams, Bobby's sister, Margaret. And they lived right in the area where the gang did. But out of the whole bunch most of them weren't as bad as people said they were. If you got to know them they were not bad.

MK: Did you know of any other guys?

EB: Goofy, Tubby, they all had nicknames. Twe-twe if he hit you you'd go twe-twe.--Mordell Boys there was Johnny, Tony, and Dominic and there was a whole bunch of them, Rat Eye. That was his nickname. I liked him.

MK: And they all lived on Kirby?

EB: Or around there. Oh Stinky Davis was another one too. Ha ha ha. But I knew most of them and we got along alright. The only one that gave me a problem was Williams and I say he was a thug. I remember hearing from somebody about this guy, this is years later. He is an adult now and married and ran over and killed one of Mordell's kids. He didn't do it intentionally. He was the only one I had bad feelings for. And if he didn't become a bouncer at a night club or a bar he could be a highjack man somewhere. He was not a nice person. And he was not Polish. He was Irish. But he was the worst of the

bunch. But I knew them. And my wife knew some of them too. They used to come into the restaurant.

MK: You remember any of them?

JB: I remember Tony Mordell. I didn't bother with them.

MK: Okay why don't we get back to the stores now, let's cross the street over here.

EB: I don't know how to spell it Koszorek, I don't know how to spell it.

MK: K-O-S-Z-O-R-E-K

EB: But they were there. I never went in there because I was a good kosher boy. Ha ha ha. I probably went in there when I went with Murtz to go buy some lunch meat for his dad, I would go here and there. [Pointing to a map] No there's two of them. And other than that I don't know too much about them. Over here I don't know what it is, but I put down might have been a barber shop. I'm not sure. Was I right?

MK: I'm not sure either. Just north of Koszorek so we're talking Palmer now?

EB: No.

MK: No, we're talking between Ferry and Kirby. So were going up one block. Yup, a barber. You're right.

EB: How'd you like that?!

MK: Stanley Klosinski.

EB: Oh I want you to know on my block. I had a good memory.

MK: Yeah.

EB: I think, over here I spelled it wrong was Ochylski's Meat Market. Did I spell it wrong?

MK: It's O-C-H

EB: Okay, now that you've said it I remember. But I think over here was another Ochylski.

MK: Right, there were two Ochylskis.

EB: I was right.

MK: There was Marcelli [Note EB: Marcelli doesn't sound like a Polish name. Check this out if you can] and another one, Casimir. There was two Ochylski Shops. [the other was Zygmont Ochylski – MK]

EB: I said no there couldn't be. Yeah, there were two. You know the last two weeks I've been racking my brain.

MK: You must of.

EB: So anyhow there was Ochylski and I remember here was Stanley's Café, bad story there.

MK: Why? Tell me the story.

EB: My dad was leaning against a telephone pole in front of our store. He was smoking a cigarette and relaxing after a hot day. This was in the evening. A man walked out of Stanley's Café, crossed Chene Street and approached my father and hit my father for no reason at all. He hit my dad in the left temple area. The blow knocked my dad down. The attacker was a big man (about six foot tall). My dad was 5 foot 4 or 5 inches. I suspect that Stanley (the owner of the café) was a Jew hater. This is only speculation but this is what I think happened. A few guys were sitting around the bar, getting drunk, when Stanley said, "Look at that Jew across the street. If I any of you guys beat his ass I'll buy you a drink." I was only 5 or 6 years old and I saw the whole thing. I didn't understand what happened. Now, understand this. The above quotations were what I surmised being said in Stanley's just before the attack. If I'm wrong, I'm not off by much. In all the years we were at the store, Stanley never said "Hello" or even looked at any of our family. As this commotion was going on, the man next door came out to see what was going on. When he saw my dad getting up, he hit the drunk so hard he laid on the sidewalk blinking his eyes. That was the end of that incident. The man next door was the owner of a men's work clothing store. His name was Mr. Herman. Previously his store was next to Central Appliance on the next block north. A few years Jennie Levenson moved into this store. Needless to say I always liked Mr. Herman after that.

MK: Was he Jewish?

EB: Yeah, so that is the end of that story. But there has always been a bad memory about that place because we never talked to him and he never talked to us. We never bothered him. But apparently, he didn't like Jews which was not uncommon. But when you had a few drinks some of your bad side comes out.

MK: You said it wasn't uncommon, tell me more about that.

EB: There wasn't a whole lot going on about that stuff. This is one of the nasty things that happened.

MK: But were there other times when you or your family experienced either bad feelings or--

EB: I had a particularly nasty experience happen to me when I was 11 years old. The culprit was my 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. Next door to our house was Mike's Garage. That evening after I fell asleep I was awakened by a disturbance. I heard some noise. The fire department was next door. I got out of bed to see what was happening. It was a minor fire and it was soon taken care of. In the meantime the experience had excited me and I had a hard time going back to sleep. When I woke up I was late for school. No clock, but I always woke up on time. I rushed to school as fast as I could, knowing I was already late. When I got to Miss Kowalski's classroom I approached Miss Kowalski's desk to apologize for my tardiness. She looked up at me in anger, "Why are you so late?" "I'm sorry I am late but we had a fire next door and it kept me up so I woke up late." She got up from her desk and stood in front of me and without warning slapped my face as hard as she could. First of all, I was not expecting the slap. Second of all, I told her the truth. She screamed out "you liar" then from behind I heard my classmates laughing. Why? I can't even imagine to this day. She was judge, jury, and executioner. I should have run out of the room to the principal's office. That bitch should have been fired. I didn't and she got away with it. I may have not been an angel to her, but she had no right to do what she did. I didn't figure out until I became an adult. I never saw capital punishment metered out before the incident or after. This stern faced bitch let her hate get the best of her. This was anti-Semitism at its very worst. I wonder how many times she glared at me with hatred in her eyes? That's the only time I had a problem like this while I was in school. About this time Father Coughlin was at his prime. He would broadcast his hate on Sundays. Or was her parish priest the one who incited her? Can you imagine hitting an innocent kid?

### **End of Side B Tape 1**

### **Beginning of Side A Tape 2**

MK: This is the interview with Leo, no I'm sorry with Erwin Bloch and this is the second tape. You were talking about the teacher...

EB: Anti-Semitism

MK: Anti-Semitism can you tell anything else you remember on the street in terms of any kind of experiences you had regarding that?

EB: No you've got to understand I did not have too much trouble with kids. I had the trouble with the adults. And there's another incident at the C.F. Smith Store which is across the street from us. They were like a forerunner of supermarkets. They had two men running the store, a manager and a clerk. Now my mother would send me across the street to get an item or two. And I would be greeted, I'm talking about 7, 8, 9, 10 year old that was my age. I was greeted at the door with, "What do you want Jew boy?!" It was the manager, and the clerk he went along with all of it.

MK: Were they Polish?

EB: I think so, most everybody was. And it was embarrassing if people turned around and looked at me like I was a freak. And when I would walk in with my mother not a word. So I thought they were a couple of cowards. My problem was with adults not with children, very seldom with children. Another incident, have you ever heard of Goike Kashub Snuff?

MK: That's here on Grandy.

EB: Right. They had a wide, grassy area between the street and the side walk, so we used to play football out there. My clique. And up the street was New Era potato chip factory. And we'd go to New Era and we'd buy broken chips for 5 cents a bag, a bag about so high. And then we would go to Goike Kashub Snuff. Was like a party store almost, but they did manufacture snuff.

MK: Downstairs.

EB: Yup, as a matter of fact there was a cigar factory further down the street on the same block. I don't know if it was R.G. Dunn, I don't know. And near Warren there was a cigar factory. So we'd be playing football out there and we'd decide it's time to get some potato chips. So we'd walk down to New Era. On the northwest corner of Medbury and Grandy. We would purchase a bag of broken chips for five cents. Then turn around and come back to Goikes Kashub Snuff to buy a bottle of Sweet Sixteen (16 oz. and loaded with gas). Goike's was like a party store. They made snuff in the back room and sold groceries in the front part of the store. We would eat the chips and try to drink the Sweet Sixteen. If we couldn't finish the pop we would squirt each other with the balance of the pop. So, now we have the chips and we enter Goike's; on the inside there was a red faced young man in his early 20s in charge. He was one of the Goike klan. Do you know what a Kashub is?

MK: Right, from Northern Poland.

EB: I thought it was when a German and a Pole marry, their offspring is a Kashub. Anyways, as we entered the store, I was greeted by this Goike person with, "What do you want you F...ing Jew bastard?" I didn't even know he knew me. That in itself was bad enough to listen to, but in the background I could hear my companions laughing. I want to say this much, if the roles were reversed, my Polish buddy walks into a Jewish owned store and this bigot Jew berates him. I would say, "When you insult my friend, you insult all of us. Let's get out of this place." If my so called buddies didn't have any class – I couldn't blame them.

MK: Did your parents ever talk about their experiences?

EB: I never told them that.

MK: How about them? Did they ever bring up unpleasant experiences?

EB: No, no. My mother was liked by the Polish ladies because she was a sympathizer. They'd come in and she'd say my Stanley did this he took the whole paycheck and drank it up and my mother would say, "OH for goodness!" And she wasn't acting she would really sympathize with this woman. "OH terrible thing!" And they loved to talk to her because they'd get sympathy from her. My dad kept out of that kind of stuff. But they liked my mother. She was well-liked. And she could speak Polish very well. She helped in the store, too. And no, they did not talk about--the reason they left Hungry and Austria it wasn't because they were treated so well it's a major move to go from one continent and move to another continent where they talked a completely different language; that scared off a lot of people, they wouldn't do it. They did it because they had to do it. My grandfather on my father's side was a scribe. Most people in Europe in those days didn't know how to read or write because the government wanted it that way. That's my version of it. They liked people ignorant, they wanted them that way. But he could read and write. Did you ever see Hebrew writing?

MK: Oh yeah.

EB: He used to print by hand in the Torah. He had such a firm hand. His talents were passed on to me. I was pretty good in art. When I was in high school, I had a block print that was on display at the Art Institute. It was a print of some petunias. My art teacher liked the fine detail on the flowers. Two of my children were talented in art. Two of my grandchildren are good in art. In fact, they scare me they are so good. My dad never warned me about what a cruel world I was entering. Maybe he didn't want to discourage me. I saw something about this subject on TV in the '50s or '60s. Some grandfather was trying to explain to his grandchildren why they were being called names by their schoolmates. He said "If you can get past the bigotry it will build character." My brother Ray had a low tolerance for the "Juju" stuff. I remember he and I were walking in the alley behind Chene Street when we reached Hendrie. A fellow I knew as Witek came out of a printing press and said something to my brother. I was very young and don't know what he said. The next thing I know, my brother is fighting with Witek. I think his father owned the printing press. The whole incident is vague to me. All I know is my brother didn't run away. He fought Witek. That last I remember was Witek going into the printing press building at a fast pace. I was too young to be proud of my brother. The "Juju" stuff was unrelenting. Some parish priest was doing his job. Another story was told to me by Harry Kuitz. Harry was coming home from school when Tony Mordell took his hat and ran away with it. Harry told my brother about the incident. My brother told Harry that he would get his hat back. In later years, I got to know Tony. He always treated me with respect. Also, he always called me Ray Bloch, was that because he respected my brother? During World War II my brother was a Lieutenant in the 77<sup>th</sup> Division. He fought in the Philippines and some other island. During the invasion of Okinawa (which was done by the Marines) his division was invading the island of Iwo Shima which was northwest of Okinawa. During the invasion of Iwo Shima 16 of his men were killed as they hit the beach of Iwo Shima. One of the men was Ernie Pyle; he

was a newspaper man writing about the invasion. I don't know who the other 14 men were but my brother was number 16 that was killed. He's been dead 59 years and my eyes are all watered up.

MK: So what about your sisters?

EB: Well they were retarded.

MK: What were their names?

EB: Louise and Edith.

MK: From birth they were--

EB: Yes, what the doctor told us, if my mother would have had anymore girls they would have been retarded. The boys were not retarded. I can't tell you anything about some recessive gene. But, that was a problem too, I use to have to listen to crazy girls. That's how people would say, "That's the crazy girl." And we just buried Edith about two years ago, wasn't it?

MK: So how did she, after your, when your father moved out and you guys moved over to the other end of town did they always live with them? Did they always live with your parents?

EB: Yeah, but Louise died.

MK: When did she die?

EB: They were on Chene Street weren't they, when she died?

JB: No, I don't think so. She moved with us.

EB: She had rheumatic fever. And she was taken to the hospital and she died in the hospital.

JB: And your father had Edith come with us.

EB: My father realized that he wasn't going to burden us with my sister so he had her sent to Lapeer. Which, I don't even want to think about what happened over there. Because they closed that placed up and decided no more institutions, they put these kids in private homes. Group homes like. And she had some bad experiences. I tell you if I had a retarded daughter I would have to keep her home because what happened at Lapeer, not necessarily my sister but there were all kinds of bad things happening. There were men there. And I'm sure a lot happened because you can't watch them all the time. I would not--even my sister went to private homes was not well treated. And finally at the end we found a very fine woman that had a home a little north of Imlay City, a beautiful

home for those people. And she treated them like they were her own children. This was such a wonderful woman. I always blamed Lapeer Hospital for not wanting to treat my sister. They shipped my sister to a nursing home in Yale, Michigan where she died the next day. If you want, you can print it.

JB: She didn't live near Imlay City. She lived north of Imlay City.

EB: Who?

JB: Ruth Ann.

EB: North of Imlay City. So I can't think of it, some little town getting close to the thumb but not there. [Note EB: The little town was Yale, Michigan]

JB: She was a diabetic.

EB: She was blind too.

MK: Aww, man!

EB: My wife and I would visit Edith every month; she looked forward to seeing us visit her. Edith just loved my wife Julie. All Edith wanted was to be loved and Julie gave her plenty of that. I know one Sunday we were due to visit Edith but the roads were very icy. We called the home she was staying at and explained our problem--icy roads, they understood. We said to tell Eddie we will see her next week. Edith went ballistic when she heard the bad news. She had been waiting for us all week and was not going to accept icy roads as an excuse. She wanted her people this week! They finally calmed her down. When she saw us the following week she said "I sorry." Whenever we visited Edith we'd ask her, "Where should we go?" She would say "Da Donald's" (McDonald's) and "I want a fish sandwich and coffee. Three cups coffee." You would be shocked if you realized how some people treated retarded children. One time at the Lapeer McDonald's a young man in his twenties along with his wife and two children came into the restaurant and loud enough for us to hear, "Look at the Goo Goo over there." Meaning my sister. His wife looked at him as though to say, "Shut up you damn fool." I don't know how I contained myself. There's a word for people like him. There's no word in the English language to describe a prick like him. Give the Germans credit for the word. It's called Schadenfreude. It means taking pleasure in the misfortunes of others. I have met many of these people in my lifetime. Chene Street had more than their share of these people. I remember a woman and her two small children looking at my sisters and saying, "God punished these people for what they did to Jesus." She didn't care if I heard. I was about 12 years old. I would say a lot of Schadenfreude is based on jealousy. I have a neighbor who fits the description. She had a poor provider for a husband. Now that he's retired, he's making more money now that he's retired than he did while he was working. They're all over the place. Now that you've been tipped off, look around, you'll find them. Back to my retarded sisters. My darling aunt came over to visit my mother (her sister). She drove up with her daughter who was my age. I will never forget the look of

horror on my cousin's face when she looked at my sisters. She refused to get out of the car. She just sat in the car looking straight ahead in spite of the fact my sisters were begging her to come out of the car. One more sad story, when my brother got married, he insisted that his sisters also attend. The bride's mother was having a fit about the girls being at the wedding. She was more worried about her social standing than the happiness of the bride and groom. I was in the service at the time. The bride's mother was a real bitch.

MK: Sounds like it.

EB: No, I was very hurt about that. The fact is when I was in the first grade, the teacher said, "Are you Raymond Bloch's brother" and I said, "Yes." She said, "He was a very good student." I said, "I know." She said, "You might even be better," because in the first grade I knew all the capitals of the states and after what happened with Kowalski that was the fifth grade, as you go down the hall, I changed. I was not the same student. Each grade moved up a room. Miss Hoskins was the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher--first room. Miss Kowalski was 5<sup>th</sup> grade--fifth room. When I left Kowalski's class I was never the same. My marks went down.

MK: Was it Kaminski?

EB: Kowalski

MK: Her name was Kowalski?

EB: Kaminski was the librarian's name.

MK: So it was Kowalski.

EB: I changed. I think that might have had something to do with it. I was not the same student. I would cut up a whole lot. I would be like a comedian. I didn't know my multiplication tables. I did not know them because I was horsing around, I wouldn't learn them. When I had to make a living as an adult, boy did I learn them fast and I'm very good at them now. But, there was something that happened and I think that had something to do with it, between my sisters and Kowalski. She was probably the worst of-- all that nonsense that I had to put up with. She was probably the worst.

### **Break**

MK: I want to come back because there's a lot of stuff I'd like to go over with you, okay, but let me ask you some questions. Your name is?

JB: Julia.

MK: Okay, and your maiden name?

JB: Olinick

MK: How did you and Erwin meet?

JB: In that restaurant.

MK: Did you live in the neighborhood?

JB: I lived on Grandy I think.

EB: Hancock.

MK: Hancock and what?

EB: About McDougall I think. Oh no, it was--near Moran, between McDougall and Moran.

MK: Did you go to the school in the neighborhood too?

JB: No, I came from Pennsylvania. I'm Ukrainian.

MK: Oh, okay. What year was that?

EB: '43, '42.

JB: '42.

MK: And how do you spell your last name? Your maiden last name?

JB: O-L-I-N-I-C-K

MK: And are you Jewish or not Jewish?

JB: No I'm not. I was brought up Catholic and not Roman Catholic, Greek-Catholic. I converted to Judaism, took lessons.

MK: And so when you met Erwin you knew he was Jewish right?

JB: Yeah but I didn't know anything about anti-Semitism.

EB: She didn't know that, yeah.

MK: 'Cause I'm wondering you know whether the differences between you were real differences? Were there issues around?

EB: No, not really. Not when it comes to religion. Neither one of us is religious. And I mean it I'm not trying to--we've never had that problem. Never not once.

MK: So your family isn't here? Your family is not here?

JB: Oh my family, no. But the kids went, my, our two sons went to Hebrew school.

MK: Was there a bar mitzvah?

JB: Both sons had Bar Mitzvahs.

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MK: Do you have any of those left?

JB: I think so.

MK: So uh--

JB: My neighbors next door were Polish. They had a hat store. They told me don't marry him.

MK: What were your neighbors' names?

JB: No, the neighbor next to the restaurant. When I went and told my father, he said, "Well it's your life do what you want."

MK: So what did the neighbor tell you? What did the hat lady tell you?

JB: Oh she told me not to marry him.

MK: Because he was Jewish?

JB: Mostly because, I think, probably could have been but I figured it was the girls more than anything. I don't know. At that time I didn't know about anti-Semitism. I walked right into it. Ha-ha I thought he was Italian. He's seen Italian women at the market and they look at him and the lady told you you're Italian.

EB: I was a salesman.

JB: No, no, no.

EB: Carpeting.

JB: No, no, no. This was at the market when you go randazzled.

EB: No, no, no, no.

JB: You sure?

EB: Yeah. Anyway she start speaking Italian to me, some little old Italian lady and I said, "I don't understand Italian." And she said, "Don't be ashamed." I don't know why. She took me by my chin and said, "DON'T BE ASHAMED OF YOUR ITALIAN!" But I understood what she was doing. I'm not going to argue with the lady you know.

MK: You guys probably want to do lunch and stuff, so--

EB: You can join us for lunch I got tuna fish.

MK: I'll join you go.--in a minute.

**Break.**

**End of January 28, 2003 interview**

**Beginning of February 6, 2003 interview still side A of Tape 2.**

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski and we're at the home of Erwin Bloch again and today is February 6, 2003. And you were talking before we turned this on a little about the NRA, a little story, maybe you can share that with us. And then I would like to go back to the maps and you started and pick up where we were and just follow step-by-step. Does that sound reasonable?

EB: Sure, no that's alright.

MK: Okay, good. So what about the NRA?

EB: Well I remember as a child all merchants on Chene Street or wherever they had the NRA sign in the window with a blue eagle with its wings spread it was the National Recovery Act. That was for us. But for the Polish people it was NRA, *Nima robota Amerika*. [there is no work America -MK] Ha ha ha. We used to laugh.

MK: Was the Stanley's the one where the drunk came out of? Tell me little about Stanley's Café.

EB: Well it was a neighborhood café and they had a juke box in there, as I use to lay down and go to sleep I could hear that juke box playing and they had quite a few customers.

MK: Do you know who the owners were? Do you remember the owners at all?

EB: No.

**Julie Bloch enters.**

MK: Hi.

JB: Hi.

MK: How are you?

JB: Okay.

EB: I knew Stanley owned it and I knew him by sight but we never talked to him. I was a kid you know he was a grown up person.

MK: Okay next.

EB: The Ochylski Meat Market. Apparently there were two Ochylskis on the street.

MK: Marshall and--

EB: Yeah I didn't. Here's where it was. [Note EB: We were looking at a map I drew] I racked my brain and I keep coming up with two Ochylskis. And I said was that so? And you verified it. This one here I don't know too much about. I guess they were--were they brothers?

MK: I think they might have been brothers, yeah.

EB: And for some reason they split up but they liked the neighborhood. This was the original and then this one opened up. [Note EB: Pointing to a map of Chene St. between Ferry & Kirby]

MK: So the original one was north of, south of Stanley's Café? Just south of it.

EB: Yeah there was just like one building between it. And the only story I could tell you about Ochylski's is we had a policeman in our store because we're right across the street and he had an opening in a shoe box that he use to sit behind a row of shoe boxes and you couldn't see him as he came into the store and he kept his eyes on Ochylski's Meat Market. There was some threat to them or something and the police department had him sitting in our store and I remember my mother giving him coffee. But Ochylski had a good meat market, other than that I don't know too much about it. Now, the next store was the Premier Dairy. It was like a grocery store, but they were very unique. They had a butter churn right in the window. They made their own butter and butter milk and you'd buy it. This is like 1934, 1935, on a hot day there's nothing better then ice cold buttermilk. That's the way I feel anyway, except beer of course. And they used to put it

in a container that you know like cheerleaders use to--a megaphone is that what you call it?

MK: Mmm hmm

EB: Well it was shaped like that. And I remember them washing down the--churn with a hose--this was inside not outside. The area where they made their butter and buttermilk. Now the owner was Jack Epstein and I think his step-brother George Blonder worked there also and they were both two real nice guys. When we had nothing to do, we'd go there and talk to them.

MK: Where did Jack Epstein live? Do you know?

EB: He didn't live in the area. He lived in the west side somewhere.

MK: And when you—let's look at the store out front. In the window you've got the churn with the butter making and buttermilk making. Was there a--where was the sign out front? Was it hanging out? Was it flat up against it? Was it in the window?

EB: I don't know. That much I don't remember.

MK: When you walk into the place what did it look like? How was it set up?

EB: It was different than most grocery stores because he had barrels of stuff. Like if you wanted beans he had barrels of beans. He had like when you get right as you walked to the end of the store there was like--a refrigerator counter and he had all kinds of cheeses in there, and he had some canned food. But it looked like a wholesale place almost. And I think they had fish in a barrel; a lot of the Polish stores had barrels too. And I remember he drove a Chevrolet. He'd park it out in front of the store.

MK: And how long was Premier there? Do you remember? Was it there as long as you were there?

EB: Hmmm--I think it was there when I came back, when I came back from the army. When I was a kid it was always there. It probably opened up some time in '33, '34 right in there. And when it closed, I don't know, we lost our brother during World War II. And when I came back from the army we were all upset, as were a lot of the neighbors, so I don't recall when they left.

MK: Did Jack Epstein own it the whole time that you recall?

EB: He and his step-father I do believe, yes.

MK: And what do you remember about him? You said you saw him quite a bit. What did he look like? What was he like?

EB: Well he had dark hair, good looking, real good looking guy. While he had the store I remember he got married. He'd bring his wife around occasionally, you know to help him in the store. But, his step-brother George Blonder was real nice. We had a lot of fun with him.

MK: And George Blonder didn't live there either though?

EB: No.

MK: Okay, good. Because I didn't have the store. I have a list of Jewish owned businesses but I didn't have Premier down. I didn't know it was Jewish owned, so it was Jack Epstein. Okay good

EB: Okay, C.F. Smith. I remember lots of stories. Had problems with the manager and clerk when I was a kid. But they had the best Macintosh apples and I remember I loved radishes. And you'd get--they had their produce in the front window. As you walked in the store over here this was all window, all the produce was there. I remember picking up Macintosh apples and to this day I don't know who has better apples than he had. They were really good. I would go there occasionally for a can of this or can of that. But I know apples to this day are still my favorite, Macintosh apples and radishes.

MK: You said you had trouble at that store?

EB: Pardon me?

MK: You said you had trouble with that store?

EB: Yeah, that was when I must have been about 8 years old and my mother said go across the street and get a can of this or can of that and I'd walk in and get a nasty little of greeting like, "What do you want Jew boy?!"

MK: In English or in Polish?

EB: No, in English. I didn't understand Polish then I picked it up a little bit since then. And I remember everybody used to turn look at me if there was people in the store and I was embarrassed and I didn't know why he did that to me. And I could tell you what a coward he was because when I walked in there with mother, not a word.

MK: Do you remember his name at all?

EB: No.

MK: Was he a Polish guy?

EB: I think so. I know the clerk was. I'm pretty sure he was because mostly you were either Jewish or Polish in that neighborhood. And you had to talk Polish to really stay in business. It helped a whole lot if you did.

MK: Okay, so that was C.F. Smith.

EB: Alright, next comes Kroger. They moved in a little later than the rest of 'em. I remember it was like the forerunner of supermarkets. And then they had another one, A&P, that moved in after Kroger. And that was like what was going to be.

MK: Did this Kroger store, was this a self-serve store?

EB: Yes, I think it was self-serve. I'm not 100% sure but I think so because most grocery stores in the neighborhood had canned goods lined up along on each side of the wall, maybe a few in the middle, they had shelves at the end of the store was the meat market maybe somewhere there would be a little produce somewhere. But these were not along--these were in like bins and tall shelves, piled high. That's why I say I thought that was the forerunner was going to be. Next door was Woolworth 5 & 10 and they built on this lot '35, '36, '37 that's when they built the Woolworth store. And it was always a busy store. But before they built that Woolworth, there was a little store, the northern part of the store was a candy store. They sold soft drinks there. A little narrow store and I suspect it was owned by Otto, Last name O-T-T-O. And I went to school with his son. His son's name was Arthur. And I suspect--I knew they wrote up numbers there. Almost everybody did, but it might have been a bookey joint too. Ha ha ha. But I was a little kid. But I'm going back.--

MK: So Otto was the last name?

EB: Yeah.

MK: And they weren't Polish were they?

EB: I don't know.

MK: Did you go into the Woolworth store?

EB: Oh sure, I remember one time when yo-yo's first came out they had a demonstration of yo-yo's right in front of the store and they had a crowd of people around there and this man I think it was a Hawaiian man if I remember, was working the yo-yo's and we were all in awe. The things he made that yo-yo do. And I remember that about Woolworth. Another time there used to be a man, a beggar used to sit there at the north end of the store, outside and he'd have his hat out with pencils or something and he didn't have any legs. He got around on a wooden platform with wheels, like roller skate wheels something like that. And he had two things with handles on them he used to propel himself with. Well he died there one day. I remember he just died right out there and they wouldn't tell us he died but that's what happened.

MK: How old were you at that time?

EB: Must have been about 11 years old at the time of this. And this store was well accepted by the people, they liked the 5 & 10.

MK: That's the only building still standing on this whole block.

EB: This?

MK: Yes.

EB: They built it out of brick that's why. Because most of the other stores were built of frame, not all of them but most of them. But when you say that's the only one standing doesn't surprise me. Well okay, now the next place was a Polish bakery. I don't know the name I forgot it but I showed you the girl's picture.

MK: Niebrzydowska.

EB: Was that her name?

MK: I think that was her name.

EB: What is it?

MK: Niebrzydowska the last name.

EB: I would know probably by her first name. But,

MK; Was it Irene?

EB: Irene. Could have been, I don't know, I don't know. Because I had a short relationship with her in high school. We used to see each other on the street. We would walk by each other without saying anything, we just didn't know each other. But, when I met her in high school it was a pleasant surprise one of the nicest girls we had in the high school, very smart girl. And they lived above the bakery and they had very good bread. Probably, the best Polish bakery around there.

MK: Wasn't it the Modern Bakery?

EB: Pardon me?

MK: Wasn't it the Modern Bakery? Wasn't it called the Modern Bakery?

EB: No, Modern was two blocks up.

MK: Oh okay

EB: I knew. Jack, his parents owned that. And they're still in existence somewhere else. And then we had General Tobacco wholesale. They sold a lot of things wholesale, cigarettes and cigars. But there was other things they sold too. But this store which I just recently remembered was on the corner moved to Wrubel's after Wrubel's moved out, that was later on. Now there are very important things in here.

MK: I think we talked about this one.

EB: Did we talk about this one?

MK: We talked about--why don't we go back up then to the beginning and see where we're at. Let's go back up to Farnsworth. We were at Fredrick, Kirby. On Farnsworth and Chene from the southeast corner.

EB: And were going to work north?

MK: Go north and then go back up.

EB: Okay right on the corner of Farnsworth and Chene is where my father originally had his store, the shoe store and men's clothing. He went strictly into shoes when he moved down 5444 Chene. Now, my grandmother owned the building and back here [Note EB: pointing on map] was a cottage. Some of the property was so long that you could build another home. I remember there was a family living in there after we left. And it was during the hardest part of the Depression; they couldn't pay their rent and I know my uncle went there to collect rent and they got into a fight with the guy that lived there with his family. And I didn't like that uncle anyways, I was rooting for him not to win. I don't remember what happened but I didn't like my uncle, very strict, unbending. So then if you cross the street. Are there any other questions you want to know?

MK: No that's fine.

EB: Now I told you away from this recorder that when I was moving in 1926, I remembered it and X here on this map marks the spot where that truck drove by with my father sitting on the floor of the truck with his feet on the running board with two men in the truck. We were moving. Our furniture was going there or maybe it was the shoes I don't know. But my mother and I were walking along this street and right by that spot I said, "Mom there's daddy." And he was waving at us. That was in 1926, my dad said to me, as I told him the story later in years, he said, "You couldn't remember when you were two years old." And I said, "Dad I remember it." He said, "You heard us talking about it." I said, "You never talked about it." I remembered it. I remember in this Farnsworth store there was a kitchen in the back of the house. We lived upstairs and there was a wooden stairway, it was open. It wasn't a closed stairway. Do you know what I mean by--?

MK: Yeah.

EB: You could see through it and I remember crawling up the steps as a kid even before I was two years old. But that's all I remember on that. That's all I remember. And then as you cross the street there was some bar there, the neighborhood bar. And I'd hear noise as I walked by. I knew nothing about the bar; I had never been in there. And then the next place north, was my barber shop that's where I got my hair cuts.

MK: Can you describe the barber shop and barber who did it?

EB: Oh yeah, the barber was a Polish guy I remember.

MK: This is Albert Szczepanowski, barber.

EB: I wouldn't know his name because at that time you didn't--young people didn't have to know older people's first name. That's the way it was. But I know I liked him, he was a nice guy, he gave me my hair cuts.

MK: How many chairs did he have?

EB: Oh boy. Two or three.

MK: Now was he the only guy in there cutting hair?

EB: I don't remember. There could have been somebody else.

MK: And then did you go in there by yourself? Or did your dad or mom take you?

EB: No. When I got older I'd walk right to the barber shop and he knew what kind of hair cut to me. Now after his barber shop on my map, I've got three vacancies, three lots I don't know what was there but I've got to tell you on this block there were a number of private homes. And the only other store I remember was Maliszewski's grocery store and I can still see the place.

MK: Describe it for me.

EB: Well you walked in, as you walk in straight ahead was the counter with the meats, lunch meats. Like in those days they were butchers too. You could buy your meat at the grocery store. And his counter was over to the right. And that's where you paid Mr. Maliszewski and later in years as I got older we used to send unsuspecting young boys to the store to ask for a quart of pigeon milk. And he'd blow his top because they kept coming steady. But that was our private little joke. But we liked that store for that. And a lot of kids--ha ha ha, And there's another like three not all of them would be private homes I'm talking about the lots. If there were businesses I don't remember them.

MK: There's a listing here there's a tailor, there's a couple of vacant stores there's a lot of vacant stores along that block back In this directory in '35.

EB: The only one I would remember, there was Greek Coney Island there. I don't know what the name was and my brother took me there when I was maybe about 14 years old and I had my first bowl of chili there. And I was hooked on that stuff from then on. It was a quarter. I ate it and I loved it. It wasn't the dark brown color like today it was more like a beige color. The way they made it. What they put in there I don't know but it was good. In fact, I thought that was a better bowl of chili than you can get in most places now. And behind or above the store was one of my friends. He lived there, his family was there.

MK: What was their name?

EB: His name was Ed. And you pronounce the name **Izulok I-Z-U-L-O-K** and his nickname was Fats. He wasn't terribly fat but he was a pretty tough guy. If he hit you he'd wobble your knees. He was strong.

MK: Was he Polish?

EB: Yeah he was Polish. And they were dark haired Polish people. Like you kind of. And most Poles are either blond or brown. But there were a few with dark hair. I seen his brother around there and his sister the whole family looked alike with the dark hair. They were good people. And I don't know what was next. That could have been the tailor next. I don't know. It could have been. But on the corner was Tennehouse Gas Station and it had a special place in my heart. I brought my first car there when I was 17 or 18 years old. It was a green, convertible, 1934 Pontiac with a rumble seat and was that a beautiful car! It had trouble with the transmission or on the gear shift something would go wrong with it and you'd have to get a screw driver and move the gears a little bit then it would be okay. But other than that, I had so much fun in that car and my wife Julie and I use to go riding in it and the rest of the bunch was jealous that I had a car and they didn't.

MK: Where'd you keep your car?

EB: In front of my dad's store.

MK: Over night you'd park it out on the street?

EB: Yeah, and then when the policemen would come by you're not suppose to park there for awhile you can't just have a permanent park. The police man would mark the tire with a piece of chalk. My dad would erase it after the policeman left. I never got a ticket. Dad was really loyal to me.

MK: Do your remember Tennehouse? The guy that owned it.

EB: Yeah he was one of the few Jewish guys that might have been was his name Tennehouse?

MK: It was. The reason I know because I looked through the Jewish Federations Book from the '30s of members and he is in it. This guy is in it. So I know--

EB: He was a dark haired guy and I always liked him. He was a nice guy. But I didn't buy that car from him. I bought it from the mechanic that worked for him and ah how I loved that car.

MK: Do you remember the mechanic's name?

EB: No I don't.

MK: Tennehouse a Polish-Jew? Did he speak Polish do you know or not?

EB: I don't think so, no.

MK: But he lived in the neighborhood. He lived a few blocks away.

EB: I didn't know that.

MK: Yeah I got his address. I wrote it down. Right in the neighborhood.

EB: But he was a likeable guy. I liked him. And incidently I paid \$125 for my car.

MK: So you were 17. What year was that?

EB: 1942 maybe right around there.

MK: So it was an eight year old car and you paid \$125 bucks for it.

EB: And it was in good shape, I mean it wasn't a wreck. We couldn't get the roof up and down, it was a convertible and the radio hung by a wire, ha ha ha, and the gas gauge didn't work. And the reason why I had a lot of problems with that gas gauge, one of my friends who referred me to you [he's talking about Charlie Murz – MK] I asked him to drive my car downtown to pay for my tickets. I gave him money because every time the police stopped me I didn't have a drivers license so I got a ticket. So I accumulated about 3, 4, or 5 tickets. So I asked my friend would you go and pay my tickets and I gave him the money and he said sure. And he paid for them, but that sneak had another key made and later on I got a job at Detroit Transmission which is around Farnsworth and Riopelle or was it Theodore? It was right in there somewhere and I worked there 'til one day at lunch time, I was like on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> floor I looked out the window, because I was in love with my car and I wanted to look at my car and the car wasn't there. So I called the police and said my car has been stolen. And then I said to the police department maybe one of my friends borrowed it. And he said, "Well what do you want me to do?" We're

not going to arrest him and turn him loose because you don't want them to press charges. I said well maybe you better forget it because I'm pretty sure that's what happened. And then I started thinking back. I filled up the tank and the next day we'd run out of gas. My wife and I we'd run out of gas and we just filled up the tank! And another time I went to put gas in and it didn't take any. So what was happening was he'd been stealing my car while I was at work. And if he had money he'd put gas in it, if he didn't he wouldn't. So that's why I was running out of gas so that was my little story. And he never knew that I found out about it, I never told him. But that's what happened with my car.

MK: Okay so let's go across the street and go back up--

EB: I'm just going to go to the ones--I think there was a bar over here or a restaurant but I think it was a bar. If it was a restaurant I would have been there.

MK: On my list it says vacant store.

EB: When I was a kid it wasn't always vacant. Okay, but next was the Modern Bakery. And it was Jewish owned and it was a very good bakery too. And they lived above the bakery. I didn't remember what their name was but I know the son was Jack.

MK: Here it says Walter Wydro. Could be? Could that be it?  
[I don't know why I said that. The 1935 Polk says Isidore Landsberg lived upstairs and in 1939 it was Max Nygowski – MK]

EB: Doesn't sound like a Jewish name.

MK: No it doesn't. 1935 the baker that was there was Walter Wydro.

EB: Well I don't know, maybe they sold it.

MK: Could be. The son's name was Jack?

EB: Jack, and I remember that we were upstairs from the store playing, he had a very nice house above the store and later in years I'm talking about within the last five, ten years there's another Modern Bakery it was in Oak Park. It was north of 10 Mile in a shopping center, it was a delicatessen which is still there and then came the bakery. So I walked in there one time and I say when I was a kid I lived on Chene Street and there used to be a Modern Bakery there and I said are these the same people? And the woman said yeah. And I said I remember Jack, I use to play with him. Well, we weren't little children we were approaching our teenage and we played at his house and I kind of liked him. She said yeah there is a Jack and he was still around somewhere; so it was the same people.

MK: Okay so do you know if it still exists today?

EB: Modern?

MK: Yes.

EB: Last time I was in it, it was there. It may not be anymore but there might be more Modern Bakeries

MK: Okay, so it was on north of 10 and what road was it on?

EB: Greenfield.

MK: Greenfield.

EB: Julie what's that shopping center there?

JB: Where? 10 and Greenfield?

EB: That's where the delicatessen is. That's where K-Mart was.

MK: Okay I know where it is, I'll track it down.

JB: Oh its Lincoln, Lincoln and Greenfield.

EB: Yeah Lincoln and Greenfield. It was north of 10 Mile.

MK: Now was this Jack in school with you? Did you know him from school or just from the street?

EB: I don't know, I don't know. He just popped into my life and disappeared out of my life. And I don't know. He was a very nice guy you know, got along great. Okay then next I don't remember, blank in my map. And after that south of that was Raimi's Dry Goods and you happen to know a lot about Raimi's. All I know is they were pretty smart kids in school because not from my knowledge my brother used to tell me that. And there was somebody called Abe there because Abie Raimi keeps ringing a bell. It was either the father, grandfather or one of the kids.

MK: The father was Jacob, that I know. One of the kids was Ralph. There may have been other kids but I don't remember. There probably were a bunch of kids. Ralph was the one I interviewed. I interviewed him last year. He had brothers and sisters so I wouldn't be surprised.

EB: But I do remember that name through my brother. And they had that store for years and years. I don't ever recall going into the store. And I personally don't know any of the Raimi boys. And then the next store going south again blank. And the one above that was a Chinese hand laundry. My brother use to take his shirts there.

## **End of Side A Tape 2**

## **Beginning of Side B tape 2**

MK: So after the hand laundry was?

EB: Jaruga's music store and they sold musical instruments and as I told you the number one seller in a Polish neighborhood was going to be an accordion. And I used to see clarinets, trombones, trumpets, everything in the window. And I've never been in their store. I remember drums in the window. The son just passed away I would say within the last year. And the right up in the obituary was that he was a dentist and that didn't surprise me because he was kind of a studious fellow. And I told you we liked the family and we used to play on occasion. But we weren't like everyday friends.

MK: The reason why I know of this store particularly is because that's where I found Ralph Raimi. He, Ralph Raimi is now a retired professor of math at the University of Rochester wrote this thing on the web about his parents and the Chene Street store and he mentions Jaruga and he mentions the son Zdzisiu he called him Zdzislaw. In English means George or something like that.

EB: That might be.

MK: Yeah, they called him George. But his name in Polish was Zdzislaw. They called him Zdzisiu. So he had these memories of Zdzisiu and he was--this kid was older than Ralph. That's what he told me. So Ralph was the youngest of the Raimi kids from that part of the family. But I also heard from Mr. Zukowski, the Ksiegarnia Ludowa person. You know the People's Book Store?

EB: Oh yeah, yeah.

MK: Because People's Book Store used to be right here originally in the '20s. This is where they opened it. So Jaruga was on one side of them up here and then Raimi was the other side. And Mr. Zukowski the son not the original owner, the guy you ran it later told me that Jaruga was also the big moonshiner during prohibition on the street.

EB: Is that true?

MK: That's right.

EB: Fooled me because I knew nothing. And I knew almost everything in the neighborhood. Fooled me.

MK: That's right, that's what he told me. I don't know if it's true. He was a major bootlegger on that block and on the street.

EB: Surprise, surprise. I remember Mr. Jaruga, Ike looked like he sold musical instruments, not like a bootlegger. The next building is not ringing a bell with me. Then just south of that building was a noisy bar. The Wolf family lived on the corner. I used to play ball in the alley with Paul and Ben Wolf. Home plate was right behind the noisy bar. I remember seeing a pile of junk in the alley behind the bar. I saw a bottle cap that said 7 Up on it. I never saw that cap before. I put that cap in my pocket. The fashion in those days was to wear the bottle cap on your baseball hat. All the kids did that inside the bottle cap was some cork. You would pry out the cork with a jackknife or a screwdriver. Then you would place the bottle cap on the front of your baseball cap with about 5 or 10 bottle caps and then you thought you looked pretty cool. It was the fashion to do that. It sounds stupid now. Anyways, I found out that 7 Up was a soft drink and I learned to love it. Lots of gas. Now the corner store was Wolf's dry goods. It was owned by Meyer and Molly Wolf. Molly was related to my mother. They were cousins. I know my mother used to visit Molly every once in a while. The Wolf's had two sons at that time, Ben and Paul. Saul came a little later. When I visited the Wolfs we would listen to the radio. "Little Orphan Annie" was our favorite radio program. The sponsor was Ovaltine, which the Wolf boys drank daily. The house was behind the store. The house and the store was all one building, Mrs. Wolf had all kinds of rentals. There was an upstairs that was rented out to a nice Polish family. Also, the Wolfs owned a two story building behind their home. They also owned a small building just north of their store. It couldn't have been any larger than 12 to 15 feet wide. This store is where you got your hat cleaned and blocked. It was run by a Macedonian guy. With all those rentals plus the dry goods store they put their three sons through college. Ben, the oldest son is a professor at some university near Philadelphia (I think). Paul was a professor of pathology at Wayne University, later moved to San Francisco area and now lives in San Diego area. Probably retired now. Saul also lives in the San Diego area. He grew up to be a handsome guy. He's either a teacher or a principal of some school out there. Not bad for a dry goods store. Our son was taking a course at Stanford University at that time. And Paul invited Julie and me to visit him in San Francisco. We spent two weeks at my son's apartment. We could see Kezar Stadium from his apartment. My son gave us a tour of San Francisco we'll never forget. We saw everything. When we returned home and were watching "Streets of San Francisco" (a TV program about crime in San Francisco). Whenever the program showed a tourist attraction in the background my wife would say "we saw that place." We visited Paul and his family during our stay in San Francisco. I insulted his wife by saying, "Michigan grows the best tomatoes." We were discussing her tomato plants at the time. Paul also took us to see the San Francisco Giants at Candlestick Park. I'm pretty sure Willie Mays played center field that day.

MK: But he had originally been a professor at Wayne?

EB: Yeah.

MK: Then he moved to California?

EB: Yeah.

MK: Do you have any contact with any of them? You do. Great! Let me write this down hang on for a second. So how long, were they there as long as you were there? Did they move out?

EB: As far as I can remember when we lived on Farnsworth we were kiddy corner from them, they were there. And they stayed there for a lot of years. What happened in the '40s I don't know. I'm talking about after, after the war. After the war I don't remember what happened.

MK: Were they German Jews? Polish Jews?

EB: Polish Jews.

MK: They were Polish Jews. And were they observant do you know?

EB: Oh yeah, oh yeah. Very religious.

MK: Do you know what synagogue they belonged to by any chance?

EB: Well, if you walked straight down from Chene Street where they lived, straight down west, the old Jewish neighborhood was there on Hastings, so there were synagogues there.

MK: So they belonged to them? Like Shaarey Zedek, or one of those?

EB: I don't know, I don't know which ones they belonged to but there were maybe 3, 4, 5 of them in that area. So they probably went there on those holidays you didn't drive you walked. Of course they didn't have a car and neither did we, until I bought one. So she really did a marvelous job considering all the hard times there were. She was very, very strict, tough woman. Everything would have to be just so with her. But she did a marvelous job with the kids

MK: Great, okay, great information.

EB: I got a lot of little crap I can tell you.

MK: Good.

EB: Oh, Siegels.

MK: Yes, can you tell me about Siegels.

EB: Siegels was like a high class ladies dress shop. And the Siegel family lived above the store. It was a nice brick building. And that was on the northwest, no the southwest corner of Farnsworth and Chene. And I remember seeing them and part of their garage, it

was a straight brick building and then part of it cut off and over the garage there was like a--not a porch but I remember seeing the girls and they were older than I was. I could see them up there and they were pretty girls, those Siegel girls. But they soon moved out and the store moved too. But they had nice women's clothing.

MK: This isn't the same Siegels that was later on. I remember a store name Siegels, a clothing store.

EB: I don't know. One more thing about Farnsworth and Chene. Down the street was one of the best friends of the Wolf boys, a little Romanian kid named Johnny Gulu, G-U-L-U a Romanian boy and they lived liked about half way down the block going towards Dubois. And I got another thing if you want to go into now about the bakery.

MK: Sure.

EB: I don't know if it was Farnsworth or Fredrick [Note EB: It was Fredrick] and Dubois was my mother's best lady friend. Her name was Mrs. Korn, K-O-R-N

MK: Okay.

EB: And they lived, the bakery was right on the corner, the northeast corner. I think it was Fredrick. Yea, it was Fredrick it wasn't Farnsworth. And Mrs. Korn, she'd always pinch my cheeks. It didn't hurt. When she'd see me. I guess that's the European thing, and give me a cream puff. Because they made cream puffs. But I got a story about the cream puffs. In those days I didn't talk back to adults, I didn't want them to know anything about me and but all kids were like that in those days. So one day I walked there with my mother, she wanted to visit her lady friend at the bakery, and I had to go to the bathroom. But I would not tell Mrs. Korn. So, I said to my mother, "Do you mind if I go home, I gotta go?" And she said go ahead it's alright. And I'm going to tell I was a blue streak running down Fredrick. I had to get home before I had an accident. She would have let me use the bathroom but I wouldn't ask. And I remember running across Chene Street and then I went from Fredrick, I went where I wouldn't have any interference, I went down the alley. And I got through that alley and then now we're on my block and I got about halfway through there and I didn't make it. And I remember I had my first pair of shorts. Well I dug a hole and buried them. I wouldn't tell my mother what happened. She never asked me what happened to those shorts. Before that we wore BVDs. They were like the forerunner of t-shirts and shorts. But, BVD's was a one piece and they used to have a tailgate on them. You would unbutton the back end if you had to go to the bathroom and they were white. I was glad to see them go. But that was my story about Mrs. Korn and they had a good bakery too.

MK: Did she have any kids?

EB: Yea, they were older. I was like a 10, 12 year old boy; they were like 21, 22.

MK: The reason I ask is because further up Chene Street just north of Harper, between Harper and Adele there was a feather and down company it used to be down below towards past you even down towards, Jack Korn was the guy that ran it.

EB: I don't know, could be. It might be I don't know.

MK: It used to be at 5247, 5249 so that would have been in this block, in this block.

EB: I remember, now that you mention it, I remember there was...

MK: Feather and down and it's listed in here as Jack Korn the owner.

EB: It could be. I don't know but my mother never mentioned that.

MK: Does the bakery have a name other than just...

EB: Korn Bakery right on the corner. They had the bakery and then they had--where he baked the bread and then further beyond, that's where they lived. Oh did I tell you about the beautiful aromas around Chene Street in the summer? Did I tell you that?

MK: You mentioned it but not in that much detail. Go ahead and tell me about it.

EB: Well we had so many bakeries around there and we had two potato chip factories. On a warm summers night, with all the bakery's going and the potato chip companies making their chips, just beautiful aromas. And then we use to run to that Polish bakery because that was the closest to our house, get the bread as soon as it was hot, right out of the oven and run it right home and put butter on it and you could eat the whole loaf with just hot bread and butter. It was just delicious. But I remember that we did that a lot of times.

MK: Good. Ok so we're done with the Farnsworth block. What about Fredrick, Kirby? Starting with Fredrick going like this?

EB: Ok, there was some kind of a clothing store.

MK: Jacobson?

EB: Could have been; I don't remember the name.

MK: Charles Jacobson.

EB: For me it's a blank. I don't remember.

MK: Raimi was telling me about him. He was friends with Jacobson.

EB: And it was a big, red, brick building. I think there was a store in the back too [Note EB- The store in the back was a shoe repair store], it was so big it was some kind of store in the back of the lot. But upstairs the Elias family there was more than one family I think that lived there. Well I went to school with Lena Elias. She and I went to school together. And she never talked. She never said anything very quiet girl. But I remember her. I went through the obituary and noticed she had passed away about 2, 3 years ago and she'd never married. The Elias family I think were Lebanese. They were nice people.

MK: They weren't related to the Elias Brothers?

EB: Could have been, I don't know. I often sometimes wonder were they the same people. I've thought about that but I don't know. I think that's a common name in Lebanese. And then there's a lot of blank stores here or houses. [Note EB- We are looking at a map of that block] And I don't know. I know there were a lot of private homes there and there were a few stores. But I remember the next one I come to was some heating company they sold furnaces. It was right in here somewhere. [It was the Royal Heating Company at 5328 Chene – MK]

MK: Okay

EB: But I know nothing about them. They were there somewhere. I may not have the right spot on the map for them. But next came private home and then came Maternicki's Toy Store.

MK: What do you remember about that store?

EB: Mrs. Maternicki was one of the sweetest, nicest ladies you'll want to know. You know Alice Murz, that's her mother. This is after her husband passed away, she just moved from between Palmer and Ferry she moved to between Kirby and Frederick. And she sold toys there and we used to visit here She lived behind the store. She had a kitchen behind the store and then a stairway going up and she lived upstairs. She never remarried again, but I remember one time when I was there with her daughter and her son-in-law Charles and we did something she liked and she just reached over and gave me a kiss and then she went like this, like when you eat something good [rubs his stomach] and you say, oh that was good, well she was telling me that was a good kiss. But she was that kind of lady, she was a nice, very, very nice lady and she spoke English very well. A lot of people didn't.

MK: Uh huh.

EB: We would go into the store every now and then and I'd meet Alice and Charles over there. I know on hot days, not only Maternicki's but a lot of the merchants in Chene Street that lived there above their stores, on a hot summer's night, they'd bring out chairs from the store, sit down in the entrance way and we'd sit there because it was too hot to stay in the house and my dad used to say to me "Boy, it's a hot day, why don't you run

down to the store and get a Party Pak?” That was the name of the ginger ale. That store. I’m pointing to the store. It’s right across where that clothing, that’s where I’d go to get Party Paks. They used to sell bread there, it wasn’t a bakery.

MK: Here it says Raczynski’s Beer Store.

EB: Well, they sold beer there too. But that’s where I’d go for the ginger ale. I know I could just see my father pour himself a glass as soon as I brought it back and he’d drink it right down. It was hot. Then he’d go like this, “ah,” because you know it pinched when it was going down. Yup, and he’d do that with beer too, although he didn’t drink that much beer. In fact I asked him one time, I said, “Dad, you always make that noise when you drink beer,” he said, “it’s good.” I said, “it doesn’t smell good.” He said “Here, take a little bit” and he did the same thing to me that Murz’s father did to me with the hot pepper. “Go head and try it, you’ll love it.” So I spit it out, I said “How could you drink that stuff?” Well, later on, you acquire a taste for beer and there’s not much that can beat a cold bottle of beer on a hot day. So anyway, next comes--I didn’t put the name down but I’m going to say it in Polish Pshabilski.” “PSha-bilski,” right, did I say it?  
[Przybylski at 5354 Chene – MK]

MK: Yup.

EB: I couldn’t spell it, but I knew who it was. Now, they had a liquor store plus a drug store right there. I don’t know his name. I remember his wife, she was a very pretty woman. They lived above the drug store. And like you asked me one time how the Jewish people and the Polish people got along. There were no open hostilities or anything like that but he was very hostile. Not her, he was. He didn’t want me to be friendly with him and I didn’t want to be friendly with him, but he ran a very good drug store while he was there. And I remember going there when we needed any drugs.

MK: How was he hostile? In what way was he hostile?

EB: It was anti-Semitic. Violently. I’ve met in my life--I’ve met and these were not peasant people, these were educated people. There’s a real-estate guy. He’s not in that-- That was later on in life that I met, he was openly hostile toward Jews. You know the Kovitz family?

MK: Right. You know I actually called Marilyn but she didn’t want to talk. She said she didn’t want to talk.

EB: She’s not a very friendly person.

MK: Yeah.

EB: She was never very close with us. Anyway Harry told me the story. He went into Przybylski’s store and he had to buy something and Harry had his back to Przybylski and Przybylski hit something real hard and made Harry jump. He did it to scare him. He was

like that. But, Harry said he jumped when he did that. That was not a friendly act. He meant to scare him, and he enjoyed that he scared him.

MK: Uh huh.

EB: I find the most anti were the more educated that's what I thought. I didn't say it was that way. That's what I thought.

MK: Was he on Chene Street?

EB: No. This was later. I met him later on in life. He was the same way. It's like if you insult these people, us, you get a special place in heaven because God's gonna mark it down. They didn't say that, that's my saying. And that's what I found and I found that the average guy that worked for a living if he felt that way he didn't bother him as much as it did the druggist or the real-estater. Now you take Hoffman for instance, now there was a--you know the Hoffman--?

MK: Uh huh.

EB: Now they were high-class people. And I often wonder if Mrs. Hoffman is still alive, whatever happened to her and you know, but there was no hostility whatsoever from them and neither from Lipski. Like the average hooligan didn't bother you as much as the educated. That's what I found in my life. Not that it was such a big thing, but you'd see it from there. Przybylski was never friendly with me. You know how you kid around with the kids sometimes?

MK: Uh huh

EB: Never. And I don't mean that hate poured out of his eyes it was strictly business. But just recently about five years ago, Harry told me that story about Przybylski scaring him. I remember one night by Maternicki's store. It was one of those hot nights and Mrs. Maternicki was sitting out there and the Przybylskis were there, he and his wife, and I was there with Murz and my wife. We were cutting up a little bit but he kept me at arm's length all the time. I didn't care. I didn't care. But, a lot of the people just sat there. Out there in front of their stores.

MK: Was that Harry Kovitz that you were just talking about?

EB: Yeah.

MK: He was the owner of Kovitz Apparel?

EB: After his parents passed away.

MK: And his father was Abraham?

EB: I think so.

MK: Okay. I remember, I didn't know, I saw the name Abraham Kovitz, but I didn't know who came after that, so it's Harry Kovitz?

EB: Yeah

MK: And he's not alive?

EB: No.

MK: And that's Marilyn's--

EB: That was his wife

MK: That was his wife. Okay, now I get it.

EB: We'd go to breakfast. We were in a parking lot one day. I was at some market and I looked up and I said, "That looks like Harry Kovitz." So I hollered over about four cars "Harry!" So he looked at me and he didn't remember me. So I said, "Raymond's brother, Erwin, remember me?" He said, "Oh, for goodness sakes" and from then on we'd meet occasionally and go out for breakfast and that was the favorite thing with us. I didn't like the way she'd talk to him. Harry was the perfect gentleman, very nice guy. He would never hurt anybody in any way. And, she would like, find fault with him a whole lot and I told her one time, you know you'll never find a better guy for a husband than Harry. But he was a little bit older than her and she would used to let him know about it. It wasn't--she was not happy and since he was such a nice guy he'd say to me, "Son't pay attention to her, she's really a nice person." But I remember that. But we kinda lost track of Marilyn, and I'm not surprised she didn't want to talk. I'm not surprised at all.

MK: Okay

EB: Here's an empty lot, been there for years. They used to have, Walker & Co used to have a sign, one of those big poster signs. And I learned to ice skate there. There was a big puddle of water that froze over. And I use to walk on my toes. On the tips of the ice skates from my house all the way over here, which is like a half of block. I want to tell you something, like a ballet dancer I walked because I didn't want to dull the blade. But that's where I learned to ice skate. And the kids use to climb up, they use to have steel bars behind that big sign, and we'd climb up to the top and look down at the world from there. But that was one of our climbing places. Now I don't remember what was here. This was across the street now. To me it's a blank.

MK: According to this across the street--

EB: There was a building there, but what they did I don't remember.

MK: According to this that's the-- that's the corner of Kirby?

EB: Kirby and Chene, yeah.

MK: So that would have been The Peerless Restaurant.

EB: That was a restaurant?

MK: The Peerless Restaurant.

EB: Well I don't remember it. And I used to go to the restaurants in the neighborhood, but I never went into that one. I don't know why. Now south of that was Sfire Brothers grocery. They were Syrian people. And they had this market. They used to have a cashier's cage right about like in the middle of the store, whatever you'd buy, that's where you'd pay for it. But it was--the meat department was over here. I think produce was over here.

MK: When you say over here what do you mean? What are we talking about?

EB: Well the back of the store was like the meat market. And the front, the northern part of the front was like produce over there. And they used to have can goods piled up on the floor. It was different then most places. Like Sfire and Premium Dairy did things like that. And I know my mother used to like to go shopping there.

MK: I'm interviewing one guy. I interviewed one guy that used to work there in the '30s, Mr. Jackowski. And I also interviewed someone coming up Ameen Solomon, who worked there also in the '30s. They were probably about 14, 15 years old at the time, so maybe your age in the late '30s.

EB: I would be about that age.

MK: And he lives here in Bloomfield. But I'm meeting with him a week from tomorrow, a week from Sunday.

EB: You're going to go and meet him?

MK: Yeah I'm going to talk to him. I got his name from somebody else. And they said yeah he worked there a number of years, Ameen Solomon, in the late '30s at the Sfire Brothers.

EB: Yeah I remember the store. And they'd have like stuff in front of the store on the sidewalks, bushels of stuff, they had that then, which was something we didn't see that often. But I remember the place and now next door, Zukowski's. Now when you told me Mr. Zukowski got shot I was very sad about that. He was a nice man, a very educated person like you know... They spoke with maybe a slight accent; he was a smart man. They sold books in the store, a lot of holy material for church and all that. And

magazines, that's what I dealt with him. But he had children, and I don't know how many, but I knew Martha, *very* nice girl and Walter. A lot of fun, we had all kinds of laughs. We'd meet in the restaurant, that's where we'd meet. And there was an older brother name Johnnie he wasn't close, but he was a good person.

MK: He was the one that was shot, okay.

EB: Johnnie?

MK: Yea, it wasn't the old man. When Martin retired John took the store over and John was shot.

EB: He died?

MK: No, but after he was shot he didn't really totally recover. He lives in an assisted living home over in St. Claire Shores, John does and he's got Alzheimer's.

EB: Wow. Nice guy. I liked him.

MK: The older man I remember him as a kid, because I use to go in that store. He was a socialist, he was originally a socialist and he was not religious. And it was funny because at St. Hyacinth the priest would say don't shop at the store because of him. Because he was a socialist, but he was the only store on the block that sold religious articles.

EB: Well, that's something. They lived above the store and I don't know if they had a parrot or something. [Makes parrot noises] But you could always hear that when you were in the store. I thought they had a parrot on the second floor (there was a stairway to the second floor. You could hear that sound when the door was open). Although it could've been something else. But Walter was one of the nicest guys I met on Chene Street. 'Cause he was very genial, always laughing, and a lot of times I would come to see Julie at the restaurant which we were coming to, she worked there, and Martha would be there and Walter would soon come in and we'd all sit in the same booth and have a-- just have a good time.

EB: But anyway--

MK: Walter's still alive in Texas.

EB: Texas?

MK: Yeah, he's living in Texas. He's old now, I mean he's got some physical problems but he did very well. He went to college and--

EB: Sure and Martha too. This man, Zukowski believed in education. So anyway, my favorite restaurant south of Zukowski's was--we called it Greenwich but it's Greenwich [he pronounces it correctly like the Village, the second time – MK] but we didn't know

any better because I guess the proper name was Greenwich if you follow the New York stuff and it was owned by Chris. I don't know what his last name was, a Greek fellow and he served a good meal there. And I remember, I told you about Lipski's dog and our dog and our dog was always getting pups. Well, we gave one of the pups to Chris because he had a little section behind the store where they had the garbage and all and he was afraid of a break-in so he wanted the dog so my brother gave him the dog. So, I told Chris one day, "I'll go back there and see him, see our dog." He said, "Be careful, he barks a lot, he might bite you." I said, "Nah, not me." Well, when the dog saw me it started growling and I ooh wee, ha ha ha, forget it. That dog didn't know I was like a godfather or something you know. So this store, it seems like I'm telling you something I already did.

MK: No. Go ahead. Why don't you describe it. Tell me what it looked like on the outside.

EB: Next was Sophie's Beauty Shop. I remember that. And her husband was a baseball fan. He used to hang around the restaurant too. Kind of a nice guy. He would always talk baseball and a nice fellow and Sophie was a nice woman. They had a good beauty shop there. And now the most famous bar on Chene Street. The Round Bar. That's where Zosia from Hamtramck, that's where she started, at the Round Bar and I had no idea what a good cook she was. But they used to have dancing there and they had a balcony too. Do you remember the--

MK: Yep. Yep. I interviewed Zosia by the way. Did I tell you that? I interviewed her.

EB: No. You didn't tell me. She gave up the place in Hamtramck.

MK: Yeah. She's retired and now she lives in Warren.

EB: Well, I remember I went in there one time and she had cucumber soup. I had never heard of such a thing. Is that a Polish dish?

MK: Yeah it is.

EB: It was good. But I didn't taste the cucumber. Maybe my taste was off that day, but she served a very good--you'd go down in the basement for that one. I forgot what street, but it was right east of Jos Campau

MK: Yemans.

EB: Yemans okay. But this was a very popular bar in the neighborhood. You could hear the music blocks away. I thought they had a live orchestra, did they?

MK: A lot of times they did.

EB: And I'd walk by and I'd hear the good times going on in there. Anyhow I think next door to that was a sausage place. They sold lunchmeat with sausage. Am I correct there?

MK: I think Jaworski was there.

EB: It could have been. Yeah

MK: Yeah. Frank Jaworski had a store there.

EB: Okay, nowww comes the famous King Theatre. It used to be the Fredro F-R-E-D--F-R-E-D-O--R-O. That was the neighborhood theater. On ladies day they'd have dishes they'd give away. I know they gave a little plaster of Paris statues away on--a movie that came out on cowboys and Indians. And that's what they had. And every week if you went you'd get one. Now, on Saturday that was the last of the week's movies on Saturday. And then Sunday's movie would start Sunday, except they had midnight theater. You'd go there at about 8 o'clock on Saturday, you'd see a double feature, that's last week's movie, this is the end of it. And then you would also see the next week's movie, both of them. So that was like, they'd have a full house every week. And I remember coming out one time, my brother and I because my mother, oh you didn't get home 'til 2-3 o'clock in the morning with all those movies. And she didn't want me wandering the streets alone. So we went together and we got to right about here, we crossed over. And here is the empty lot on the other side of the street and here come the Kirby gang with their huge Lincoln cars. It would seat about 10 people. And I don't know how old I was. My brother was four years older than I was. And the car stopped right as we got to the corner, it stopped right in front of us. We were being looked over. And my brother said out of the side of his mouth, he said, "Take your hands out of your pocket, you're going to have to defend yourself." And then the car just moved on. But that was one--But a lot of times that gang would line up along the front of the theater and look for people they didn't like. But I never, personally had a problem with the gang itself. I knew most of the guys. I went to school with a lot of them. But a lot of people had problems with them. I remember they used to go over to fight with the Piquette gang. And then there's an international YWCA, it was on East Grand Boulevard between Chene and Dubois or Du-bwa, ha-ha that's the correct way. The neighborhood boys pronounced the street dubois – in French it was pronounced du-bwa. So I knew there was an Italian bunch they lived around Moran, Mt. Elliott and they were going to be there. And the Kirby gang didn't like 'em and there was going to be a showdown at the Y. So I said I'm not going that day because I got dark hair, nooo way, they'd think I was Italian. Well they cleaned up on them that day. Then they would make up and they'd become friends again. And the same with the Piquette. They all became friends. In case there was a bigger gang they had allies. And all I knew was this one little Italian guy.

### **Phone Rings**

MK: You were saying you knew this Italian, this one Italian guy.

EB: Yeah, I didn't like him. He was a little smart-aleck. There's this girl we're going to talk about Virginia Lee Urbanski. She lived on Grandy. She was an excellent dancer, very good at jitter-bugging and her partner was this little Italian guy, Armando. Armando was a thug. I didn't like Armando because he saw me talking to Virginia. Because Virginia and I went to school, but he was so jealous, "How dare you talk to my girl?" You know. I remember these exact words he says, "Hey, Bloch you want to get you butt cut?" That's what he told me. And Virginia said we know each other from kindergarten. Well Virginia died at an early age. But both of them could really dance. Then they used to go to the Y and dance. I knew he was going to get it that day. But I was in high school at that time, but they worked them over pretty good. But I didn't show up. I didn't want to be mistaken for the wrong guy ya know. So--where was I?

MK: King Theatre.

EB: At the King Theatre. Oh, and next door to the King Theatre was Charlie's Sweet Shop. A little Greek guy ran it. He used to have a popcorn machine running out there outside and he'd bring it in at night and you could always smell that popcorn when you walked by; but he also made candy. That was the big thing with him. He made homemade chocolate candy. And we'd stop there to get the popcorn, but they didn't sell it in the theater. You remember Charlie's or wasn't he there anymore?

MK: They were selling it and I went to the King, but that was when I was pretty young then, you know. I was probably like five or six years old.

EB: Oh, well, he made good candy. He was a nice guy, and everybody liked him. Nice guy. I don't know what was here.

MK: We're now going up towards Frederick. Jacob Marcunos, there's a florist. They said a florist in 1935.

EB: I come up with a big zero. I don't remember a florist. But it's like, you know it just didn't even exist. Then we have what I called the beverage store and I remember you'd go in and they sold bread there too. That's where my dad sent me for the, you know Party Pak. And you said it was a beer store. But I remember seeing a whole lot of empty bottles laying around the place, but it was a big store. And uh.....

MK: Good. So that's that block.

EB: Yep. That's that.

MK: So now we're going to go all the way north now to Ferry. Because we did your block already. So we're now on Ferry and Chene.

EB: I would like to tell you a story about this house before we get on Chene Street.

MK: Okay. Which house is that?

EB: Okay, this is a private home. Okay, here's Chene Street. This was on Ferry, right across the street from Smolinski's.

MK: So this is going East on Ferry from Chene?

EB: Yeah. Okay, and one of my buddies worked there or lived there. His name was Ray Belau. [In the 1940 Polk Directory it is spelled Belau –MK] [Note EB – Belau was pronounced Below] Now, Belau and his family moved into this house, it was a rental house and it ~~was~~ had an upstairs and a downstairs. Mrs. Belau was a widow and they came from Coldwater, Michigan. That was probably about 1935 they moved in around there. She was overweight, she didn't have any teeth, but one of the sweetest, nicest ladies you ever met. She was always happy, it was the Depression but she kept her kids happy. Those kids didn't know it was a Depression. This lady, she really must have loved her kids because I never saw her angry. Although there could have been time, and they lived upstairs. The kids that weren't married was, okay I don't know if Tillie was older than Danny, the sister was Tillie, brother Danny, then my buddy Ray, and then his kid brother Tony lived there. We used to sit on the front porch forever. We sat there and watched cars go by and dreamed like, when we get older, "I'm gonna have this kind of car and I wanna have that kind of car." And that was our hang-out. All the family were nice people. We liked them all. Mrs. Belau had a daughter, married daughter living about two blocks north. Her husband's name was Columbo. I think he worked for the water department. Then she had another daughter, Mammie, that was older and she lived somewhere in the area. Now, what I want to tell you, the downstairs family, the man had Parkinson's Disease and he had like three or four children and we heard the rumor, the kids did, that he got walking that way with his hands shaking and all from -- from shellshock from World War I. [According to the 1940 Polk Directory their name was Buczek--MK] Although it could have been true, that's what we thought and anytime he had to go somewhere his daughters would help him because he couldn't walk by himself. So they needed a daughter on each side to take him wherever he needed to go. And we, being a bunch of dumb kids, would look and the girls, I remember that look yet, they were younger than we were and they weren't going to mess around with that bunch there, not that we were terrible. The look she had, the girls, is like, "That's my father, how dare you look at him like that." But kids are kids, you know we didn't know any better and if some of the guys would imitate him walking, I don't know, that could've happened. I didn't do it. But I'm not any more innocent than the rest of them. I remember the look of those girls, I will never forget, how defiant they were to, "You shouldn't look at my father." You know, they wouldn't say that. While we were sitting on the front porch they would never come out and they never bothered us in any way. But I remember how those girls defended their father. Whew! I wanted to tell you that story because there's a lot of little stories in the neighborhood and if those girls ever read your book, they should know that I'm sorry.

MK: Well, you had another house over here?

EB: No. This was a two-family house over here. This again, is on Ferry Street next to Belau. I don't know who lived there. It was a nice house though. This is a funny story. Here's a kid, it's a funny story. His name was Wisniewski. Arthur was his name. Mr. Wisniewski's wife died and he had a daughter and a son. The daughter was a little older than us. Very pretty girl, I remember that. But Arthur, we went to school with him. He used to say, "Wisniewski means cherry tree." Or "cherry" and I'd say "Oh, George Washington chopped down a Wisniewski tree." Ha ha ha . He didn't think that was funny. Ha ha ha.

MK: He's not the one you have the photo with, is it? It was Michalski, was it Michalski?

EB: Michalski. He lived on McDougall.

MK: Yeah. That one picture of you and this other kid.

EB: That was Michalski. The way you said it. Ha ha ha. Although Charlie Murz used to call him Mahalski. They were nice people.

MK: Okay. So let's go onto Chene.

EB: Okay. You sure we didn't do this?

MK: No. We haven't done this.

EB: Seems to me we were talking about--

MK: Yeah, you mentioned Sadowski or something?

EB: George Sadowski was a big name in the neighborhood but I don't know if it was him or another guy. He was the congressman from our district.

MK: Okay.

EB: But I remember my brother talking to one of the boys in that Congressman's house but I can't recall his name. Seems to me, it started with a "C" but I'm not positive about that. He said he'd seen a lynching in Virginia. They lived in Washington but they had this house and that was like in the thirties and I think lynchings happened around the Washington D.C. area. But--

MK: You know, I think we did do this street

EB: Yeah, it seems to me we talked about it.

MK: I just remembered. Yeah. I remember you mentioned the drug store and the bar

EB: He gave me pennies--

MK: Right. Right. We did do this one. So let's go to these two now. You got two more here. This is off of Chene.

EB: Okay. I want to start with Frederick and Jos Campau. They had this famous café. It was called Ivanhoe. Do you know about it?

MK: Yeah. I know about it. Tell me what you know about it.

EB: Well, I didn't know anything about it 'til it became famous and it was also known as the Polish Yacht Club. Ha ha ha. I was in there one time, to try their fish and as I say, you couldn't get perch with the steak fries anywhere else that good. They were good. I tried to figure out why they called that Ivanhoe Café. Ivanhoe used to be our telephone exchange number when we were on Chene Street.

MK: Yep. That was their exchange number.

EB: And that might have been the reason they called it that.

MK: Yep. That's exactly the reason because I talked to the owner, Lucille Sobczak the grand-daughter of the original owner and she said that's why they called it the Ivanhoe.

EB: I figured that out. Okay. Now, over on Kirby and Jos Campau. We're like working our way west. I'm going to start at the top and then work west. Was Orlowski Meat Market. I forgot the boy's and the girl's name, but they went to school with me. They didn't start at that school they just moved in later.

MK: Was it Stanley Orlowski?

EB: What?

MK: Was it Stanley Orlowski?

EB: I don't know, but I thought he was a good kid. I liked him in school and his sister was a real pretty girl, she was a nice girl too, but I've never been into the market but our school was like one block over, over here. So--

MK: So, we're going actually north now.

EB: Okay. But I want to tell you something that I haven't got on this map.

**End of Side B Tape 2.**

### **Beginning of Side A Tape 3.**

MK: This is again an interview with Mr. Erwin Bloch and today is February 6, 2003.

EB: Okay to go?

MK: Yep

EB: Alright. Somewhere on this block, the same block where Orłowski's Meat market was, lived a girl named, I think, I don't know what her last name was but I think her name was Josephine and we used to play baseball at Ferry Park which was like on the next block, by the school. They had this girl, Josephine. Was the greatest ball player I ever saw in my life. This girl was just a natural. She'd play outfield and she'd catch it like one-handed. When you look at a ball player and the way they catch and the way-- you know who's a good ball player. Well, she was every bit as good as any of the guys around there. She was not a big girl, she was like standard. So, this girl was so good, we would stand there in awe, watch how she would play and I often wondered what ever happened to Josephine. And I always thought this girl is going to become a baseball player for a professional fastball girl's team. As far as I know, she could have played for a boy's team too. But I don't know what happened to her but she was something to behold. She was a good ball player just in every way. And when she hit, that ball--it was unbelievable the way that girl played and she was as good as any boy and probably better than most. But I have to tell you about Josephine because--

MK: Well, we've got a few more things here. Why don't we try to get through these things too?

EB: Okay, I'm gonna go to Grandy between Kirby and Frederick. There used to be a grocery store on the corner. That would be the southwest corner right there. It was a mom and pop store.

MK: That's the northwest corner.

EB: No. north is here.

MK: Oh, you're right. You're right.

EB: Okay. And I don't know anything about the grocery store, but next door was one of my best friends, Joe Kawicki, or "Kavitski," how they pronounced it. But I remember many times being over the house and his mother and father, two of the nicest people in the neighborhood. They were real nice and he had a very pretty sister, a little older and he had an older brother that lived there, they were single at the time, and then they had a younger brother named Henry. Henry became famous. This kid could dance the polka like you wouldn't believe. He was on Lawrence Welk's program dancing the polka. Now Henry would worm his way into anything he wanted to get into, he was determined

on a lot of things. And he was very proud that he was such a good polka dancer and I guess all the girls wanted to dance with him and Henry was very proud of that. One evening my wife and I were watching the Lawrence Welk TV show and who do we see? Henry Kawicki had wormed his way on the show and was dancing the polka with some pretty girl. Joe and I were very close. Okay, right across the street from this grocery store I don't know too much about, there was a vacant house for many years and we'd call it the haunted house. The kids did. Nobody lived there and it was all ruined inside. Somebody later on fixed it up.

MK: The northwest corner of Kirby and Grandy?

EB: Yeah. Right. Now, south of that, a few houses, lived the Lis Family L-I-S. There were too brothers, actually there were more than the two brothers, but I remember the two brothers. I remember Leonard, we went to school together and there was another brother. John, but they were good kids. We played a whole lot with them. The last I heard of them, they lived out in the Mt. Clemens area or Clinton Township, around in there. Murz ran into them and he told me he had seen them. They mentioned my name and they said they still remembered me, one of the Lis boys died. I don't know which one it was. I told you about Mrs. Korn already. This was her bakery here. Then there was a family called Mordell. They had a grocery store. I don't know if it was on Kirby or Farnsworth, right on the corner.

MK: Dubois?

EB: Dubois. Yeah. And I'll tell you a story about Dubois. Anyway, the Mordell family lived there and there was more than this but I was friends with Tony, Dominick, and Johnny. Johnny went to kindergarten with me. I remember that. And his mother and father ran this corner grocery store. One of Mordell's sisters, when we lived at Farnsworth and Chene, did housework for my mother because my mother was busy in the store. I knew one of the sisters. Now, I wanna tell you a story about Dubois, make it real short.

MK: Okay.

EB: We're standing on the corner of Ferry and Chene and some highfalutin lady comes by in a car and she rolled the window down and she says, "Excuse me, can you help me?" And we walked over and she says "I'm looking for Dub-wa Street." Lady, we've lived here our whole lives and there is no street like that. Ha ha. Well, the street was what we called DuBoys, the proper way in French was Du-Bwa. So we finally got through that. We told her it's one block that way, but that's my Dubois story.

MK: Okay. So why don't we stop here for now?

**End of tape 3**

**Beginning Side A Tape 4**

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski and I am with John Halloran in my office in Ann Arbor and today is June 23, 2003

EB: 24<sup>th</sup>

MK: Is it 24?

EB: Mm-mm.

MK: Feel free, that's okay. 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2003. And we're here with Mr. Erwin and Julia Bloch to talk a little bit more about Chene Street and Mr. Bloch you've brought some material here, particularly this list of students, and I was wondering if maybe one thing we could do was go down the list and you could sort of reflect a little bit of what you remember of these people. [Note EB- This was a list of kids I went to school with from kindergarten to high school, I started school in 1929. (73 years ago)]

EB: Sure.

MK: You want to do that?

EB: Sure, sure.

MK: Okay, so why don't we get started. Why don't we go for it. You want to start up at the top?

EB: Okay, Warren Schmidt I guess--

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: There was an "n" I missed.

MK: Mm-hm, right.

EB: Warren, he was a nice guy, but we were not close, but we were on friendly terms.

MK: Was he in your classes? Or do you know?

EB: Oh yeah he was in my class.

MK: At Northeastern?

EB: No, no, this was Ferry School.

MK: At Ferry School, these are at Ferry School, then.

EB: Yeah, but as you get down toward here it gets into Northeastern.

MK: Okay, so tell me what school maybe first.

EB: Okay, Warren was a good kid, we liked him. The next thing we've got here is Doris Elzerman. Probably the prettiest girl in school. She was Dutch. Elzerman, that means old man or something like that. She was blond and beautiful. A lot of the guys were crazy about her. And then her girl friend Lorraine Bowers, also very nice. They lived in Elaine Apartments, that was right where the Boulevard made the turn where McDougall and, well if you went east one block, that's where the apartment was, it was on East Grand Boulevard. [southwest corner of East Grand Boulevard and Elmwood – MK]

MK: So, was it past the library or not?

EB: No, the library was going the other way.

MK: Okay.

EB: You mean the Butzel Branch.

MK: The Butzel Branch. Yeah..

EB: And Bowers, also, very popular in school. Then we get to Helen Underwood and Ruth Pawlak, they were like, real good buddies. Where one was the other one was also. And both alike, both likable girls. We never had a problem with them. Next we get to Henry and Leonard Pisula. We're on McDougall Street now, that's where they lived. I remember their father drove a Plymouth because Leonard was talented in art, and I was talented in art, and on Saturdays we'd go down to the Art Institute and they'd let us draw. It was an activity you could do if you had some talent. Henry was the bigger of the two brothers. The father used to pick me up on the corner of Ferry and Chene and he'd drive us to the Art Institute. I think we had to walk back, I don't remember that. But Pisulas were, they were a good family. Delores Gible, I saw her name in the paper recently. Dark-haired girl, very pretty, she lived on Mitchell, right by the school. You know Joseph Campau.

MK: Right.

EB: She lived in one of those houses right near Ferry, but on Mitchell. Right across from the playground. And I was going through the obituaries, my hobby, and I saw the name Gible, and I remembered her and I looked and found the name Delores. She didn't die but she was a member of the family. But Delores stayed with us for maybe one year, two years, and they moved. Elenore Affeldt, lived on Ferry Street, just before you get to the railroad tracks. There was some side street. I forget the name of it. On the north side of the street. They had frozen foods in a huge building where they kept frozen foods. She lived on that street. It was a large warehouse I know part of the building was for storage of frozen food.

MK: That wasn't at the Grand Trunk?

EB: That was Grand Trunk, yeah.

MK: That was at the Grand Trunk Building?

EB: Yeah, yeah the Grand Trunk runs right down here, and here's the building and there was a little street on it, she lived on whatever that street was. It was a small street. Now Willie and Blanche Alonzo were the two Black kids, the only ones in school at that time. And very quiet, nice kids.

MK: Where did they live?

EB: Right in that same area. Right around the--right by the railroad tracks. On the same street approximately where Elenore lived.

MK: Off Ferry there?

EB: Yeah, off Ferry. And you never heard a peep out of either one of them unless you asked them a question.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Nobody bothered them, and they didn't bother anybody. Everybody liked Willie and Blanche.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: They were, I don't know if they were twins or what. Because I don't remember talking to them too much. Not that I didn't want to, they just were quiet.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Now Zenon Werner. Zenon, is that a Polish name?

MK: Yeah, it could be. Yes, yes.

EB: Well, his aunt owned the soda fountain,

MK: Irene?

EB: Pardon me?

MK: Irene Werner.

EB: I don't know her first name.

MK: Yeah.

EB: It was Mrs. Werner, a very handsome woman. And two good looking sons, they were like, 18, 19, 20 years old.

MK: George and Cass.

EB: Well I--

MK: I interviewed the family.

EB: We used to go there, that was our hangout, the soda fountain. Playing the jukebox. It was nice going in there because she was a very pleasant woman and her sons were--it was a pleasure dealing with these people. Well, Zenon lived on the next block on Chene Street I don't know, not on the corner, but on the second house, north of where the soda fountain was.

MK: The soda fountain was between Palmer and Hendrie.

EB: Right.

MK: So--

EB: The other side of Hendrie.

MK: Then there is Medbury, the next street. So between.

EB: No no, no no. Yeah, it was the second house north of--

MK: Hendrie.

EB: Hendrie.

MK: On the same side of the street as Werner's?

EB: They had a house where they converted one of the rooms where they sold used magazines. And I used to go there, like for a nickel you could pick up a magazine. And I used to buy magazines.

MK: What kind of magazines did you buy?

EB: Girlie magazines. I was hoping you didn't ask. [laughs] I was hoping you didn't ask. But they wore underwear. That was a big thing. And Zenon was a quiet kid, he was a nice kid, he didn't bother anybody. Dan Hodak lived on Hendrie and he and I were very

very close friends. He was of Croatian descent. And right across the street from where he lived, Vlastic had their...

MK: Right.

EB: Was it garage or was it a dairy there?

MK: It was actually, originally a manufacturing kind of, or a processing plant.

EB: It's a nice building.

MK: Yeah.

EB: Dan Hodak and I were good friends. We never had a cross word between us, Dan was a good ball player, so he fit in pretty well. After the war I heard Dan was home from the war. I walked to Dan's house on Hendrie to see him. I was greeted by Dan mother with "spava issue." That means sleeping Jesus in Croatian. That's what she called me. It was like a joke. She woke Dan up. He looked like he had a bad time during the war. Dan joined the merchant marines. He told me about being bombed by the German Air Force while they were in Bari Harbor in Italy. I think a lot of merchant ships were sunk. Bari Harbor was on the Adriatic Sea only further north. We lost contact with each other for a few years. The next time I saw Dan, he was driving a truck for Fairmont Dairy. He was doing a turn around on Woodward Ave north of 9 Mile Rd. I was right behind him and blew my horn. He noticed me and we both rolled down our windows, I yelled out "I'm in the phone book." He yelled back "So am I!" Dan was engaged to some girl from Highland Park. She was half Jewish, half Yugoslavian. She wanted Dan to break contact with the old bunch soon after they got married. I got hold of his new phone number somehow. I called and she answered. I told her who I was and could I talk to Dan. She said Dan was busy washing windows. I said have him call me when he's finished. I want to believe she didn't give him the message. I heard later they divorced. Not because of that I hope.

MK: Right.

EB: I think she was a control freak and was trying to run his life. Dan went back to Croatia on a visit. While he was there he met a woman and got married. He brought her back to the U.S. Dan was active with some Croatian Society. He played the mandolin with the society. Dan got involved with this group. The Croatians wanted to break away from Yugoslavia. I used to see signs painted on railroad overpasses saying "Freedom from Yugoslavia." I didn't mean Dan painted the signs, maybe he played the mandolin while his buddies did the painting (that's a joke). The next I heard was years later. Dan owned a restaurant on Mound Road just north of 8 Mile. After a year or so, I decided to visit Dan, seeing that I was on 8 Mile Road approaching Mound Road. I find the place and walk in. Dan is frying eggs behind the counter. I said, "Hi Dan." He didn't recognize me. We talked for a while. He said somebody wanted to buy his restaurant. They needed his property for a parking lot. I think it was a Wendy's. He told them, "I want \$250,000

for the place. Take it or leave it.” They took it. I told Dan I was a carpet salesman. He said his wife was opening a specialty shop around 15 Mile and Mound. They needed to carpet the store. They found a carpet at the place I worked and we installed it. That’s the last I heard of him. Maybe he didn’t like the carpet (joke).

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: And that’s the last I saw of him.

MK: How long ago was that?

EB: Well, that’d have to be 19, about 68, 1968.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: 1970, right in there.

MK: Yeah, okay. And, where were you selling carpet? I know you told me that before but--

EB: At that time, Beckwith Evans.

MK: Okay, Beckwith Evans.

EB: And I found out the secret of selling. Don’t lie to your customers. Be honest.

MK: Yep.

EB: And that’s the last I saw of him. I learned a lesson from Dan. You cannot go back and expect things are going to be the same. He made some remark about the Jews, knowing I was Jewish. And I thought, the hell with you.

JB: He keeps reading the obituaries.

EB: And the next name is Barbara Nowicki. She was a very, very nice girl. Polish girls were nice. But she didn’t like the name Nowicki. And I still remember the name she gave herself. She wanted to be known as Barbara Norton. And if she could hear what I’m saying right now, she’d say, my God, he remembered that. She said it once and I remembered it. Barbara was pretty nice.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Okay, Norb, Norbert Norsworthy and William Pace lived on the Boulevard right near the library, that’s after the curve.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Both of their fathers were policemen for the Chene Street station [on Canfield – MK], I do believe. I think they were detectives. And William, the girls were all crazy about William. He was good-looking guy, well dressed. I lost track of him. We were like, hi, we knew each other, but we were never close. Walter Walkowski was I remember a jovial guy, pleasant guy to be around. And he lived right around Grandy or Jos Campau and Ferry, right in around there somewhere. Margaret Williams was the sister of the thug, Bobby Williams. She was okay, she was alright. What an animal she had for a brother. Of all the whole Kirby Gang, he was the nastiest.

MK: Where did they live?

EB: Right around Farnsworth and Dubois, right in there. Oh pardon me, Du-bwa [laughs]. And John Palumbo, I knew him from high school. Northeastern High School, that's where I knew him from, we had Polish kids, Italian kids, and around Russell Avenue, which is around I-75, we had a lot of Balkan kids. I knew there were, they used to have a lot of coffee houses on Russell Avenue, or Russell Street. And they were Bulgarians, Yugoslavs in that area. And north of that area, or pardon me, east, was the Black section. We had a lot of Black kids. And there was a mixture, a smattering of just about everything there. But Palumbo I met at Northeastern and very likable nice guy.

MK: So what year would have this been?

EB: That was around '41, right around there.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Eddie Katula, he knew the Kukawski's, family, because they used to live on--

MK: Ferry

EB: Van Dyke, no, but previous to moving to Ferry and Chene where they had their store, they also had a store, I think, in the Van Dyke, Harper area, and that's where Eddie lived. Eddie Katula. Eddie got a job at the Eastown Theater, while he was going to high school.

MK: This was at Northeastern?

EB: Northeastern. And he said, "I'm taking tickets today, you guys come over and it won't cost you a penny" [laughs]. If they counted the house [laughs]. He let in half of the school. Eddie was a good guy. I think he was interested in boxing, he never bothered anybody, but Eddie knew how to take care of himself. Sylvia Fink. She had me handpicked for her future husband. Is this going to be recorded? [laughs]

MK: Tell me about it.

EB: Well she lives in Florida now. I liked her. She's Jewish. The Finks had a grocery, you know where my parents on Farnsworth and Chene, that's where they lived there, they weren't there, yet, but next door was an empty lot. And then there was a little grocery store her parents later on had the store.

MK: Was that on Farnsworth or on Chene?

EB: On Chene.

MK: So it'd be, south of Chene or north of Chene.

EB: Uh.

MK: I mean, north of Farnsworth or south of Farnsworth.

EB: She was south of Farnsworth. Her mother was a very nice lady, her father--

MK: Do you remember their names?

EB: Yeah, Fink. F-I-N-K.

MK: What's their first names?

EB: I don't know.

EB: But they only stayed their maybe a year or two.

MK: So you said they had a grocery store on Chene near Farnsworth. And this would've been in the early '40s right.

EB: Yeah, Then they moved to the Harper-Van Dyke area. I guess business wasn't too good there.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Now that's where the problem came in. She wanted me to walk her home, from Northeastern. To Harper and Van Dyke. Now you got to love a girl to do that, and I didn't love her, okay. I liked her, she was a nice person. And she got me my first job at Holbrook Supermarket, I was in the produce department. She got me the job. Because she wanted to be near me. Sylvia finally gave up on me, before she did she would want me to walk her home on Harper and Van Dyke, and I'll tell you something, I didn't want to do it. On this particular evening I was being initiated into a fraternal order. Sylvia had had it with me. She now had a new boyfriend. He really was a nice guy (they later got married). The way I saw the situation was, Sylvia and her brother Al were angry with me. My punishment was to be Al Bronstein. Al was built like a nose tackle about six feet tall, about 270 pounds and the mentality of Lenny in *Of Mice and Men*. He was going to be

my punishment. He kept looking at me and then the ping pong paddle with a big grin on his ugly face. I was told to assume the position. Bent over with hands on my knees. He put the paddle to me without any mercy--again and again about twenty times. It was very painful. Every time Bronstein hit me, Sylvia's brother Al enjoyed it. I could hear him laughing. I'm sure Sylvia enjoyed it. Now that I'm not sixteen years old anymore, I ask myself why did I allow this to happen? I didn't have to join that organization. I didn't care for Sylvia, after the paddling I didn't care for her brother Al any more. To this day I still see Bronstein's ugly face. Last I heard was Sylvia and her husband retired to Florida. They sold their fruit market. Before they retired their bookkeeper swindled them out of \$10,000. I wonder is that poetic justice?

MK: Right.

EB: They're sick. This Alvin Bronstein, was his name, was the big dummy brute. And if he heard that, I mean it all the way. That, he enjoyed it, he was sick.

MK: This was your teacher at the Hebrew school? Alvin Bronstein?

EB: He is the friend of the Finks.

MK: Okay. He was the big guy, the big guy you were talking about.

EB: The monster. You know, I used to play football, if I had to play opposite this guy, I'm dead. Well let me tell you, he broke a paddle on me. You know a ping-pong paddle. And many, many years later I still burn about that.

MK: Sylvia's parents first names, do you remember what they were?

EB: No.

MK: No.

EB: No, I know Sylvia's father put imitation brick on my father's store. That's along the side and the back. He had a brick front, he had built, he was trying to modernize his store. But, her father was like a contractor, and it was pretty hard to get business those days. But I know my father gave him a break. And they did not do a good job on the siding. It, it just didn't look attractive. But that was the beginning of imitation brick.

MK: Yeah, yeah. Right, right.

EB: So. Al her brother, I don't know what happened to him. I never heard. Harold Yetke, he lived on Ferry, north of McDougall in that area. He was a good athlete.

MK: You mean, east of McDougall, right.

EB: East.

MK: Yeah.

EB: I remember Harold as--about my size, but a very good athlete. I think he used to get gold medals in the decathlon. Did they have decathlon when you went to Burroughs?

MK: Oh yeah.

EB: Well, we used to go out to Burroughs school, that's where we would compete in ten events.

MK: Is this from Northeastern?

EB: No, this was in Ferry School.

MK: In Ferry School, okay.

EB: And I was 15 years old at the time and I was shaving already, and when the other kids took a look at me they were psyched out. I was first in the 100-yard dash, I was in the running broad jump, I did real well. In fact, a few people remarked--I ended up with a bronze medal. And my brother used to coach me--he couldn't win a medal. He said somebody in the family has got to win it and it's got to be you. And I did win the bronze medal. It's a little thing, a little bronze thing, it had a screw on the back and you screw it into your lapel. I was proud of that. Then I ended up with it on my belt somewhere. But Harold won the gold. Harold was good. Like you had to chin yourself, how far you could throw a baseball. But I remember my 100-yard dash. They were all, "Look at him he shaves already."

MK: I went to Burroughs.

EB: Huh?

MK: I went to Burroughs.

EB: You went to Burroughs?

MK: Yeah I went to Burroughs. Junior High. I know the field well.

EB: Yeah, it was a big huge field.

MK: It was the Lodge Playfield.

EB: Yeah.

MK: Called Lodge.

EB: So, okay, now we've got, I can't remember the name. One name was Turkovich brothers. One was John Turkovich, and I don't remember the other brother's first name. And why they were both in the same class. I don't know if they were twins or one was sick and fell back, I don't know. But right after the war, I remember that one or both of the Turkovich brothers was trying to go big time in some kind of business. They had big ideas. And they were pretty smart kids so I wouldn't be surprised if Turkovicj--

MK: Were they in Northeastern?

EB: No, I went to Ferry School with them.

MK: Ferry School.

EB: And Greusel was the--

MK: The middle school.

EB: That's a prison. That was a horrible school. And Emily Reno. She lived around that frozen food plant, around that street there. You know where the--

MK: At Ferry there, where the--

EB: Yeah, and she was good in art. Both of us used to do very well in art classes. And I remember picking up the paper after 1945 and her name...she was into designing women's clothes. So that had something to do with art. So she might have done very well. She was a nice girl. And next name here is Wanda Kasuba. And she had a cousin, had the same name, Kasuba. I forget her first name. But I used to work at the Tech Plaza, that's on the, Van Dyke, and 12 Mile--was it, yeah 12 Mile. I worked for a carpet company. I went to K-Mart and she was at K-Mart at the lunch counter. And I said, "Your name's Wanda isn't it?" She said "No." And I said, "Oh, excuse me." So she was the other one, and I couldn't think of her name. And I said, "Do I look familiar?" And she said "No," so I dropped it right there, but it was the other one.

MK: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

EB: Maybe she didn't want to know me. Sylvester Lada. He was a big kid. I mean like 6 foot. A pretty good guy.

MK: Was this again at Ferry or at--

EB: Ferry, yeah. We got along alright. He was okay. The next name is Harry Gartska. And I don't know if I got it spelled right or not. There might have been a "z" in there. But he was one of the most humorous guys, he knew how to play the harmonica too. His mother was a widow. I know he had an older brother and his nickname was Farina and he used to play softball right by the Ferry Market. He was one of the big-time, good ballplayers. He was good. I remember one time I met his mother, they were having a

party. And remember a lot of people were on welfare then. It was tough, they weren't having it good, but I don't if they were having it good. But they had a nice party and his mother was such a nice lady. That was a good family. She was trying to keep her family together.

MK: So did you know him again, at Northeastern or--

EB: Ferry, Ferry.

MK: When you go down there if there were any that were at Northeastern.

EB: Okay, okay.

MK: Just say their Northeastern.

EB: Okay. I know we went to, this is really a sad story, we went to see Harry, he was in the hospital. Was that before the war or after the war? Do you remember? We went down to Veterans' Hospital.

JB: He'd be a veteran.

EB: Yeah, then it had to be after the war. And we went there to cheer him up not knowing he had cancer and we were making jokes and all that and the poor guy's dying. And he asked us to leave, and I don't blame him. He finally told us, he's got cancer. So I never heard from him again.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: So that's the last I saw of Harry. But Harry was one of the nicer boys I knew. You know, we were kind of tight with Harry. Okay, now I'm going to pronounce this name, I'm going, going, Butkiewicz.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: [Laughs] He always corrects me when I say a Polish name wrong.

MK: [Laughs]

EB: Frank, I don't remember a whole lot about him but he was a good baseball player. And that was from Ferry School and it might have been Greusel also. Now the next name is Genevieve Sturza, and talking about pretty girls in school. She would give Doris Elzerman a run for a beauty contest, one heck of a run. Because Genevieve was--you know those Polish girls that made it big in Hollywood? There were a few of them that were big time -- she could have been one of them. I didn't say she was, but she was that pretty. Well she had a brother and I don't know his name. A little younger brother. He was playing by the railroad tracks you know, Grand Trunk, and the train suddenly started

and knocked him off and he lost an arm and a leg, and I remember how shocked all the kids were in school because it was in the paper. And I've never seen either one of them.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: That was like a--

MK: What year would have that have been.

EB: 1936, 1935, right around in there. I didn't remember. He was a Sturza but I didn't remember his first name.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: The next name is Frank Barberi. He lived near the frozen food plant. When we went to Ferry School, he was a quiet kid. Never said much. Later in life, after I married and had children, we were living in northwest Detroit. One of my children told me he had Mr. Barberi as his teacher it turned out to be the kid I went to school with. We had an open house at school and I went to Mr. Barberi's classroom and introduced myself as my son's father. I asked him if I looked familiar. He didn't remember me.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Stanley Patina. He transferred in from St. Stanislaus School. This was at Ferry School. Somewhere around the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and we used to make fun of him because he had silk shirts, his mother sent him to school wearing silk shirts, very neat and clean. And like one day, we were on the second floor in school. It was a beautiful spring day. And the windows were wide open. And Stanley, while the teacher left the room, got up and wanted to see what was going on outside. There was a balcony out in front of the, where the windows were. So I think it was Charlie Murz, he and I boosted him out the window and pulled all the windows shut. And the teacher comes in and there he is on the outside looking it. And the class was in an uproar. But good ol' Stanley was a good sport about it. He was not angry. He said, hey that was a good joke. And many years later – I always did like him, he was a nice guy--and many years later I walked into a pool room--this is after the war. I wanted to see if the old gang was there, I was just out of the army.

MK: On Chene?

EB: On Chene and Palmer, Prisby's Poolroom. And I walked in there, and it's dark, you can't see with the lights hanging down you can't see everybody, and as soon as I walked in there, everybody quit playing pool, dropped their sticks and looked at me. And wise old me says, oh oh, you shouldn't have come in here whatever it was. And I just stood there looking around seeing if I knew somebody, didn't know anybody. And from the back of the room, somebody said, "He's okay." And everybody continued playing pool, like a western, you know you walk into a saloon. And it was Patina who said,

“He’s okay”. He was always a good guy, but he was a good natured person. Now the next one is a famous name but I don’t know--this was from Ferry School, Chuck Clavenna. Now there’s an optometrist called Chuck Clavenna. I swear it’s got to be the same guy, or maybe it’s his son. But I’ve seen his name in the papers. And he transferred in. They closed the school down on the other side of Forest and Mt. Elliot, somewhere, I forget the name of the school. And Chuck was one of them who transferred into our school. And he was a pretty nice guy. I wouldn’t be surprised if he’s that optometrist. And, next name. Charles Delaney. One of the few Irish names [laughs]. He had a red face, and that was not from drinking. He was a good-looking guy. He always wore nice clothes and he wore a white collar, that’s years before it got popular, he had the white collar which was very dressy and a different colored shirt. And I’ve got a granddaughter named Delaney, that was his last name, that’s her first name. Didn’t name him after Charles, but it was a nice name. I thought about him when my daughter picked this name. He was a good person. Now, next person is Clyde Thomas. He’s another of one those people that transferred in. This is from Ferry School. That transferred in from--the school was the Williams School. His father owned Prisby’s Poolroom originally, and he’s the one that sold it to Prisby. Prisby used to be--Prisby is the name, I’m mispronouncing the name, used to be a cab driver. And he’d go into play pool and you know, if you ran out of money, he’d say go ahead, take a game on the house. He was, really nice to the guys. It was a nice poolroom; there were not too many problems there. Clyde Thomas. he was kind of a stocky heavy set guy. Very nice. Now, this is something my wife never knew about, they had this girl. Her name was Evanka Tomoff. I think that’s a fabulous name--I like both of them together. She lived somewhere on Brush Street. They used to have a tennis court right around Ferry, Palmer--

MK: On Brush?

EB: Yeah, she lived across the street from the tennis courts. She was in my art class at Northeastern. And I had a crush on her, but she never knew it.

MK: Was she Jewish?

EB: No, I think Tomoff would be a Bulgarian name, and I think I read that she’d passed away. I read the obituary. But she was good in art. And what her father was doing on Brush Street, at that time I don’t know.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: It was not too far from the Art Institute.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

EB: But I never saw her again. Now James St. Peter. That’s a nice name, you have a lot of fun with that name. And I did. He’s another one that transferred from the Williams School.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: And I remember in gym, we were choosing up baseball teams. I was the captain of one team, there was like four teams. St. Peter was the captain of another team, and whoever else there was, our gym teacher said, “Erwin who, who are you playing today?” I said, “I’m playing St. Peter,” and everybody laughed. I didn’t mean it to be funny, but we had a lot of fun, he was French. That’s, that’s, he was a nice fellow. Now, I got two names here, Dick Palmer and Robert Palmer, they’re both brothers. Robert was the older one. I bought his football shoes because when I tried out for the football team, when I got to high school you had to have football shoes. And he was either all done or he was getting a new pair, I bought his old shoes, which were about two sizes too large for me. And they were related to the Palmer Moving Company. They were big. In fact, the boys were involved with the Detroit Lions. They would hire some of the guys for, uh...I don’t know if it was P.R. or what. But, I remember that the, when the—oh, who was that football player that went to Hollywood and played in that—I can’t think of his name. He worked for them, and I know Robert Palmer, when he came back from the war, he was in the artillery, he was losing his hearing. With all those cannons going off. And both boys passed away at early ages. Not from anything from the war, but I remember reading and saying, oh boy. Dick had nice curly hair, they were good boys, really nice guys. Their father really made something out of that Palmer Moving.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: And John Rata was a very good-natured person. Turned out to be a policeman. This was from elementary school, and John never had a cross word with him. He, he was easy to get along with. When we saw each other we always smiled at each other. And the next one was Robert Sklut. He also became a policeman. And he and I got into a fistfight in school. We were sitting in the auditorium having lunch and somebody took a brown bag and crushed it up into like a ball and hit Robert Sklut in the head. And he thought I did it and took a swing at me, and I took a swing back at him. And I said, “Wait until we get to gym class, it’s going to be your fanny.” And we got into it. We got into a fistfight right in the gym, nobody bothered us, I got knocked down twice, but he had a mark under his eye. And finally they broke it up. But I never talked to him again after that. But I know he became a policeman.

MK: Good training.

EB: Pardon me?

MK: Good training.

EB: Yeah, he wasn’t that good of a fighter. He was heavier than I was. I was about a 140, 130 lbs, and he was like 160 lbs. But I did alright. At least he was marked up, I wasn’t. He didn’t get knocked down once. Next name is Lorraine Teimann [pronounces it Tieman – MK]. They lived off Mt. Elliot. I don’t know if it was Ferry or Palmer, one

of those streets. And she had a step-sister; both were in the same class. I forget her name now. I'll come up with it later on. But she and I were not the best of friends. I was kind of like a comedian and she was usually at the end of the joke. She didn't really care for me, but we got along alright. But one day a friend of mine, his name was Ray Smith. He was crazy about the other sister. I can't think of her name now. And he said "Let's go over and see them." And I said "I don't think they like me, Ray." He said, "Come on along anyway." So we went there and the girls were very gracious. One of them didn't like me [laughs] with reason. So anyway while we're sitting there, I was smoking at the time. She was wearing one of those really dainty dresses. I had a cigarette in my hand, and she kind of leaned over to give me a drink or something and I saw the circle getting larger, from the cigarette. Her dress was not burning, but the hole kept getting bigger and bigger. And I thought, "Should I tell her or shouldn't I?" So finally it went out and I didn't have to tell her, but she discovered it, but I remember that part. Jimmy Secora, he's from the McDougall--Ferry, Palmer area. And he was a ballplayer. I remember that much about him. And I don't have too much to say about him, but we were okay. Now the next name is, a brother of a close friend of mine, a kid brother, his name was Henry Kawicki. Now the Kawicki family lived on Grandy and Kirby. Kirby? Yeah, Kirby. And Henry was famous for one thing. That kid could dance a polka. He was on Lawrence Welk's program. If you remember Lawrence Welk? [Note EB – Lorraine was the other sister]

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: He was dancing--- on Lawrence Welk's program with some girl, and Henry was probably the world's greatest polka dancer. I remember my wife and I used to watch the program and she said, "That's Henry!" He was getting bald already, this was after I got out of the army. So, the next name is Roman Jaworski. Pronounce that? Jaworski?

MK: Jaworski.

EB: Okay. I knew him casually, but I remember the name for some reason or other. Nothing good nothing bad. No stories to tell. The next girl--I can't pronounce her name, but I remember in class no teacher could pronounce her name either. And she used to say it sounds like baby, but I'm putting it down as, this is from memory and it may not be right, but, B-A-B-I-C-Z. Does that make sense?

MK: Babicz, yeah. That's a good Polish name.

EB: Olga, she was okay. Fred Connors is the next name. I knew him. I don't know if it was intermediate or what, but my brother was very good friends with his brother. And I know at one time we were sitting alongside my house between two houses. And he was giving me a sex lecture, and my mother heard the whole damn thing upstairs, she was upstairs in the bedroom. And my brother told me when you're going to get a sex lecture why don't you go in the alley or something. I said I didn't know mom heard that [laughs]

MK: So how old were you then?

EB: About 14 or so, 13, 14. Ah, Ray Koper is the next name. He went to elementary school with me. He was also another good athlete. Ah, in the decathlon he scored very high. And he was a very modest guy. But he was good. Next name was Victor Busko. His father worked at a Packard Plant, he drove a Packard car and we all envied him. Boy, those Packards were nice cars. Victor was a good kid, kind of a heavy set guy, not fat, you know, kind of bulky guy. Linebacker type. Now, I got the Zajac brothers. And I got on the sideline that they lived in the Hancock, St Aubin area. His name was, they was brothers, Zajac. I don't for sure remember their first name. But they were like twins or--

MK: So this is at Northeastern?

EB: Let's see, Zajac, Zajac.

MK: This is Hancock...Hancock and St. Aubin.

EB: The Smith friend of mine I was talking about lived in that area.

MK: If it was Ferry, it might have been Ferry.

EB: I don't recall.

MK: Yeah.

EB: Now there's a kid I can't remember his first name. His name was Burke. And I remember he was a latecomer to the school. This was elementary school. I remember he said his father was an undertaker. That's all I remember about him. Good kid, but I don't remember, he didn't stay too long. Next name, he lived two doors away from the Murz family, Edwin Opalewski, his nickname was Oppie. He was the star basketball player for St. Stanislaus High. He was real good. And as a matter of fact his two brothers, Barney--trying to think of the other one--Barney and Leo, both of them real good softball players. And they were nice people. Kept a neat home, never caused anybody any trouble. Opalewskis were nice people. I got a name Rita Kaminski, I remember the name, I don't remember what she looked like. But there was a Rita Kaminski in my class. The next name is a very interesting story. Margaret Adams, that has to do with, if I got any Depression stories to tell, Margaret Adams had just to give you an idea of how poor people were, she stood up, I was in the music class, and, she had a quarter wrapped up in her handkerchief, and she was standing up doing something and she said, "Oh my God, my quarter's missing." She was supposed to buy a quart of milk on the way home from school, and she lost it. She wet her pants in front of the whole class, she had to go home and tell her family she lost a quarter. And nobody laughed, you know, we felt bad for her. And, but Margaret Adams was a nice girl. That story always stuck with me. The next girl is Alberta Robertson. She was a latecomer to our school, elementary, but she moved in from Montana. And she had a brother that we kind

of liked. And I remember her brother hated custard and the mother was, like my mother made me eat chicken, he had to eat custard, and he said, "I hate custard!" But she was kind of a different looking girl. She looked like she was from out west. Arthur Otto. I don't remember too much around him. His dad owned the candy store, and I think I told you. His father may have been a bookie. Young Arthur never bet on horses.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: I think I told you that. His father had the store on Chene Street, where Woolworth bought the building, and his building was replaced by the Woolworth store.

MK: Across the street from where you were, right?

EB: Yeah, but, further towards Kirby, yeah. Herbert Ptak. He lived on Kirby and he was kind of involved with the gang. I think he got into trouble with the police. I don't know for sure, but I know somebody on that street went to Jackson prison for something, I don't know what for. I don't know if it was Herb or his friend but we used to call him Hubbie, that was his nickname, everybody had nicknames. But Ptak was okay. Next girl I met in high school. Jeanette Sherman, she's one of the girls in the picture. Her father owned a 5&10 on Van Dyke.

MK: Which one was she in the picture?

EB: She was next to the girl at the end, on the right side.

MK: On the right side?

EB: Yeah. She sat right next to, there was June Lewenberg on one side.

MK: Right.

EB: In fact that's the next name, June Lewenberg.

MK: And then next to her was Jeanette Sherman.

EB: Yeah. She was kind of a nice girl. She was a Jewish girl.

MK: Jeanette was?

EB: Yeah.

MK: Where did she live?

EB: I think she lived, she might have lived upstairs from the dad's 5&10 cents store. It was beyond Burroughs School, it was up a little further on Van Dyke. I saw her store once.

MK: Huh, don't remember one down there. So it'd be on the same side of the street as Burroughs.

EB: Yeah, same side.

MK: And north of it.

EB: Yeah.

MK: Okay.

EB: I think it was on a corner. Some brick building and it was a 5&10 cent store. And, June Lewenberg. She lived on Olympia Street. I didn't know her until high school. Her father owned a furniture store.

MK: Which furniture store?

EB: I don't know. I knew her mother was not Jewish, I think her mother was Irish or something.

MK: But her dad was Jewish?

EB: Yeah.

MK: Yeah.

EB: But she was the one at the end. She was a nice girl.

MK: Did she identify herself as Jewish, or not?

EB: Yeah, I think so. With that name. I don't know really. Oh, Jeanette I know for sure was, we belonged to some Jewish club that used to meet on the east side. And Jeanette and June were members of it. I forget the name of it, some building. It wasn't a synagogue maybe it was a synagogue, but maybe it was like a private building.

MK: Where on the east side was it?

EB: I don't know. Been a long time. It was somewhere east of uh, Harper-Van Dyke. Harriet Johnson. She was a tall, dark-haired girl. With the name Johnson she was a Greek girl, her real name was Johnsos, S-O-S. Her brother used to play tackle; he was a lineman for Northeastern High School, but she was so proud of being Greek. The first thing she'd say when you talked to her, "You know I'm Greek." And I'd say, "Okay, so it's okay to be Greek, and you're proud of what you are."

MK: Keep going, I'll stop you.

EB: They came from Canton, Ohio originally and, I met her in elementary school, but my brother told me about her brother who was a good football player. But never saw her again. She's probably working for some Greek airlines saying, "Hey, I'm Greek!" [laughs] Now, the Smith person I was talking about was one of my best friends. He lived in Hancock-St. Aubin area right on the corner. His mother was Jewish and his father was Polish.

MK: So what was their name?

EB: Smith. The real name used to be Musolowicz, but he was in business with a lot of Jewish guys, they were stock buyers on Gratiot Avenue and he wanted a name that was easy to pronounce. But Ray was one of my best friends. He was a loyal guy, you could trust him.

MK: Did he identify as what, Jewish? Or what?

EB: No, he didn't want to be Jewish.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: I remember the Polish side of the family when, when Ray was born, snuck him out of the house and took him to get him baptized. There was that animosity there, between the two families. And Ray was not proud of the Jewish side, because his uncle was like a sissy, I don't mean gay, but he would rather identify with being Polish. And once he learned a Polish word he never forgot it. And he and I used to have two little girlfriends right around Hancock and St. Aubin, one was Emily Milka, [Note EB- Milka was Emily in Polish] that was his girlfriend--

**END OF SIDE A, TAPE 4**

**START OF SIDE B, TAPE 4**

MK: So Emily was his girlfriend and--

EB: Gertie was mine.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: And we used to take them--there was a Valvoline warehouse at the end of, where the railroad tracks were, the Grand Trunk. And we used to kiss 'em there. Yes, kiss 'em. And anyway, for Christmas they bought us a nice present, and we bought 'em a two-bit bottle of perfume. And Ray and I were walking down Chene Street one day and we heard, clickity, clickity, clickity, those two bottles of perfume bouncing on the sidewalk, the girls took 'em and threw them at us [laughs]. Cheapskate.

MK: What was Gertie's last name?

EB: I don't know. When I was a kid, with Polish girls, you had to be a good salesman. And I was not a good salesman, because there was no monkey business, not that we didn't try, but you got nowhere.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: So, anyway, now we've got down to the Wolf brothers. They were my second cousins. That was Ben Wolf, Paul Wolf and Saul Wolf. That was Meyer Wolf you mentioned on Farnsworth and Chene.

MK: Yeah.

EB: If there was a sergeant, a female sergeant, their mother was tough as nails. She was tough. Nobody wanted to tangle with her. And I remember I would go over the house to play with them, if they didn't want to do what she say, they got a pach na dzudek. Now is that Polish, or is that Yiddish?

MK: It sounds Yiddish.

EB: A Pach is a hit in the rear end.

MK: Right.

EB: That was her favorite word and nobody tested her.

MK: Because in Polish you'd say *dupek*.

EB: Okay, and that was Yiddish.

MK: Right.

EB: But I remember saying, and oh when it comes lunch time she'd get leaf lettuce and sour cream and that was their lunch with bread. And when they got through eating everything, and she'd stand there like a sergeant, and say "Ess" – that means eat. Nobody left anything, in fact, when you got done, you took the bread and cleaned out the bowl, you didn't leave the sour cream in there. And I used to often wonder why she didn't offer me any. But there were hard feelings in our family. My father's sister married her brother, and he was an alcoholic, used to abuse the kids and his wife and I know my father's family was just very angry, very angry with what he did to their sister. Did she end up in an institution? Yeah. And Molly raised three kids that went to college, she paid for it, every one of them. Ben was something big in Philadelphia, do you remember what it was?

JB: Principal.

EB: Oh that was Saul.

MK: No, Paul becomes a doctor.

EB: Paul was a doctor, a pathologist. Out of all the brothers I liked Paul the best. Paul, he was a professor at Wayne University.

MK: I interviewed him.

EB: Okay.

MK: I called him, he was in San Diego, University of San Diego.

EB: Paul used to tell his class and he gave uh, he was a pathologist, he'd tell the class the first day, nobody ever failed my course, so relax. He was a good guy, you know. And the kids loved him. Saul was a principal of some...Saul was a real good looking kid. He looked his father, handsome guy. Nobody crossed Molly. Next name is John Gulu. I didn't go to school with him, but they used to be a friend of the Wolf boys. He was a Romanian kid. And he seemed to be a nice kid, we used to play with him. But I don't know too much about him. Next name is Ted Grabowski. Ted lived on Frederick. I got good memories of him, but nothing special ever happened with us. The next one's a sad story, Mary Silas. She lived near the frozen food plant on that street. She was a Mexican girl. She had pitch-black hair and at an early age, she had very big breasts. And she kind of liked me and I kind of liked her. Nothing ever happened because I never saw her again when we went home for summer vacation. And talking to some of the kids, her father was sexually abusing her. And she never did come back to school, what happened I don't know. But that was a sad story.

MK: This was still at Ferry.

EB: Yeah, I just knew her for one, not year, just one term.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Ernestine Bell, I don't remember too much about her. She lived near the cemetery on Mt. Elliot either Ferry or Palmer or Kirby, one of those streets.

MK: This is the Lutheran cemetery, right? The Lutheran cemetery.

EB: Lutheran? I don't know.

MK: Yeah, with German, there was a German cemetery.

EB: Well there was one right on Mt. Elliot.

MK: Right.

EB: There's only one that I know of in that area, around Ferry and Mt. Elliot

MK: Yeah, that was a Lutheran cemetery.

EB: Okay, I didn't know. That's where we used to rent bikes. There's a store right across from St. Hyacinth's, the guy used to rent bikes for a quarter an hour. I don't know, a fat guy, nice guy though. And we rented bikes, that's before Charlie got one, we rented the bike for a quarter an hour. And we'd play like follow the leader and uh, the leader whoever it was went right into the cemetery and they had banked roads, with rocks on it. It wasn't paved. The rocks kept it from like, disappearing, you know. And it was embanked.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: And as we were riding the bike somebody said, I think something moved by one of those tombstones. So we put the bike in high gear. Charlie's pedal hit a rock on an embankment and snapped off the pedal, and with that one foot he pumped his way, and he was still first out of the cemetery. Every time I see the Murz family, the kids, they say tell us about dad and the cemetery and the bike, I've told 'em the story many many times. But whatever the cemetery was, I notice as you get...closer to East Grand Boulevard the Polish names end and the English names start, now that other Teimann girl I couldn't remember was Joyce Teimann. She's the one I burned a hole in her dress. And Lorraine Teimann was Ray Smith, he liked her. And Ray always liked a tall thin girl. Every girl he had, Milka was the same way, and the woman he married was the same. His picture of a woman or a wife was tall and thin.

MK: So what happened to him?

EB: Ray died recently. He lived in Florida. Before he could move into his new home, he was living in an apartment and was having a home built, he died of cancer. He never did get to move into his house. His wife is still living there.

MK: Did you stay in contact with him over the years?

EB: Oh sure, we were very close friends. In fact, the older we got to know each other the closer we became and we got a phone call one day, I guess, Ray's son also died, he had a heart attack and died. And his sister, Cathy, called us from California to tell us about it, and I may not be correct on this, Ray's son died a few years after his father died.

JB: Cathy.

EB: Cathy called us up and said, "Can you pick me up at the airport?" And we said, "Of course." And--

JB: He was buried in Southfield.

EB: Yeah, Holy Sepulcher. So she said, “Can I stay with you?” “Yes, you can.” It was my buddy’s daughter, you know. But in the meantime, she was very angry with her family, that was why she was trying to get a place to stay because she was angry with her other sister. She was also angry with her mother. She was a very sensitive person. Her mother was a good person, her sister was maybe a little—a little mean sometimes, but didn’t deserve that. They didn’t want to talk anymore. So we sat with her in the front row at the church. We were not part of the family, but she wanted to sit with us. And I felt a little uncomfortable, because I didn’t want the mother to be angry with us. She kind of, she kind of worked her way into our house. I don’t mind that she came, but I didn’t know there was animosity in the family, and it kind of put us on the spot.

MK: Well this is for Ray Smith’s funeral, or his son’s?

EB: No, no, Ray had passed away before that.

MK: Oh okay, so this was the son’s.

EB: Yeah. In fact—

MK: This was her brother’s.

EB: Ray passed away, at the funeral. The daughter wrote me a thank you note, and she said I’ll never forget how you stood next to me at the cemetery. I stood next to Cathy while the casket was being lowered into the grave. And I didn’t plan it, it just happened, and she thought I had planned it.

MK: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

EB: And there was nothing wrong with her feeling that. But she’s said I’ll never forget and if you need me, I’ll be there for you. It was a very touching note, in fact so touching I still have it. And Ray Smith, the father, was a steam fitter. And he made big money. And you got paid double time, triple time for--like Charles Murz says, we made more money than he did. And I said, no Charlie, when we were making \$150 a week, approximately then, Ray was hitting \$500 a week with overtime and triple time and all that. And Charlie said no, and his wife said, I agree with you on that. Ray had money. He was first class. He always wanted the best. He got the best for his kids. He bought a nice home, not just any, a little better than average. He was a classy guy. He bought nice things. Whatever he bought.

MK: Mm-hm. We’ve got 15 minutes.

EB: Well, Joe Kawicki, that’s Henry’s brother, that’s the one I went to school with. We were kind of close. I told you there was--

MK: How is Kawicki spelled?

EB: K-A-W-I-C-K-I, I think.

MK: Oh, Kawicki, Kawicki, yeah, okay.

EB: Joe Kawicki was a short stocky guy. I was a little taller than he was. He was approximately 5'6" and weighed about 160. I was 5'8" and 140 pounds, when we played baseball at Ferry Field, I could hit the fence. Joe could hit the ball over the fence. I never hit the ball over the fence. When we played football Joe could throw the ball further. He also caught more often than I did. When we wrestled, he could pin me down. He was very strong. When we ran, he was faster, whatever sport we participated in, he was just a little bit better than I was. One day during Christmas vacation, I went over to Joe's house to visit with him as I walked into Joe's house, he said, "Guess what I got for Christmas?" He said, "Two pairs of boxing gloves" In most homes, people would spend more of their time in the basement of their home. They would eat their meals and cook downstairs. They had table and chairs, plus a stove for cooking. The basements were always clean and neat. It was like a recreation room. The upstairs was for show. As we walked downstairs to the basement I noticed the whole family was there. Joe's mother and father, his older brother and sister, plus his kid brother Henry. Somebody said, "Now Joey can try out his new boxing gloves" I'm thinking to myself, "Oh great, now I'm going to get my ass kicked in front of his whole family." I was thinking of our past sporting experience. You know, I finish second. I tried to get out of it, but the family would have none of that. So with a heavy heart I laced on the gloves. We started to spar. I had previous boxing lesson from some older guys at Perrien Park. I remember one guy in particular--his name was Kirk. He was about 18 years old and had been in the Golden Gloves tournament. Kirk told me after we sparred around for a few rounds, "You are a natural boxer." He was very encouraging. I was tickled pink an older guy was spending time with me. He taught me a lot about footwork and bobbing and weaving, now getting back to the ass kicking, I didn't expect, myself, too much from myself from past experience with Joey and myself. Joe kept hitting me in the forearms. My guard was up. Both my gloves were in front of my face. Joe kept hitting my forearms. When our match was over, my forearms were beet red. He never boxed before. I had some practice with Kirk. I hit Joey a number of times in the face or head. I never hit Joey with bad intentions. These were 16 oz. gloves. It's pretty difficult to hurt your opponent with these gloves. When the bout was over, nobody was declared the winner, but I was never asked to put on the gloves again. In all the years I knew the Kawicki family, I never heard the word *zyd*. Not once. This was a hardworking, God loving group of people. Joe was a good friend. He had one habit. He'd hit you on the fleshy part of the shoulder. He did it so often, he made up a word for it, he would hit you on the shoulder and say, "That was a squib." I would say, "What's a squib?" He'd say, "When I hit your shoulder, that's a squib." Now Virginia Lee Urbanski was probably the best jitterbug dancer in our whole school. She was very tiny, kind of pretty, well built. And she and I were not especially close or enemies or anything. We were both there, but not for each other. But when we got to high school, that's when jitterbug was really really big. Zoot suits, all that stuff. You know what Zoot suits are?

MK: Yeah.

EB: She took up with a looloo. I have no animosity towards Italians, in fact I like Italian people. She took up with one little Italian thug. His name was Armando. He was about 5 foot 4 and as nasty as he could be. But a good-looking guy and a heck of a good dancer. And I've known Virginia probably since kindergarten, so I'm standing out there talking to Virginia, casually, like we knew each other, and along came Armando, and very jealous. He said, "Hey Bloch, you want to get your butt cut." They're the exact words. And I said to Virginia, "What's wrong with him?" She said, "He's jealous, leave him alone." But, did I tell you the story about the international Y, when the Polish guys were going to fight the Italian gang?

MK: No, tell me about it.

EB: Well word got out. This has got to do with Armando. Word got out that the Italian guys were going to take over their girls at the International Y, and the Polish guys were not going to stand for that. So word got out, the gang, the Kirby Gang was going to be there and they're going to clean their clocks. And I looked at Armando and Virginia, said, "We're going to the dance at the International Y." Ohh, and I knew what was going to happen, and I wouldn't go because I looked Italian [laughs]. Ooh, that was smart wasn't it. Yeah, well, let me tell you something. They got beat up pretty good. And the end of it was, they made up and they all joined forces together.

MK: Who, who got beat up, the Italians?

EB: Yes, the Italian gang got beat up at the international Y. The Polish guys were at the Y the week before and had a pretty good idea how many people to send to the Y. The Kirby gang loved those large Lincoln cars. I think they were 1932 limousines. They owned two or three of them. These cars had seating for six people in the back seat. Whenever you saw all the cars cruising one after another, you knew something was going to happen.

MK: This was the Kirby Street Gang?

EB: Yeah, getting back to the gang, the King Theater would have a midnight show every Saturday night. A midnight show consisted of two movies for Saturday, plus you also saw two movies for the coming week which started Sunday. You saw four movies for the price of two. This was a big thing in the neighborhood. The theater had a full house every week. You would buy your tickets at about nine o'clock Saturday night, see four movies and get out Sunday morning at about 3 am. So, this particular Saturday night, my brother and I went to the midnight show. My parents wouldn't allow me out at these late hours. It was okay if I went with my older brother. When the show let out on Sunday morning, the gang was lined up in front of the theater. I said to my brother, "Somebody's dupa is going to get kicked." We walked out of the theater and headed for home. When we got to Kirby, we crossed Chene, then as we got to the corner, one of those big Lincolns blocked

our path across Kirby. My brother said out of the corner of his mouth, "Take your hands out of your pockets, dummy." The gang looked us over for a few seconds and drove away. My brother said, "If you're going to be attacked, you might as well get in a few punches." The gang knew me; I was on good terms with the gang. It was dark outside, they couldn't see our faces until they got close up.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: And I did, casually, like nobody should know anything [laughs]. He figured like, if you're going to get beat up you might as well hit a few of them. And they decided we were okay, but they knew me. I was not on bad terms but I was not their buddies either. And they drove on but I remember my brother saying, "Take your hands out of your pockets." That's the kind of guy he was. He was the nicest guy in the world, but don't mess with him. He will never do anything to you, harmful to you, but he knew how to take care of himself. And I didn't know that 'til after he was gone.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: The end of the Urbanski story is good news and bad news. The good news is Virginia didn't marry Armando. She married a Polish guy. The bad news is that poor Virginia died of cancer at a young age, around 1945 or 1946.

MK: Do you know what ever happened to Armando?

EB: I could care less! That little thug, he was rotten, he was rotten. He was a little sawed-off thug, but he had a gang behind him so you had to be nice to him. Because you know, one bad move--

MK: You don't know his last name, do you?

EB: No, no. Now Barbara Domzalski, well you knew that was the doctor's daughter. She was a nice girl in school. Never caused any problems. And I know when we get around McDougall we'd always look at Barbara's house and say, "That's probably the nicest house in the whole area." And it was. Now Frank Szymanski. He became a judge. He played football. Now I didn't know, I was not intimate with him, but--

MK: Was this at Dexter, I mean, was that at Ferry or at--

EB: No this is at Northeastern.

MK: It was Northeastern. What about Domzalski, was she at Ferry or at--

EB: Ferry.

MK: Ferry, okay.

EB: Frank was a very good football player. When he played football at high school he was a fullback. He was big. When he went to Notre Dame he was a lineman, a guard I think. And then when he played for the Detroit Lions he played a lineman, too. He didn't last that long. He was like, you know like 215, 220, those are midgets compared to what they got now. They're 300 pounders, over 300. When Frank Lahey was coach at Notre Dame, he went to sign up Frank. Frank's parent owned the Doc Scholman's Café on St. Aubin Ave.

MK: Garfield, Garfield.

EB: Okay, right in there somewhere. Frank was tending bar; he was already a senior and they were trying to get him to play for Notre Dame. So being a good Polish host, they were at the bar, he poured Lahey a shot, and he poured himself a shot. And he put his down; Lahey said, "I don't drink." So Polish people aren't wasteful, so Szymanski took his shot too. That's a true story, that was in the paper. So they got Frank to play for them and Frank married some girl from high school, I don't remember her name. Oh and Frank became a judge and Doc Krezel, I got his name down here, he was a lineman when Frank was at Northeastern. He'd be, Frank got him in, what do they call it, police at the court? There's a--

MK: Yeah I know what you mean.

EB: To keep the people from--

JB: Bailiff?

EB: Huh?

JB: Bailiff, no?

EB: I don't know, anyway, Frank was very loyal to all his friends. And I was talking about Doc Krezel. I was in court and I saw him there; I said, "You won't remember me" because, he was a senior and I was a freshman. He said, "No I don't." I said "You didn't know me, but I'm going to say something that you used to say that's going to shock you." And I forget the words, it was like double talk.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Piazza, Piazo. Okay. And I said that. And I said, "Is that familiar?" And he said, "Yeah." And I said, "You and all the guys used to say that but I never knew what you meant." And he started laughing and he said, "Okay, you went to Northeastern." But he was a good guy. I'm talking about athletes now. This is all high school stuff. I met Elmer Swanson, he was a track star at the University of Michigan. He was a great runner. He was great at Michigan. I wasn't a friend of his, but I knew him.

MK: Was he a white guy?

EB: Yeah. Then I met Don Lund, that's when Northeastern was playing Southeastern. Don Lund used to play for the Tigers. Don Lund was playing for Southeastern High. I remember talking to Don. He was a nice guy.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: He was a very, very good ballplayer. He didn't last that long but he was another nice guy. I talked to him and he--

MK: Did he make it into a front office some place, I mean I remember Don Lund--

EB: Might have been.

MK: --with the Tiger organization.

EB: Could have been. Yeah, could've been.

MK: I'm pretty sure, I'm pretty sure he did.

EB: Now this guy I'm about to mention, his name was Ussery. I forgot his first name. He was a Black guy, he was the catcher on Northeastern's baseball team. And if he ever hears about this, he'll be shocked. He never knew me. But I thought he was a nice guy, good hard worker, and he was a good catcher. And now, his pitcher was named George Duditch. Doo-ditch. He was a good pitcher. And another nice guy. These athletes were, they weren't stuck-up, they were regular guys. He was a pretty good pitcher but I never remembered him going anywhere. And then I mentioned Doc Krezel. He was the bailiff at the courthouse. At high school, Jimmy Gamiccia was our quarterback. And he was a little guy, about five foot six, kind of husky, but bow-legged. And I remembered that. Now I'm a salesman, for what was it, Beckwith Evans--either Beckwith Evans or New York Carpet, and I'm the manager of the store, and I'm standing in the center and it's built up a little where you could see everything. And I said, "Son of gun if that doesn't look like Jimmy Gamiccia." Looked at him and looked at him, I don't want to make a mistake.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: So, oh, if it's Jimmy he'll be bow-legged. So I walked around behind him, he was looking at carpeting, and I walked around, and yeah, that's Jimmy. So I said, "Hi Jimmy. How are you?" And he said, "Where did I know you from?" He said, "I know where, the \$10 window." I said, "You talking about the racetrack?" I said, "I've never been to a racetrack in my life." He apparently had a job at the race--and I said, "I'll tell you how you and I had contact one time. You were on the varsity and I was on the freshmen team, and we had scrimmage. And you were," he was a quarterback, but instead of passing it he was running with the ball, and he got near me and I tackled him, and when I picked

myself up, I put my hand down, and I said, "How's it feel to be tackled by a freshman?" I said, "Do you remember that?" And he said, "Yes I do!" And I said, "That's me!" [laughs] And that's like forty-some years ago I remembered.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: I have the name George without a last name. I forgot George's last name. I will never forget George. George was roller skating on McDougall Street--between Ferry and Kirby--and somehow he tripped or fell and was run over by a car. The accident was fatal. I remember our teacher telling us about poor George. It was very difficult for all of us to understand we would never see him again. The accident was in all the newspapers. The next name is Delaine Bosky. She was tall and slim. Ray Smith liked this girl very much. Nothing ever came of their friendship. Ray later married a young lady named Janet. Of course she was tall and slim. Delaine also married someone else, I never met him or for that matter, never saw him. Ray and Janet would exchange Christmas cards with Delaine and her husband. One year Delaine didn't get a Christmas card from Ray and Janet. She called to inquire as to why she didn't receive a Christmas card. Janet told her poor Ray had died. I was at the funeral home to see Ray for the last time. I stepped up to his casket, with a tear in my eye, said, "Goodbye old buddy." I always trusted Ray and Janet.

MK: Wow, thank you.

EB: But, I'll tell you something. This is 60 some years--

MK: That's amazing.

EB: To help me remember names, I would look at the obituaries. I'd see a name that was familiar to me. I'd think about it for a few minutes. Then, I would say to myself, "I went to school with somebody with that last name." Most of the time I'd remember the first name.

MK: Absolutely.

EB: But the only person who has a better memory is my wife. You've got a real good memory.

JB: No I don't.

EB: Yes you do.

JB: I have nothing like your memory, if I had to go through what you did, I could never do that.

MK: I couldn't remember the kids in my classes now.

JB: You can?

MK: No [laughs]. My elementary school.

EB: I happen to have a good memory.

JB: That can be bad because he remembers everything.

MK: Yeah.

MK: Let me ask you something else. Did you remember, or did ever come across anything from Northeastern of a guy named Walter Kaperzinsk. He had, they called him Kaper. Do you remember that?

EB: No.

MK: He was a friend of Paul Wolf's.

EB: Well Paul was younger than I was, so I probably wouldn't know that class.

MK: Yeah, would have been graduated in '45. Let me show you a picture of him. The reason I ask is--

## **BREAK**

MK: Okay, go ahead.

EB: Well she lived right across the street from the Smolinski family. It was a two-family house and she lived upstairs. And the man I told you about that had Parkinson's disease. He lived downstairs. You remember that story?

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

EB: Well Mrs. Belogh's, I remember in, around 1935 or so she moved upstairs of the first house, north on Ferry. That's where they used to have the Central Store, on the corner.

MK: Right, Raimi's store.

EB: Uh.

MK: Sam Raimi's store.

EB: Yes, Central Store was on the northeast corner of Ferry and Chene. Right behind the Central Store was a large brick garage that could house as many as fifteen to twenty trucks. That was National Grain and Yeast. This is on Ferry Street going east. Next came the alley. The first house after the alley came next. This is where the Belogh family lived.

It was a two family house. The poor guy with Parkinson's disease and his family lived downstairs and the Belogh family lived upstairs. The Belogh family came from Coldwater, Michigan. Approximately in 1935. Mrs. Belogh was a widow, with four children living at the house. Danny, Tillie, Raymond, and little Tony. She also had two married daughters living close by. Their names were Mammie and Clara. Clara's husband worked for a utility company, I think it was the water board. Their last name was Colombo, I think, Mrs. Belogh was Polish, her husband was not. Mrs. Belogh was on the heavy side, without any teeth, she may have not been in good financial condition, but she was so pleasant. As a matter of fact, this was when the Depression was at its worst. This dear lady was always smiling. She was determined to keep her family happy. She was probably on welfare. So were thousands of other people. Whenever our gang was sitting on the front porch--that was our hangout--Mrs. Belogh would cut up and joke around with our gang. All the guys liked her. They always had food. She supplied the love. Her two older kids Danny and Tillie couldn't find work. They must have been in their late teens or early twenties. Tillie was very pretty with a knockout figure. Danny treated the gang very well. The whole family were nice people. The only exception was Little Tony, he must have been 8 or 9 years old. Whenever his brother did some minor thing wrong, Tony would run tell his mother what Ray did. Ray would say, "Wait until I get you alone." Tony would run and tell his mother what Ray said. Ray never hurt his kid brother. The last I saw of Tony was a short order cook on Puritian and Livernois, in the 1960s or 1970s. Ray was a good friend always, never a Juju (anti-Semitism) stuff from he or his family. The end of the story is this--as a young boy of 14 or 15 I liked Mrs. Belogh and her family. When I reached manhood, I would occasionally think about Mrs. Belogh and her family. It was only then I realized what a great person this lady was. She made her family happy during the terrible times. As an adult I love this woman. She is my hero.

MK: How do you spell her last name. Do you know?

EB: I'm not positive on the spelling. It sounds like "Beelow". I think they spell the name B-E-L-O-G-H. I heard Mrs. Belogh speak Polish. The front porch of that house was a meeting place. Talking about the Depression and hard times Mrs. Belogh's ex-son-in-law would stop by once in a while. We got to know him and all the guys liked him. I don't know his real name. His nickname was "Bluebeans." He drove a 1932 Ford. He was also unemployed. So one day Bluebeans drove up to the house. The gang was sitting on the front porch. Bluebeans said, "If you guys want to go for a ride, chip in 25 cents apiece and I'll take you for a short ride." We all chipped in a quarter apiece and got in the car. Must have been four or five of us. He took us to 14<sup>th</sup> and West Grand Boulevard and back. Sure, he conned us. He needed gas. We liked Bluebeans and enjoyed the short excursion. That's how things were during the Depression. To this day I like Bluebeans.

MK: Did you ever come across a guy named Ron Lewicki?

EB: I don't think so.

MK: Let me show you his picture.

EB: Lewicki I don't know.

MK: The reason I ask is because he was involved in some of these gangs and--

EB: He was involved in what?

MK: He was involved in some of these gangs. And he knew the Mordells.

EB: Oh, they all had nicknames. Nobody went by their real names.

MK: Let me show you something, Lewicki--

EB: The last name is familiar. I've known people by that name.

MK: This guy right here. This guy, Ron Lewicki.

JB: Look at that.

MK: This is Bryski, and this is Lewicki.

EB: Not really.

MK: No. Because he was involved in a lot, he told me about an Italian guy. And that was Armando, I can't remember his name, who he used to get into fights with in the '40s. This is like after the war. This is probably '48, '49, so probably later than you. But he was, he said for fun they used to drive around and crash weddings and then get into fights once they were found out that they didn't belong to either side they'd start fights. That was their fun, fun times.

EB: Is it this guy?

MK: This is I think his cousin. This is later, I have a later picture of him. This is Ron later on.

JB: This is going towards the area of the Detroit River.

**BREAK**

MK: No, where were these stores, where?

EB: It was on Chene on the west side of the street. One or two doors away from Wolf.

MK: So it's the same side as Wolf?

EB: Yeah.

MK: Because they're on Farnsworth, right?

EB: I was walking by one time and there was a big commotion going on. And somebody broke off bottles and they had one guy, and I said, "Let's get the hell out of here. This is crazy." They wanted to kill this guy. I don't know what ever happened.

MK: Where was the Astoria Garden?

EB: I think Astoria was the second or third house from the house. Not house, building.

MK: What was it?

EB: A, a beer garden.

MK: A beer garden.

EB: This was the peasants that came over and they brought over--they had no education. It wasn't their fault, you know. A lot things that happened, I figured out why I could live with it. But it wasn't until a few years ago, it wasn't while I lived there, I could not, I didn't figure it out. In the book *Chutzpa*, I talked to you about that. Chapter 5. They talk about Poland. That was Dershowitz wrote the book.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: And the Jews were trying to get Auschwitz for a holy place for them because it it was--and, no way was. Who's the cardinal of Poland now?

MK: Glemp.

EB: That's the one.

JB: They put--

EB: Huh?

JB: They put flags or something there so they couldn't--

MK: The cross.

JB: Crosses, yeah.

EB: Yeah, anyway. He does not want one inch of the ground to go to any of the Jews. Glemp is very very anti-Semitic. And the Jews got a lot of guts, too. This is Poland, ya know, I got to look at both sides of it. First of all, you're dealing with peasants. And when you have sermons on Sunday and you remind them the cabbage crop was bad this

year because the Jews were playing around with the money--I didn't say this happens, I'm just giving examples. They would be building up hatreds. They didn't want the Jews in the country. This was their country. And where I begin to understand it is when I see Indians in this country, and I do not dislike Indians. I'm talking about Indians from India. They used to flood to England until England was no longer a power. Now they, carpetbaggers is what I--you know what I mean by carpetbaggers? Now they're over in this country and I would never want to wait on an Indian because they're impossible to wait on. They, you got to play the game. Whatever the initial price is on something, and when you're walking talking to them about, you are working as a salesman on 2% and they're not about to give up. I had one way to get rid of them. Because it's impossible. I'm not going to wait, I'm working on commission. I would say, "Look, I'm going to hold this deal for you and I'm going to put it in writing. This is what you get. Take a couple weeks, take a month. If you can't beat this deal, come back here and I'll write it for you. But, if you can, write it." I kissed them good-bye. They're not going to come back. But it was, I didn't swear at them, I didn't hold the door, I didn't kick them out. They would keep a salesman for hours. And lie, I'm talking about doctors, lie to you, that's a game with them. I mean, this is the way they were brought up. I'm not faulting them. But as a commission salesman you have not time to give them six hours and get zilch at the end. Or if you do get an order it'll be canceled within the week if they can get it for 10 cents a yard cheaper somewhere else. I didn't want to miss a customer. And I kind of resented them. And then I said to myself, that's how the Poles feel about the Jews. They're latecomers, they're carpetbaggers. There's a book, I may not give you the right words, but it's very interesting. I don't know if it's *God, Jews and Religion*. Or *Jews, God, and Religion*. It starts off very dry but it goes into such details. In that book it was written by Jews not Poles, they tell a story. Oh, King Stanislaus in the 11<sup>th</sup> century wanted a middle class in Poland [he must be referring to King Casimir the Great in the 14<sup>th</sup> century – MK]. That's how the Jews got in there. They didn't sneak in over the border or anything. And then somebody, some big shot in Poland, got the bright idea of we've got to collect taxes. Who'd be better to collect taxes than the Jews. So they made Jews, which who likes a tax collector? That book was so interesting. I could see where the Jews got a bad reputation. And the Poles feeling they were trying to steal their country. Because I think the church and, let me qualify that, there's a lot of Catholic churches, in all different countries. Like in Italy, the Catholic Church is very big. But in Poland, the Catholic Church is everything. I think it's bigger than the government. In chapter 5 of that book it tells of Derschowitz going over there trying to get Poland to okay, and they got into some legal hassles. And they even had a Polish lawyer working very hard for them. They liked them a lot. He was a real hustler. And suddenly he dropped it. I think the Catholic Church got a hold of him and said, this is Poland, don't fight us. The guy didn't want to touch it anymore. In Italy, a lot of the Italians. This is only my theory, it doesn't make it true. The Catholic Church says you got to do this, you got do that, you got to do this. And in Italy, okay, if the Pope says we got to do it we'll do it, if we feel like it. They had a little sense of humor. In Poland they were very orthodox. Very strong Catholic and I think the Church ran the, they ran the, you lived in Poland. I never lived there. Although being brought up on Chene Street, might as well say it. Well. That's why I could live with it. It was their country, I can understand it. And I can also understand--the Jews have a very bad habit, if you got it, flaunt it. The

Chinese are very, every bit as middle-class as the Jews are, every bit. But they don't make noise, they do everything quietly. They drive their Cadillacs they drive their Buicks. Why, I worked at the union produce terminal. And that's where we had a lot of Jewish guys that brought their vegetables there. It's on Fort and Green.

MK: Right.

EB: I worked there for a couple of years. And these are uneducated guys. But they pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps. And they were making money, but they worked horrible hours. A lot of them gambled, a lot of them ran around. I mean they had such a bad life. See, you'd have to get to the produce terminal about 5 o'clock so you'd get back to the store with your produce and you had to stop at Eastern Market, too. And you just don't go there and come right, it takes time. So you'd end up working about 18 hours a day. They were tough, very tough. But they had a favorite saying. And I hate that saying with all my being. They used to, one would say to another one, "I can buy you and I can sell you" and what that means is I've got more money in the bank. What the hell does that mean? And they're sick with that.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Like when the Blacks were moving in. Hey, we're going to Novi, that's where I'm going. If you've got the money follow, otherwise, screw you. That's their attitude. Very nasty people. Talking about my own people. I can see some guy in Poland, very successful. When they see where there's money to be made where the peasants couldn't figure that out. The little Jews and the great big husky Polish guys working their rear ends off picking cabbage or digging potatoes 18 hours a day. And he's got a house, and he's got a chauffeur. Or he's got a horse and buggy, he's got a Polish maid, he's got a Polish cook. I can understand the hard feelings. You don't flaunt it, you keep your mouth dead. That's why they're dumb and they get themselves into this bullshit. And I mean that, I'm not saying to pacify you because I've said something about Poles.

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: I didn't say they were right but I can see how it happened. I can see. And I still say the Church is more powerful in Poland than any other Catholic country. I didn't say bigger, powerful. I think the Church comes first and then the government and I think the government knows it. What do you think of my theory?

MK: Good, I appreciated your candor.

EB: Well that's how I feel.

MK: Do you want to turn it off?

EB: Was that on?

MK: Mm-hm.

EB: Oh God!! [laughs] Now the Jews are going to hate me!

MK: Well, why don't we stop, it looks like we're almost at the end here.

### **BREAK**

EB: We were standing on the corner at Ferry and Chene, maybe 3-4 of us just harmless just talking having up. And a car pulled up and a woman said, uh, uh, boys, can you tell me where Du-bwah street is. And we said, we've never heard of that, lady. One said to other, no we've never heard about it. Well they said it was a block away from Chene Street. Is it this way or is it that way? I said, well over there is Grandy, and over there is Dubois. And she said, that's it, that's Du-bwah. And I said, well we live here and that's not how we pronounce it over here. But the proper way is Du-bwah. But nobody said "Du-bwah" or you got your rear-end kicked! [Note EB – Repeat]

### **CD11.0 [km 1.22.13]**

EB: --the guy was black, you never met him before, why kill him, why kill, you know. And I, I remember it ended, I don't know if the police came or what, but it got over with. But there must've been hundreds of people out there. So it just happened in a few minutes and all of a sudden they, they were there. But the black guy was--he did okay for himself. I just, I was no friend of Blacks then, but I also was not their enemy either, because their predicament was a lot like my predicament. So I could understand, you know, some of the things, but you know what happened, I don't know. And that was the end of the incident. But I just, the reaction of the, of people on the street just kind of shocked me. That was--

MK: That was summertime?

EB: Yeah. It was in the summertime. I know exactly what store it was in front of. There used to be a Polonial—Polonia—Cleaners.

MK: Right.

EB: Right in front of that store. And there was a Sleder's drug store, that's exactly where it happened, it was right, a little before you get to the middle of the block.

MK: Right.

EB: Right across the street from Maliszewski's.

MK: Right.

EB: You know the street just like I do, huh?

MK: Yeah

EB: But that's something that I, I, stuck with me for quite a while.

MK: Mhhmm.

EB: When I was a kid, about, oh, this is a funny story. I must have been about 7 or 8 years old. And my dad was always good to me. And I was the kind of kid that was getting into trouble. So one day I did something so terrible, and I don't know what it was, my dad chased after me, he wanted to get his hands on me. Well, he had no chance of getting me. And as he chased me down through the back yard and out into the alley, I kind of left him, you know, a mile behind, but I didn't want to make him any madder than he was already. I let him stay within ten feet of me. Finally he gave up, and oh about a half hour later I kind of snuck back in the back yard, because what was I gonna do, and I got under the kitchen window. And we had, the window was open a little bit with a screen on it, and I stuck my ear up and my father and my brother are talking. And my brother's trying to calm my dad down. Honestly, I don't know what I did. And my father said, "He's a little bastard!" And my brother, always, he always did kind of defend me, but he did respect my dad, he calmed my dad down. Well somehow I snuck in the back door and I think I slept under the bed that night. And that was the end of it. When I woke up in the morning he didn't, you know it was over with. But I didn't know what that word "bastard" meant. So I went out to play because I thought it was safer than being at home. And one of the older kids in the neighborhood, maybe 12, 13 years old, I said, I don't know who it was, I said, "What does 'bastard' mean?" And he says, "It's something like an orphan." I says, "God damn. I was adopted." I really believed that I was, because I looked different than the rest of the family. I says, "I been adopted!" And it was, I finally found that it wasn't, that it wasn't so, but that was, it all fit in, you know. But everything was soon forgotten, but I never forgot that story.

A Polish myth. Polish people, now these are like, you know, fresh from Poland, maybe been in the country maybe ten, fifteen years, they believed if you do business with a Jew, the only time you should, Monday morning a Jew wants to start off and make his week a good start for that week. And they honestly and firmly believed that story. That was a story that I heard a few times when I lived on Chene Street. And believe me it's a myth. When I was selling carpeting I had this Polish couple come in, this was around Van Dyke-12 Mile area, seemed like a nice couple. And I put 'em on a good carpet, same kind we got, that twist. I always liked what they call a twist carpet, very strong carpet. And I, what I liked I would push, and I had 'em on this carpet and I'm showing it to 'em, and telling 'em, it may not be thick but there's a lot more yarn than shows. And I had them convinced that that was--say this was like on a Thursday or a Wednesday, I'm not sure of the day. And I said, "Well folks, I see you like this carpet. Do you want to close the deal right now?" "Well, we wanna think about it for a few days. But we will be back." Comes Monday they're back, they want a better price. I says, "Here's the myth again." See they

really believed this. So I had a little room to give something. At that point I didn't want them walking out because now they're serious, they wanna buy. I had a little room to give 'em some money, wasn't a whole lot but I gave it, and they were satisfied. But the whole thing is a myth. Have you ever heard of that in Poland?

MK: No, but I heard about it on Chene Street.

EB: Yeah?

MK: Somebody was telling me a story about, I think it was 3 Brothers Department Store.

EB: About—

MK: About coming in on Monday morning and about getting a deal on Monday, at 3 Brothers. But I've heard that from somebody else.

EB: Well that was probably, most of the Polish people honestly believed that, and there was no truth to that whatsoever. In fact, a Jew could have started the rumor [laughs].

[END OF 11.0]

[11.1 KM 1.23.13]

MK: There was one guy who handled the whole thing?

EB: Yeah, he drove and when you waved him down--

MK: Older, younger guy--

EB: He was an older guy. Okay. Now, Better Made Potato Chips. They had a softball team, and they played at Callahan Park. Do you know where that's at, have you heard about it?

MK: Right, right. Over at Elmwood and Moran.

EB: Exactly. Right on Ferry Street. It was--

MK: Right

EB: Better Made was on the corner of McDougall and Ferry. And they had quite a good team, Better Made. And a big fan of theirs was my friend Arthur Michalski. And he used to talk about 'em all the time. And he bragged about this pitcher that Better Made had; his name was Popeye. That's his nickname. And the guy had to be terrific. Have you ever watched a softball game?

MK: Mmhmm.

EB: When they throw underarm, it's pretty, it's hard to hit, oh it's fast. Well that was a pretty big team in the neighborhood. It was, it was a big thing.

MK: How old were you then? What years were you talking about?

EB: We're talking about '37, '38

MK: Mhmhm. Mhmhm.

EB: Right in through there. Okay, but I wanted you to know that he was, this Popeye was well known as quite a good pitcher. Okay, then now we had what we called "The Miser." This man lived on Ferry Street right near where Murz lived about two, three doors away. And I remember he drove I think it was a 1929 Chevrolet, and he kept it clean so much that he rubbed the paint right off. Off the hood. Now he and his wife and his daughter, who always kept to themselves, they were never friendly people, they'd go out every Sunday for a ride. That was what they did every Sunday. And if you ever played in the alley and you hit the ball in his yard, you're not getting it back. We did not like that man. I never talked to him or his wife or his daughter, and nobody, they just kept to themselves--

MK: What side of Murz, where did they live exactly, which side?

EB: They lived on the south side.

MK: Mmhm.

EB: Between--I'm sorry, between Grandy and Chene.

MK: Okay, and how far from Murz's were they?

EB: About two, three houses.

MK: East of Murz's? Away from Chene?

EB: Ah, let's see. They were west of Murz's.

MK: West of, so closer to Chene.

EB: Yeah, but Murz were toward the end of the, the second house before you get to Grandy

MK: Mhmm.

EB: See, there was a bar on the corner of Grandy and Ferry, an alley, one house then Murz, and about two, three houses later was the Meisner's. Okay, now I mentioned this man before Smolinski, who I thought a whole lot of. He had the bump and paint shop. I

remember one year he picked up a car. It was a Chrysler. It was totalled. He bought it. He fixed it up himself. And when he got done with it it looked like a brand new car. I remember it was a two-toned green Chrysler, 1941. And he had that for years and years. The man was, he was very very good. Lou, Lou and I think it was his brother, his brother Bill, they run that bump shop. But I remember that, that two-toned, it was, it was really something. We were talking about the Kirby Gang. These are little things I'm telling you, it won't take long. I had a little incident with 'em. I didn't, but I had a friend, his name was Walter Krauss. He was born in Egypt. His aunt owned the millinery shop to the left of where my dad had his store. They used to make hats there, design hats, and he was a very good ball player for a kid that was born in another country. This kid was skinny though.

MK: Was he Jewish or not?

EB: Yeah, he was a Hungarian Jew. And we were coming home from school one day, he and I, and we were pretty good friends, I liked him, he was a good kid. And we, you know where that bar is where I told you there was a bar, then there was the alley?

MK: Right

EB: We took that alley down and then down the cross alley, we're walking down the cross alley--

MK: Back toward Chene?

EB: We were heading towards Chene. Oh, there were about four or five of the guys from the Kirby Gang there, coming home from school, and Walter had a long nose. It was really a long nose. And that caused people to pick on him a lot. So they started up with him, teasing him and—well, anyway, about half-way down the cross alley there was a huge concrete garbage can, big. So they got a hold of Walter and said let's put him in the, throw him in the garbage can. They didn't hurt him or anything. And I'm, "Come on guys, he's not bothering any--" And I'm pleading his case, you know. I'm not about to get beat up for a thing like that. And I'm, "Come on, leave him alone. Walter don't bother anybody." They wouldn't listen to a thing I said. They threw him in the garbage can.

EB: And I helped him get out after they were gone. They left. So anyway, that was the end of our friendship. Because his mother said, "How could your friend let 'em do that?" What did you want me to do, get beat up and thrown in the garbage can too? What, you know. That was stupid. Because that had nothing to, I tried my best to save him, and I really did. But that was, if it wasn't then it was gradually it's, and I think that was his mother's doing. They lived, if you know where the Ritz Theater was--

MK: Right

EB: Right across the street, upstairs, of some store. That's where they lived.

MK: And their name was Krauss?

EB: Yeah. They didn't own it, they just lived there.

MK: Right. You know where Herper's name was? You wouldn't remember Herper's?

EB: No.

MK: Well what year would this have been?

EB: Well, I was still going to Ferry School. I would say, yeah, around '36, '37, '38, right in there. Because I know, wait a second, the car, I talked about the car, that was 1941. Chrys—oh, that had nothing to do with this.

MK: No.

EB: Right about then.

MK: 1930s, let me just turn this off [pause in recording]. Okay, so the Krauss's lived across from the Ritz Theater.

EB: Yeah.

MK: And was there, was she married, did she have a husband there, or, was he living there?

EB: Yeah, the husband, later on they moved to the 7 Mile around Pershing High School and he opened a bakery up. He was a baker, Walter's father.

MK: But he didn't have a bakery on Chene Street.

EB: No.

MK: Okay. Just that one store that she ran. Okay. Okay, good. Let's go on from there.

EB: Okay now, on my way home from school, that walk on Ferry Street, and between Grandy and Jos. Campau, right on Ferry, the house, the garage that was on the Grandy side rather than Jos. Campau, was converted from a garage into a--they made carpets, you could see it in the window, they made rag carpets. Do you know what a rag carpet is?

MK: Yeah.

EB: And I, we used to stop and watch him with his loom making, making, that's how he made his living. His name was, I don't know if they pronounced it Vah-syk, W-A-S-I-K.

MK: Yeah. Wonshyk, or Wah-sick. Wah-sick. Yeah. Was he related—do you know his first name, cuz—

EB: No.

MK: Cuz there was a Wasik funeral home. You know, across from St. Stanislaus, there's a lot of Wasiks in that neighborhood. I wonder if he's related to them.

EB: Might have been, I don't know.

MK: They also owned a drygoods store a long time before that. So this was, this was on Ferry between Campau and Grandy?

EB: Yeah.

MK: What side of the street?

EB: It was on the north side of the street.

MK: North side. And was it closer to Campau or Grandy?

EB: Uh, Grandy. Because here was Grandy.

MK: Okay.

EB: Here was the, the house. And then the garage.

MK: Okay.

EB: There must have been an alley. And then the house, and then Jos. Campau. But that's just a, you know, just a little thing I remember--

MK: Right.

EB: --We used to be fascinated by it, and later I grew up to sell carpets. Oh, and another fond memory I got of Chene Street, was in the evening, in the summertime, you could hear the horns from the river, the freight is going by you could hear it. And real plain. Not in the daytime. Only, only at night. And another thing we had during the summertime was what we called June Bugs. They were probably not June Bugs, they were probably fish flies. And they carpeted all the windows. They were attracted by light. And as you walked on the sidewalk you could hear the crunch. They were all over. And that lasted for about a day or two or three or a week or something and then they were gone. But I remember all those. We used to pick 'em up by their wings and throw 'em. They only lived a day and they were gone. So that was another thing I remembered. Oh, they were talking about, during the time that Fr. Coughlin was raising hell on the radio about the international Jew bankers, uh. There was one time during the Depression, it must have

been '35, '36, we had no food in the house, we did not have a cracker in the house, we had nothing, not too good for a international jew banker, you know. First sale we made 8 o'clock at night. And they sent me, my parents sent me across the street to buy something at the grocery store. We were affected by the Depression like all our Polish neighbors. We had it just as bad as they did. So, while we were talking about Fr. Coughlin, my dad used to listen to the radio. Fr. Coughlin would come on, it was on a Sunday, and he'd stand by the radio and listen and start swearing, because here's a guy that don't have, not only the Depression, the [unintelligible] you bastard giving him a hard time, and I call him the Irish bastard. Just recently, some Jewish kid from Huntington Woods wanted to burn the shrine, he tried to start a fire there with gasoline. And I guess he's in jail now. They tried the case here in Royal Oak where I live. He was a nut. But I understood how he felt. Because when I saw my father swearing, like, you know, "God, what else do you want me to tolerate?!"

MK: Mhmm.

EB: Coughlin was, and I'm mad at the Catholic Church for allowing that to happen, but that's the way things were then. They could happen then.

MK: Did your father swear in English, or Yiddish or Hungarian?

EB: In English. No, he could swear in all those. He, he could swear in 5 languages. And some of the words I still remember but I don't know what language. I think, this is not swearing but he'd say, "Put on your" this is "coat." He'd say "Put on your yippersnot." Now I don't know what language that's from. He had so many languages.

MK: Mhmm.

EB: And he could swear in all of them. And some of 'em, I found out what some of the words were, woo-hoo [laughs]. Pretty good. So, uh, I says, I had to mention about Coughlin because that was a big part of our life. I just thought that was so unfair. And they used to line up on Woodward Avenue, he'd make the speech. It was like a balcony out there or a porch, all made out of brick. And they'd all line up in front of him. And, uh, it went on and on and on and the thoughts I had, because right now I live in that neighborhood, as I, I used to take walks every day and I'd walk past the church and if the church knew the feelings I had about what they did to my family and myself, the roof would probably cave in. I remember that vividly, how angry my father got at that. And I know, not then but I know now, how he felt.

MK: Right. Were there any other programs that your father listened to on the radio? Both cultural or social or political or, or just entertainment? Do you remember listening to the radio very much?

EB: Well, he listened to Jack Benny. Everybody listened to him. He listened to baseball a whole lot. Uh, he'd have the radio going in the store when he'd wait on a customer, and then when they left, go back to listening to the game. My first recollection of baseball

was 1933 and I said to my dad, he was listening to some game, it was the World Series, I says, "What are you listening to, Dad?" And he said, "It's the World Series." And the Washington Senators were playing somebody, I don't know, I forgot who it was. And I vaguely remember that, and it didn't mean anything to me because I didn't know baseball, I didn't care. And the following year, the Tigers won the pennant. In 1934. And all the homeroom teachers at Ferry School brought in their little radios and we had no classes, we all sat and listened to the game, and we thought those teachers were great. Because we loved [unintelligible]. And that's when the Tigers lost, that year. And to this day, I'm not going to go through it now, I remember every Tiger player on that team. I got it memorized. Every one of 'em.

MK: So, what kind of radio did you have? Do you remember the make it was?

EB: Uh

Xx: Philco?

EB: No. He got it from my worthless uncle, who took over the store when we left on Farnsworth and Chene. He had a novelty business. Sold cigarettes and all that. It was from Mail Pouch. It was shaped like that

MK: Kind of a round shape?

EB: Not round.

Xx: Oval?

EB: No, like, I don't know what you'd call the shape. I could draw a picture of it.

MK: No, it's fine.

EB: Mail Pouch was a tobacco company, a chewing tobacco. And they had, it was given to my father by my uncle. He got it free and he gave it to my dad. But you were advertis—Mail Pouch Tobacco on there, and that was the insignia of Mail Pouch, on where the voice comes out. And we had that radio for years. That was a good radio. But he'd have it in the store and we'd, we'd, he'd listen to a lot of games. And then my dad was from Cleveland. And whenever the Cleveland Indians were playing the Tigers he'd give me the business, especially if, if, if Cleveland was beating Detroit. But in his heart, he still loved Detroit. But he did [unintelligible] me. Because I'd get upset and say, but "You know, you live in Detroit now, Dad, you know, you don't stick up for the Cleveland Indians." So, I, I still remember that radio. It was, it was, you never saw it, did ya? Did you see a picture of it or something? Okay, now, next door to me I got a woman named Dessie, that's her first name. And we've been living together, next door to each other, for 28 years. I just found out recently, during the Depression she lived on St. Aubin and Ferry.

MK: Mhm.

EB: And, I think I talked to you about this, and she said she was too young to remember anything because you said, well, if you want her, we can talk to her. She didn't seem too enthused about it, she's, "Well, what am I gonna say," you know. But I just thought that the only thing unusual about that is that, there, they lost everything and they had to rent. And I guess they couldn't pay their rent. She say, "We moved around a lot." And I think there was a lot of that going on. Although she don't talk about that part. She had a husband, both very, very nice people. But she said she lived in quite a few places during the Depression. But she, she remembers going to the Ferry market, because it was, you know, like 2 blocks away. And uh--

MK: What was her last name? Do you remember, do you know what her last name was?

EB: She told me.

MK: Was it a Polish name?

EB: No. She's Serbian.

MK: Serbian?

EB: I think she said Turkel.

Unknown: It sounds like it.

EB: She told me. But, she didn't remember--

MK: And she lived on Ferry or on St. Aubin?

EB: On St. Aubin, right near Ferry.

MK: Okay.

EB: And then maybe some of those places, they maybe only lived there a month, 2 months.

MK: Mmhmm.

EB: I don't know.

MK: Okay.

EB: Now, some of the street names in my neighborhood, I often wondered, were named after like Civil War generals. Like Warren Avenue, and then right next to it going north is Hancock.

MK: Right.

EB: And a couple more blocks is Farnsworth. Warren was a general now I don't know I'm wondering is this the same Warren we're talking about. He was a general. He's the one that went on, that went to inspect Little Roundtop at Gettysburgh and he says, "Oh, my God. We don't have any soldiers on this. If they get a hold of this spot we're in deep trouble." So real fast he went out and got and he was the man that saved the, because that's exactly where they attacked right there. Okay that's General Warren. There was a Union general called Hancock, and he was there at Gettysburgh.

MK: Mmhhh. That's right.

EB: Now there was also a general named Farnsworth. He was in the cavalry. He was told right after the battle of Gettysburgh to see if there were any rebels still left, they were on a, one of those rises, ridge, Seminary Ridge. They told him, "Take the cavalry down there and see if they're still there or have they left." They didn't know. So they were there because he got killed, just checking out the area. He got killed right there. So that's three names that, right after the Civil War were they building houses at that time and were honoring the generals? I often wondered about that.

MK: Mmhhh.

EB: All right, they got a street called Frederick. And that's a city in Maryland and there was a lot of activity going on there during the, that wasn't too far from Antietam, which is just a few miles away. There was a street called Frederick. That's where the Polish Yacht Club is.

MK: Right. That's right.

EB: And I wonder did that have to do with the Civil War. You know, you see these names, you wonder. At least I thought—Let's see. I got to do all this little stuff. I think I'm all done with the little stuff. Yep. Gee, I wanna tell you about, this is a little longer story. And I'm gonna mention a man's name that is very prominent today that indirectly I had something to do with it. I was stationed, well first of all I was in Missouri and when my wife had our first son. She was in Youngstown, Ohio. I hadn't had a furlough in over a year, and I went to see Capt. Jones was my commanding officer, That was in the air force and I requested a short leave so I could go see her in the hospital. And he refused me. And he says, "Why do you think you're better than the rest of them?" And I says, "I don't know, all I can do is ask." And he says, "What's so special about you going?" I says, "Well, I'm of the Hebrew faith and it's important for the father to be there." And his antisemitism was starting to come out. And he was pretty miserable. He was from South Carolina, Capt. Jones from South Carolina. He was a real redneck. And I'm sitting around around the barracks, I'm thinking I'm sitting around with a bunch of buddies. I said, "I know what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna go see the Catholic chaplain." Cuz there was no Jewish chaplain. They can get you emergency leave. So the next thing I know the First

Sergeant's waiting outside, he wants to talk to me. And he says, "By the way, do not go see the Catholic chaplain for emergency leave. Because you're going over the Captain's head." He found out pretty fast, didn't he? So there was a little chink in the, you weren't necessarily with buddies. I still went and I told the Catholic chaplain what. And he's, "I know all about that." He said, "I'll get you your leave." And he got me, I don't know it was like 5 days. And when the First Sergeant, see the Captain wouldn't talk to me. The First Sergeant, he wouldn't talk in the, he called me outside the barracks. He says, "You got your leave. You went over the Captain's head." And he's, "Now you let me tell you something." He says, "Do not be one minute late or you're gonna find yourself in a lot of trouble." In other words, something goes wrong, you're in trouble. This is a lot of crap that you gotta put up with in the army. If your captain don't like you, or your sergeant, they can make your life miserable. And, anyway, that's part of the story. Then I got transferred to George Field, Illinois, right from there. And I'm passing the bulletin board and you're encouraged to read the bulletin board because that's they only way they got to be in touch with you, if you're supposed to be at a certain place at a certain time—[END OF 11.7 KM 1.30.13]

## 11.8

EB: that's were they, "And don't say I didn't see it on the bulletin board because that doesn't go. You gotta read, So I'm there reading the bulletin board. Now this is George Field, Illinois. This is southern Illinois. And there was a bulletin that said that if you are of the Jewish faith, that was right around the Jewish holidays, go see your commanding officer and you will get a 3-day pass. And, but you gotta live within 500 miles of the base. Otherwise, they're not, give you a 3-day pass. So I went in to see the commanding officer. And his name was Silverman. Captain Silverman. And I said, "I'm here about the, you know, about the 3-day leave for, for the holidays." And he said, "All right, granted." He said, "But let me tell you another thing." He says, "Just because you're Jewish and I'm Jewish," he said, "don't expect any special favors." And I was in shock. He was even worse than Captain Jones. Here's my own countryman not having any compassion whatsoever. His name was Captain Silverman, he was a lawyer from Denver, Colorado. Now this Kobie Bryant case. The prosecuting attorney is Silverman. Now, he's not the same man. He's a lawyer of course. I'll bet you it's his son or his grandson. So I gotta tell him if, if this ever goes to print, I think his father or his grandfather was a big bastard. Worse than Captain Jones. You know, they advertise for you and when you go there—but what I think happened is when I got transferred they send your papers to the next commanding officer, I think some little note was being written, because he never did, Jones never did forgive me for seeing the Catholic chaplain. And he probably had a nice little thing there like, "This guy's a troublemaker or—"

MK: Right

EB: And that's a no-no. You're not supposed to do that. But they do whatever they want. But if you hear about Captain Silverman, it's gotta be the same family, Denver, Colorado lawyer, yeah, it's got to be. And I saw a picture of 'im, and I says, "Damn," he looks just like his dad or his grandfather or whoever he was. But he was not a nice person. So I

think Kobe's in trouble! [Laughs] But I had, and I had one other case, I'm tryna make this short. There was a Sergeant McBessie he was from Louisiana.

MK:McBessie?

EB: McBessie. M-C-B-E-S-S-I-E. or Y, I don't know. He was in the regular army, and the regular army were a bunch of bums. They'd get paid once a month, go out get drunk a couple times, they'd be broke and, but, like he said, we had the clothes on our back, and 3 square meals a day, that's—during the Depression they had a lot of guys that joined the army because--

MK: Right

EB: Well he was a bum is what he was. He was not, he was not a high class person. But he took a liking to me. He wanted me—he said, after the war, the regular army is a good place to be, it's not like it is now. He says you, he tried to talk me into it. I'm thinking, get away from me, you're talking-- Then he found out I was Jewish, somehow I don't know. And that was the end of it. He apparently did not like Jews. And he was in my barracks. And they'd sit around, they'd put the whiskey bottle on the, where you keep your clothes, not the duffle bag but they had a, it was like a, when you go on a trip--

UNKNOWN: Foot locker

EB: Foot locker. And the whiskey was there. And his drinking buddies were sitting around there. And they'd get drunk. Pulled out, one of them pulled out a gun and they aimed it at the door, either the front door or the back door, and fired the gun. Somebody could be walking by, and got killed. But they were drunk, they didn't know what they were doing. So, oh, maybe about a week later, there they are, drunk again, and I walk in and I didn't even have my hand off the doorknob and he's, "Oh, here's the Jew Boy now!" And they're all looking at me and he takes out his gun and he's aiming at me. And I didn't know how to handle that. He hates me. And I know he's fired the gun through the door. I don't wanna, I don't wanna test this idiot. And it was like I'm looking at him and he's looking at me and I don't wanna [END 11.8 KM 1.31.13]

[11.9]

EB: take off through there because he'll fire the gun for sure. And just about the time I thought I was really in, I thought he was gonna start firing the gun, there happened to be a sergeant in one of the upper bunks. His name was Sergeant Wolfe. He was from the Philadelphia area. He just got back from Italy. He was in the , in the Air Force. Well we were all Air Force. And he, he was, he was, I don't know if it was the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force or the 5<sup>th</sup> Army that was in Italy. But anyway they had a lotta, a lotta bombing runs and after you take so many of them they send you back to the States. And he was a little, he was not very friendly with people, he was a kind of belligerent guy. He was Jewish. So when he heard all that's going on—he was no friend of mine. He was no friend of anybody. He took out a biretta and he aimed it at, and I don't wanna--

MK: He aimed it at the guy, not at Wolfe--

EB: Wolfe aimed it at McBessie. And I don't wanna say the words that were said. And he says, "I'll put a bullet between your eyes." And he said, "You think I'm fooling." And McBessie was afraid of Wolfe. Because Wolfe was, he was a well-known guy like, he wasn't shell-shocked but you didn't want to talk to him because it never ended up good. So you kept away from the guy. So McBessie put his gun down and that was the end of that incident. But Wolfe was so, like, he didn't say, "I saved you" or—

MK: Mmhmm.

EB: The way he was before was the way he was later on. I coulda reported McBessie, but I didn't. And nothing ever came up again and that was the end of that. But he never bothered me again and I never saw him drunk again or anything because he could, all I had to do was say, "Hey, see that bullet hole? McBessie fired it." But you don't want to get started with--

MK: Right.

EB: But that was when I was in the army, that was a, a few things that uh, it wasn't, there was very little of that. But I still remember it and I remember his name. I already forgot what he looked like. Okay. About 19--, 1936, approximately then, you know my dad had the shoe store on Chene Street, and we lived above the store, and this was on a Sunday. And the only thing we could do was get the guys, we'd meet somewhere and maybe go to the show somewhere or sit on the porch and, so maybe end up playing baseball. So I left, went outta the store, the store was closed you know, and I locked the door behind me, and I know this--we lived between Ferry and Kirby. Right about at Ferry Street there was a bunch of people, there was bet-- just crowds of people, they were all lined up on both sides of Chene Street, and something was going on, I didn't know what it was. So I hurried over there. And I don't know what happened but it was 2 white guys fighting a black guy. Apparently there was an automobile accident or somebody cut somebody short and these people were lined up on both sides of the street, it was like a lynch mob. They said, "Kill 'im! Kill 'im!" meaning the black guy. And I was so shocked. This was 2 guys fighting 1 guy. Now let me tell you something, the black guy did okay for himself. He didn't run. He didn't hide. He was defending himself, and he whacked—he hit him a few times. Of course he was getting it, too. And I was, I, I, I remember that so well. That, that the reaction of people, they were like, because the guy— [END 11.9 KM 1.31.13]

[NO 11.10]

[11.11]

EB: [Unintelligible. Laughing] This is silence, I'm looking about, I got a list here. I'm jumping around so--.

MK: We're just in time for lunch, too.

EB: Okay. When I was 15 years old, that was 1939, every year just before we finished school in the summer, they'd have somebody from the YMCA come down, and they had a summer program to keep the kids off the street and they, I got literature and you'd take it home to your parents and you could sign up to go the Y if you wanted for, just for the summer.

MK: This is Northeastern?

EB: No, Northeastern, when I, no, no, no. This was Ferry School, when I, yeah, yeah, elementary. I was 15 years old.

MK: Well that's, 15, you couldn't have been 15 at Ferry 15 would have put you in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

EB: Well, I know I was 15. Maybe it was at Greusel, I don't know. All I know, to this day I always thought it was from Ferry School.

MK: It was probably Greusel, though. 9<sup>th</sup> grade would have been Greusel.

EB: It was prob'ly Greusel. I still seem to think, I still think it was Ferry, but I may be wrong. Well anyhow I'd bring these home every summer and they'd be ignored and I guess apparently my parents talked it over and said maybe we oughta send him to the Y, it's better than he maybe getting into trouble or on the streets. But they decided that I could go to the downtown Y, it's right there where the new Tiger Stadium is [unintelligible]. For the summer. Well I never had so much fun in my life. They had a swimming pool, I learned to swim there. Then they formed, they said where, we got a baseball league and we're having tryouts for the team. I was a pretty good player, so I tried out for the team and I could hit the ball pretty good. And they had some instructors and one of them said, pointing at me, "He's gonna be the cleanup hitter." Which is a great honor. And we played different Ys. We ended up winning the city championship. And I was so proud that here's a Jewish guy, cleanup hitter on a Christian team. And I was really proud of that. And I met some nice kids there. I was a little closer with these kids than I were with, in my own neighborhood. Because there was some hidden animosity there. Always. So one of the kids I met, name was Peter Ramucci. He lived not far from Chene Street. He lived on Heidelberg. That's where the Baker streetcar made a righthand turn, going down Gratiot, going downtown. Heidelberg was right in there, one of those streets. That's where they got that crazy museum.

MK: Right.

EB: Well he took me home one day. He says, "Come on over my house." So I went over to his house, and I liked him, he was a good ballplayer too. And I felt a little closeness, with, Peter Ramucci was one of the first guys I trusted. And he took me over to his house and the first thing, his mother was a very gracious lady. She said—it was a hot day—she

was, “Would you like something cold to drink?” I says, “Yeah, okay, I would like that.” And she had a jar with rasberry juice in there, and she mixed it with water, cold water, and she’s, “Try this.” And it was delicious. Now to this day, my wife’ll tell you, my favorite pop is rasberry crème from Faygo. I love it. I buy it by the case. Whenever I drink rasberry crème from Faygo, I think about Mrs. Ramucci. And I met Peter [end of 11.11 km 2.7.13]

[11.12]

EB: years later. Now in the meantime, the war came, he went to the army and I went to the army. And then we all come back from the army. I got a job at the Union Produce Circle, that’s wholesale, where it’s brought in by rail. And right next to the stall I worked at was a guy named Weiss. They sold wholesale. And Peter Ramucci was there working for them. He was a track man. You come in and buy something, they’d give them the ticket, and they’d walk and load ‘em up. He’d go out to the railroad tracks cuz they were right behind the building, load ‘em up. That was his job. Well, we recognized each other, and, I always did like Peter Ramucci. And as a matter of fact, he knew my friend Ray Smith we talked about. Ray smith’s father used to be with the stockbuyers, at Gratiot Avenue, and Peter lived right off of Gratiot and they met, cuz we’d talk about Ray and he said, “Yeah, I knew him.” And Pete was a tough guy. I mean if I was a big shot and I needed a bodyguard, Pete Ramucci would have been my bodyguard cuz I mean, he knew how to take care of himself in fact he got into the Golden Glove but he didn’t go too far, so there was ... one guy. But, um, I, I, I always thought of Pete Ramucci as like something new.

MK: Is it spelled R-I-N-U

EB: No, R-A-M-U-C-C-I.

MK: Okay

EB: And uh, he told me, while we talked at the Produce Circle when we had time, and he wanted to open up a car wash. He was a guy who wanted to be his own boss. And to open, to have a car wash, you had to, you had to be pretty tough. Because you had rough people working for you. So that’s my motto. So anyway, Pete was one of the nice guys I’ve met. And I had a wonderful time, uh, I used to take the Baker car, get off at Ford, take the Grand Belt, or was it, Crabstone, that’s right, Grand Belt was off Milwaukee

MK: On Milwaukee Boulevard.

EB: And that would take us right by the Y. and it was, I had a lot of fun at the Y. It was really nice. So, are you thinking about, we outta go to lunch at all? Are you thinking that?

MK: If you want to.

EB: It doesn’t make any difference to me. If you’re not close to

MK: This is just about the end of this tape, this side.

EB: I don't know if I got anything but my little shorts here.

MK: You wanna go get some lunch, and then we can come back, okay?

MK: We're starting, so we're on again on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 2004. Mr. Bloch.

EB: I mentioned at one of the other interviews about how much the boys at Ferry School loved Mr. Watson, who was our gym teacher. We had 2 female gym teachers, and they were nice people, they were okay. But they couldn't play baseball with us the way he could. And we really appreciated him. So we all liked Mr. Watson. So years go by, I got out of Ferry school and I come back from the army and I was up for furniture so I had 3 jobs that I was working. And one of the part time jobs was at a **proof** market on Southfield and 7 Mile Road, right on the corner. And there was a bus stop there and this was before I thought I'd take a walk outside. And who's waiting outside but Mr. Watson. And I said Mr. Watson! And he says, I can't remember your name but I know who you are. He always said that. So I told him I was married now and I just go out of the army. And I said what are you doing now? And he said I'm assistant principal at, some school I don't know what it was. I said well very good, good for you. I said, you know the boys used to like you a lot. So, I haven't seen him again for, I thought it was the end but you know, and then my daughter comes home and she's in middle school, and uh, she's talking about her principal Mr. Watson. I said, I wonder is that my Mr. Watson. So I'm describing what he looked like to me as a kid. And I said he's kind of a big man, he's got a crooked nose, and he's got a mustache. She said no, that's not him dad. He wasn't that big of a man, but when I'm a kid he's that big of a man. So one day my daughter and mom said we got open house at, what school? What school was that? Anyway, that probably, it was intermediate class. And we're going through the classes, we spend 15 minutes in each class and you wanna ask the teacher about your child. And I told Julie, I says I gotta, I know where the office is. it's probably not him, but I wanna find out if its' the Watson I knew. So I lined it up, walked right into the office and as I was walking in, from one of the back offices, here comes Watson, it was him! I said Mr. Watson! And he says, I know who you are but I, I know who you are. And he was glad to see me. And we started talking and just then the classes were changing and the teachers were out in the hall directing traffic. And I looked over, real pretty teachers and I said to Mr. Watson, I said, you really got some nice looking teachers here at your school. Pretty, young teachers. And I said, not like Ferry School. I said we, they weren't too nice, except one. And he said yeah, who's that? I said, you remember Ms. Sullivan. He said yeah, I married her. Well, you know how you say the wrong thing sometimes, well that time I said, but I meant it, She was very pretty. Where the gym was, right across the hall was Ms. Sullivan's class. She was a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. Very, dark hair, very pretty face, nice figure. Well he married her and then, uh, when my daughter was graduating which was just a couple months after this meeting, Mr. Watson stood up and he made a little speech, I'm retiring. He says, I know when it's time to retire when children you taught when you were a teacher have become grown up and now you're teaching their children, referring

to us. He said, it's time to go. I, he and his wife opened up a travel agency somewhere. But that's all. And uh, I just kind of brought up that story because usually you say the wrong thing you know, but that time I really said the right thing.

MK: You nailed it.

EB: We all liked him, he was a nice guy. Now you were talking to me about Charles Murz. When we had nothing better to do, he'd teach me Polish words. That was his job. And I know one time I cracked his mother. She was a fiery woman, boy she had a temper. But when she was nice she was very nice and when she was mad, keep out of her way. One day she was in a good mood and she said, is my son teaching you Polish? And I said yeah, he's teaching me words here and there. I said, I could go into a restaurant and I could, I could order a hotdog. And she says how? I says, this is not exactly right, but I can tell you. I said [something in Polish] She cracked up. She said oh! She just, she was very funny. So, Charlie keep after it. I know one time we were off with Alice and Charlie, we were talking about something, I forgot what it was about, and Alice said to me "he haw." And I shot right up. And I said, what'd you say that for. I don't know what it was about, but I picked up enough words where, I could understand. I don't mean that, there wasn't anything great, but I know a few words. So anyway, going back now to Chene Street.

MK: And the restaurant that you mentioned to me, that you liked the Murz family a lot?

EB: Yeah. I can go right to that. If uh, this would never happen, but if it ever happened, my favorite family was the Murz family. I liked Mrs. Murz, I liked Mr. Murz. I liked the brothers, the sisters. We had a lot of fun. The dad was a very quiet man, a big man, but very quiet. Very seldom, didn't say anything. I know one time Mrs. Murz said something and she was teasing her husband and he was not in the mood. He was not a violent man. He was not in the mood to be teased. And he let out one breathe. That was the end. She knew don't go any, that was so funny. But they never fought with each other or anything like that. But I gotta to say that Charlie's father was probably, for an uneducated man, a genius. He knew how, he knew about carpentry, electricity, he knew plumbing, he knew how to lay cement, uh, did I say plumbing? He knew that. He was a painter, he could do everything. So they decided they had like a single home, so they decided they were going to raise the roof a little and make a second story apartment up there. And the man did it. They had to be, and Charlie was very good but he learned that from his father. I remember day after day he'd be up there working, and they finally rented the place out to Charlie's sister and her husband. I gotta say though, the old man, he had to be, as far as I'm concerned, all those things he knew, a genius. He had no education. And I got to say about, in a polish neighborhood, the average pay about \$45 a week at that time. He worked in a factory. He's right in there somewhere. That was in the 1930s. And there's a lot of things that you wanted, if you wanted it, you had to do it yourself. There wasn't money to go around. So like one year I may have said this before, Mr. Murz built a smoke house in the backyard. 'Bout a half a pig. And he was smoking the meat. I know, I remember one day I walked in there and Mrs. Murz was grinding up something with the grinder. And she's pouring blood in there and she says, I want you to taste this. And I

say, oh no. She says, it's blood sausage, very good. I said, ... She knew I wouldn't like it. And uh, they made crawfish and in their backyard they had 2 pair trees. They had a garden where they had their vegetables. And they made a good life, but it wasn't easy you know? But in the polish neighborhood, this is, I've not polled a little bit, but I've got to say something good. Polish people, very strict, they keep a clean house, they all have a nice lawn. When I say all I mean the majority. The house was kept up, it's painted. They had flowers in the summer time. And, uh, all the things they did they probably had to do for themselves. Which, if you needed anything for the house, you did it yourself. You didn't hire, there was no such thing. Maybe an old widow might hire a painter to do some painting inside or outside. But, the only houses, on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, that's between Sheridan and Grandy, that were un-kept were rented houses. Now the Beelo house that was a rented house, that was un-kept. Now there was another one in the middle of the block that was un-kept, it was as rented house. The people that lived there, they kept it up very nice. And uh, there's a lot of attributes about being Polish. To this day, you let polish people in your neighborhood, and they're all over the city, or this area, they have a nice house. They have a nice lawn. They take care of the place. In fact, if anything, it'll probably be one of the nicer houses on the block because usually the husband knows how to do all of that stuff. It's just amazing just, how nice Polish areas were kept. Like Hamtramck was just a jewel, not anymore. Like Ferry Street, the street was paved with bricks. And it was a bumpy ride because over the years, but that was a nice street. It wasn't, most everybody, fairly pleasant people. And everybody knew everybody.

MK: Were there a lot of trees on those streets?

EB: Yep.

MK: What kinds of trees were they?

EB: Well, they used to paint 'em white. Now I don't know, I know Charlie's mother's house had chestnut tree, not the kind you eat. And uh, those kids would take tin cans and try to knock the chestnuts down, that was the game. And one day one of the kids threw Charlie's bedroom window which brought out the big tiger, Mr. Murz. And had the kid trapped up in the tree. Happened to be one of the Kirby gang, when he was younger I'm talking about. And the mother and father said, 'eehhh, shocked ahhh oh!' You know, and the kid was scared, he was trapped up in the tree. Well I knew who that kid was, he was the kid that was called Goofy. That was his nickname. And he was a bad one.

MK: What was his real name? Do you know?

EB: I went to school with him. Everybody had a nickname, I even had one. So, they said, go on Chene Street and see if you can find a policemen. So there were about 3 of us, me Charlie and I don't remember who the other one was, and we couldn't find a cop. So we said well, let's go back. So we're going back and it was night time now, this was not in the day. And somehow Goofy got down off the tree and he was running right towards us. And he slipped the old man, something like that. so, I thought he was coming for me. So I took a swing at him, and that's what he wanted to do, so he took a swing at me. He

missed, I missed. And he says, I haven't got time but I'm gonna get you. And I looked around and my buddies were all gone. I was the only one that had the guts to fight him. But I never hit him, I tried to though. So, uh, some of the neighborhoods you go in, in a Polish neighborhood, there's like an unwritten law that you better keep up your house. It's not only the Polish, a lot of European people are like this, you better keep up your house. Uh, we've got, he's not Polish, we've got a neighbor who is very strict on, they keep their house up very nice. These are Romanian people, American Romanian. And they can't get in line with any of their neighbors because they got this strict code, that I, I know this, you better keep up your lawn, don't let the grass, they don't tell you that, but you know that it better be done. They do the whole area, and it's pretty well done that way. And a lot of times, on the way home from school, Bobby Jocks would be sitting on the porch. And watching, he didn't tell you, but you knew, don't you dare step on my front grass. Because that's what they had, at that time it was front grass. And sometimes you'd pretend like it, and he'd start getting up. He's sitting on the porch because he knew the kids are going home from lunch and he's going to guard his property. It was funny and it wasn't funny. They uh, there's nothing wrong, I'm almost like the old guy too now. I don't care if they step on my lawn, but I keep up a nice lawn, and I'm proud of it. And in fact, I think it's a little contagious in our neighborhood. My neighbors have a nice lawn, the one across the street, he's got a beautiful lawn. Skip a house and another. So our section, right in the middle of the block, very well kept. So uh, Polish people they -

JB: Nobody's Polish in our neighborhood.

EB: What?

JB: Nobody's Polish in our neighborhood.

EB: Yes they are.

JB: They are?

EB: David, his father.

JB: That's it.

EB: No. Somebody else, I forget. So I just have to say that Polish people know how to, oh well one time with the man's lawn, the old man was sitting on the porch and I thought, he can't catch me, so I stepped on his grass and I started running and he was right after, but he couldn't catch me. But that's how it was, cranky about your grass. Um, I was talking about like the Mordell boys.

MK: Um hm.

EB: Uh, we were right near Mercer Hall, which is very close to Grandy. And there's Johnny Mordell, he was about 5 foot 6, maybe not even that tall, but he was a tough kid. And there was a black kid, a tall one, maybe about 6 foot tall, older than he was. And

Johnny was from a darker neighborhood, even though he didn't live there, that was his turf. So he probably insulted the black guy. He must've been about 18, 19 years old. And then they started into a fist fight. And I thought, Johnny, what're you, I'm thinking this, why are you starting, this guy's taller than you are, he's beiger. He's older than you are. He thought he was invincible. Well he got beat up. And one time he kinda looked back at me while he was getting beat up and I said to myself, I never said I was gonna, you're dumb for starting up with this guy. And I'm not gonna, he wanted me to help, without saying anything he kind of looked at me like, where are you? And that's the way it was. I had nothing to do with that. And that was, in fact, on the corner of Dubois, or Dubois, and Farnsworth, on the northeastern corner, there was as 2 family framed home. And word got, this was like 1935, '36, word got around that a black family was moving in one of those. Well, I had to go see what was what. Because I knew everything that was going on in that neighborhood. And there it was, a broken window, that happened. And they did not get in the house. And they would fight to protect their turf. And they didn't want that block to be lost. But, I remember that, I remember going to see that. Uh, they were our blocks. When I was at Northeastern High School, I used to eat my lunch in the auditorium. I'd bring my own lunch, I brown bagged it. They had the magazines around the, in the auditorium. Esquire, so I picked one up one time and I was going through it and there was this black kid, what, those pictures, they used to have those Betty girls you know? Just beautiful drawings. And I said they're kinda nice ones in here. And he sat down next to me and introduced himself. He said, my name is, I'm almost sure this was his name, I'm not positive, I do not remember his last name, but his name was Merle. And we got along real well.

MK: What year was that?

EB: Well it had to be around '42, 1942. So of course there were blacks in Northeastern. Yeah, I would say about, close 2 half were black. And Merle was just a nice kid, he really was. Good looking guy. And, a peaceful guy. A lot of them I thought were thugs. He was a pretty nice guy. And we used to sit there and look at, uh, what was that magazine? Esquire. And we'd sit there and we'd always met for lunch. And I enjoyed his company. With him, I felt like Peter Ramucci. I thought the friendship with these two that I hadn't felt with the guys I was brought up with. There was some hidden animosity with the friendship. You could feel it. I didn't feel it with Merle and I didn't feel it with Ramucci.

MK: How about, what about with Murz?

EB: Murz was violently anti-Semitic but he never said anything, but I knew it. Because when I started going, when we started to know each other, we'd probably met in about 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade. And I'd go over to his house and his mother would greet me with [something in Polish], she teased me with that. She didn't say it in a mean way. And as I grew older, she stopped that. And, I began to like her a whole lot. But Charlie, I would say, he's a very jealous person. I don't know but - . So anyway, we were talking about this black kid Merle, and lately I've been thinking a lot about him. I don't know if he's still alive. Oh, when I quit school, that's the last I saw of him. I never even said goodbye to him. He never said, you know, he never knew. I wanted a car, and that was all that was to it. And I

was never going to get a car eating lunch in an auditorium. So I just wonder if he's still alive. If he remember, if he ever hears about this story, that we used to look at Esquire Magazine together at the auditorium. And I thought he was real great guy. And we could've, if we would've stuck together, we would've been real true buddies. I liked him a whole lot. He was very nice, a very nice person. And you know, I don't even know if he's in the states anymore. You know, people move around a lot. But I liked him a while lot. I was, I guess, without knowing it, I was looking for a real buddy that we trusted each other and we never did little nasty things to each other. And I couldn't find it there, there was, I blame the church for a lot of that. I'm sorry, I blame the church for it.

JB: ...

EB: Uh, well, yeah. As I said, in most countries it's church and then state. And I say in Poland it's church, it's church, and then it's state. It's run that strictly and uh, I don't think they're doing Polish population any favors by that kind of attitude because the church just about runs everything in that country. I don't know how it is today. Uh, I have a lot of animosity about that, especially Cardinal, Bishop Glemp, he's violently anti-Semitic. And um, I can understand those things happening in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the 15<sup>h</sup> century. I'm talking about a modern world that's still happening. And it's probably a political a lot of the other stuff around. It seem like everybody in Europe hates somebody else, their neighbor. And uh, there's one polish woman, I read this in the paper, she was from Poland and the Priest was telling her to have more babies. And she's saying, how can I have more babies when we don't have enough food the way it is now. And the priest and she's rebelling against the priest. And the priest says, go have more babies. And she says, on what? And I'm saying, that lady has got some brains. At a certain point, it's like right now, they're blaming in Boston some Cardinal to take the fall for the Pope, what's been happening in the Catholic Church, and what'd they want from that poor guy? He doesn't cause well, they made him quit his, in Boston, and that guy took the blame just like what's gonna happen now about the prisoners, somebodies gonna take the blame, not the one who knew all about it and did nothing about it. I'm just surprised there wasn't a big rebellion in Boston. Because those Irish are very -

JB: There was a big one.

EB: There was a big one huh?

MK: Let's get back to Chene Street stuff.

EB: When I went to Northeastern High School, our fight song went like this "Ooh shah shah shah, ooh shah shah shah hit 'em in the head with a kielbasa."

MK: That's great. That's great.

EB: Tell you another thing that, understand this has got to do with anti-Semitism, but I spent a lot of hours thinking how can earth be, this has nothing to do with Polish people okay? When I worked at the produce terminal, a lot of Italian people worked there. And I

like Italian people, I really do. They had this one guy, his name was Paul, he was from the old - he's Sicily. And he was old time Italian, he worked for a Jewish boss and he'd always say "Morta Cristo," Christ killer. And the boss knew about him, if he didn't he wouldn't the Italian people you know, and what, you don't have to like your boss but you gotta respect him. You can't be calling him names, that's idiotic. And once what happened, he talked to the, the boss said look, you know, the nicest people I ever worked for were there neighborhood people. He talked to the union official and he'd say, I know I can't fire him, but this guy he says things where I can hear. He's defying me, and you don't do that to a boss. You show your boss respect, you may not, you don't have to like him, but you must show him respect. And they said, well put him on potatoes. Which means, 100 pound bags of potatoes, nobody rolled with it, all the workers had told on him. And the other Italian guys working with him, the ones that knew, said oh, don't be such a ... why do you gotta say that? Because Paul was getting his back broken with loading up 100 pound bags of potatoes, 50 bags, 100 pounds of potatoes all day long Paul had potatoes. And the back breakers, he was strong but. And then there's another case when I worked at United **Arie**. Some guy walking down the alley where the trucks are waiting to be loaded, and he's saying something about the Jews. And is say, how can he be so selfish. How can he be so selfish. And I said, never understand when anybody did that. Because, no matter who I worked for, I don't care who they are, zero bad stuff would come out of my mouth about the, whatever the way he was. If I worked for an Arab I would never say, I could never, I could never, never understand that. Sometimes I just feel compelled to say those things, I don't know. So, sometimes it's about, it's about **that in here**.

MK: Okay, great. Well thank you for coming by today. We've got quite a bit of material.

EB: I thought some of that stuff was real good stuff.

MK: It's an hour and a half of material and um, I like the Northeastern fight song. Okay, well thank you very much.

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Erwin J. Bloch in Royal Oak and today is February the 15, 2006. And Mr. Bloch has been kind enough to develop a scene of thematic drawings of his father's shoe store on Chene Street. So we're gonna talk about it right now. So this looks pretty detailed here, why don't you try to walk us through what we've got.

EB: Okay. That's the front door, here's the **foyer's** windows here's the seat

MK: On the left here

EB: On both sides

MK: Yeah

EB: Now I've got about 7 or 8, see I don't know if it was 5 or 6.

MK: Okay.

EB: I'm not positive

MK: Mh hm

EB: Over here, on the north side of the store were the men's shoes.

MK: Excuse me, were they in boxes, or were they -

EB: Yep, in shelves. And in boxes. That had, he had shelves built all the way around

MK: Okay, but none of these are open, they were all just boxes

EB: Right

MK: Okay.

EB: Now here we had children's shoes and gym shoes.

MK: The back of the store

EB: Yeah. And they had odds and ends on the little counters here.

MK: What kinds of, you mean like shoes? Like polish and stuff like that?

EB: No no, um, shoes that were not **hemly** anymore. You can't reorder the same shoes. That was the end

MK: Right.

EB: The odds and ends.

MK: Okay.

EB: Okay and here was a stairway, two steps, or one step to the kitchen. The kitchen was right -

MK: Right behind the store.

EB: Yeah. And we had wrapping paper over here. And the register was there.

MK: Along the right wall there.

EB: Yeah.

MK: The south wall.

EB: Yeah. And here's where the women's shoes were, on the south side of the store. And there's a pot stove, honest to god. Now whether it was here or there, it was in this area somewhere. Like to the best of my ability, this is pretty accurate of what the store looked like.

MK: What um, who made, who built the shelves for you? Do you know who it was?

EB: I don't know. When we moved in in 1926, the shelves were already there. Dad bought this building, we lived above the store and when we moved in, the shelves were already there. He got 'em put it.

MK: 'Cause it wasn't a shoe store before, was it?

EB: I don't know what it was there before, I was 2 years old when we moved in and uh, I, I just never paid any attention.

MK: Did he carry stuff like shoe polish, or quaff for shining shoes, or brushes or that kind of stuff?

EB: No, he had, one time, hats of, at the other store he used to have men's clothing too, but he gave that up.

MK: The corner store there?

EB: Yeah, the one on Farnsworth and Chene. And he concentrated on shoes. Now I remember looking at these, out the east side of the building, a table where they had odds and ends. There were old fashioned women's shoes. Oh, they looked like from the early 1920s, 1918, 19- Uh, I remember seeing them, looking at them and thinking how funny they looked. They were high, the shoe was built up to over the ankle.

MK: Lace up?

EB: Yeah! Um, over here was the benches we'd sit on, or not we, my dad and my mother to help the customers try on the shoes.

MK: Was there any kind of, were there any displays? Or posters, or price lists? Anything like that at all in the store that you remember?

EB: No, no. there was no price list. The fact is, the shoes would be on display in the window with the price on there. I know dad used to put one shoe down and the other shoe over. It was like this. And that's how we'd display them in the windows.

MK: Was there a sign out front? That said shoes, or not? You know there -

EB: There might have been something written, in the higher, above -

MK: Above the display windows?

EB: Yeah. There might've been, I know dad's, his wording for the store was "shoes for the entire family."

MK: So that was kind of the logo that he used?

EB: Yep.

MK: And was that written up anywhere? Did you see it anywhere written?

EB: Probably. It was written somewhere. Not in the store. It probably was outside the store. And yeah, I don't recall seeing a sign out there, one that hung off the roof.

MK: Now remind me, above the display window, was that wood frame, or was that brick?

EB: It was brick in front. He bricked the front, and wood frame all the way around. But on this side, on the south side and on the north side he had imitation brick put on alongside the building.

MK: But above the second story, at the front of the store, was that brick?

EB: No.

MK: It was wood frame.

EB: Wood.

MK: What color was it? Do you remember?

EB: Oh god. No. I know it needed a painting.

MK: And the brick itself, was it red brick?

EB: No, I think it was yellow.

MK: Yellow brick? Okay.

EB: And he just had the done, I would say, in the early '40s. He had it bricked in front.

MK: How did he get delivery of the shoes? Where did the shoes come in?

EB: A truck would pull up in front of the door. Something like, some delivery truck and they'd drop off cases of shoes, and they'd bring 'em into the store

MK: They would bring them in, or he'd have to go out and get 'em?

EB: No no, they'd bring 'em in

MK: They'd bring 'em in. And did he have any other place for storage or shoes, except the shelves?

EB: No, that's it

MK: That was it. So all the stock was out?

EB: Yeah. I remember one year one of the salesman talked him into buying a lot of woman's motor boats. They were galoshes and they were all over rubber and they had fur along the top, right around, above the ankle. And that was the biggest seller he ever hit. That went over very big.

MK: Um hm. What, when was that? Before the war, or?

EB: Before the war.

MK: Before the war?

EB: The salesmen would come in, and they'd put their suitcases on one of the chairs, he'd open up the suitcase and he shown what the newest line was. Dad had two favorite salesmen he liked very much. One was uh, Endicott Johnson, that's Endicott Johnson, that's in new York. And he was dad's favorite. Um, and he had, his name was, hm, Mr. Hood, H-O-O-D. And he was like, he was just a good salesmen. He'd get very close with his customers. My dad liked him a whole lot and he liked my dad. I remember about 1928 or '29, Mr. Hood bought a new car and he brought it over special. He didn't have his suitcase with him. He brought it over to show my dad. It was epic. And he took the family out for a ride. That's how close we were. I member I went with him to. Then the other salesman that my dad liked a lot was Joe Striks, S-T-R-I-K-S, I think. I forgot what company he was with, but he was my dad's favorite, these two. And um -

MK: Well besides Endicott Johnson, who else were the big names?

EB: I forget.

MK: She was a big carrier.

EB: Endicott Johnson was a big one.

MK: Right. I thought we had this before but I don't remember now, there used to be a Kremen shoe store across the street.

EB: Yeah, um hm.

MK: Do you remember Isaac, was his name Isaac Kremen I think?

EB: I don't know about Isaac, but it was Kremen, K-R-E-M-A-N. Or E-N, I'm not sure.

MK: What do you remember, did your dad know him personally?

EB: Sure! He used to come over to the store to spy on us. And, they didn't talk. They were friendly competitors. Kremen had a store, the back of his was right by the Ferry Market. You could walk into the back of the store or the front. He had a big stock.

MK: Earlier on I know he had a store in Hamtramck.

EB: Who, Kremen?

MK: Yeah. And I'm wondering, do you remember, was he there on Chene Street when you opened up?

EB: I don't know

MK: Do you remember him?

EB: I don't remember, it was like he was always there. When I got to be about 10, 12 years old I got to know he was, who Kremen was, and I knew where his store was. Um, he was as friendly guy.

MK: What about the guy down the street? Rose, Dave, uh, what was him? David

EB: Rosenberg?

MK: Rosenberg, yeah

EB: They had the Floreshime Shoe?

MK: Right.

EB: I didn't know them at all but they had a very neat shoe store.

MK: Was he around when you were there?

EB: Yeah, I didn't know him. I never talked to him or anything. But I used to see him a lot.

MK: So he wasn't as close to your dad as Kremen was?

EB: No he was closer.

MK: No, but I mean personality, he wouldn't come over.

EB: Oh no no no. they never talked as far as I know. I don't think they were enemies or anything.

MK: Then he moved down on Gratiot, further east. He moved off of Chene Street to Gratiot. Probably before you -

EB: Um, no that had to be either during the war or right after. Because the whole thing changed it was no longer, business wasn't as good.

MK: Right.

EB: I remember my dad asked me, when business wasn't so good, he wanted to know what should we do. Now mind you, right after, right before that my brother got killed in the war and -

JB: Want some coffee cake?

MK: Sure, thank you.

JB: How many?

MK: I'll take one.

JB: No, take two.

EB: Um, it really, that broke my parents very hard, very hard. So he said to me, what should we do with the store? Should we keep it open or should we close it? What should we do? And what, I told him why don't we close it. And I always regretted that -

MK: Why?

EB: I wasn't interested in uh, he wanted he and I to run the store. And um, I wasn't interested in retail sales.

MK: Kremen ran that store for a long time. He was there into the '50s.

EB: Coulda been. The reason he kept that, probably, was because of the Chene Ferry Market.

MK: Right.

EB: Wednesdays and Saturdays, that's when the market was open. It brought a lot of business at those days. Now when my dad had his store on the corner of Farnsworth and Chene, which my grandmother owned, my dad decided that that block on Chene Street was not good for business. And he was 100% right. He knew that the best spot on Chene Street for business was Chene between 3<sup>rd</sup> and Kirby, which was very active in business whoever was there. And around the Milwaukee area and Chene, that was pretty busy. And you know around Harper Piquette. And then if you went south, Forest was, Forest and Chene was--

MK: Right, the cross town area.

EB: Yeah, was a pretty busy area.

MK: Do you remember, I don't think I asked you this, but do you remember a shoe store in the '30s, Max Weinberg, up in the Milwaukee area. He had the Jewish hour on the radio later?

EB: I knew who he was, but I didn't know he was the same man had the Jewish hour.

MK: Yeah. And he had a shoe store on Chene Street.

EB: He used to speak in Hebrew on the radio.

MK: Was it Hebrew or Yiddish?

EB: Probably Yiddish. And he said, Yiddishe **Spunda**, Yiddishe is Jewish and I think **Spunda** had to be audience.

MK: Um hm. Or hour.

EB: Or, could be, yeah. My parents would listen to the program. Now later in life, I'm talking about after my parents were gone, I worked for the son of them that used to live around Chene Street. Not live, his parents had a store. And his name was Robert Weinberg. And we worked together at a carpet store. He was manager of one store and I was salesman of another. But, he said he was from right around Milwaukee in that section they had a store. Now I don't remember it, or if I do it's very vague.

MK: What about the other, the non-Jewish shoe stores. There was Jaglowicz.

EB: Yeah. They had a nice store.

MK: And Ustarowski, are the two that I remember. Ustarowski, U-S-T-A-R-B-O-W-S-K-I.

EB: Where was he?

MK: He was on Chene and, around Medbury. On the west side of the street. It had, the reason I remember it, it had his name on the tile in the front of the store. When you walk in, you know, when you walk in the entrance way, it has his name on the tiles. You don't remember that one?

EB: I don't even remember him at all.

MK: What about Jaglowicz? Do you remember Jaglowicz?

EB: Oh yeah, yeah. I remember he used to be on the west side of Chene Street between Hancock and Forest.

MK: Somewhere near there, yeah.

EB: Yep. He had a good looking store. It was well kept. Good looking store. Our store needed remodeling which they really never, my parents never really did. I guess, during the Depression people used to get what they called, from the city, it's like a check. They used to call them scripts. And it was good for like one pair of children's shoes or one pair, they explained what it was. And my dad couldn't cash it in because the city was broke. The city issued it. So, he'd have to sit on these checks and there's a few vultures around. I remember one vulture used to come around and buy it at 50 cents on the dollar. In other words, sometimes my dad would need money badly, he'd have to sell 'em at half price. And these vultures were around who had the money that could do that. Um, and he had to do that quite often. I remember the scripts though.

MK: Did he extend credit to his customers?

EB: No, no credit. Everything had to be cash. I think the shoes he used to cross like, \$2.98, \$3.99, right to be in the price range.

MK: Were there checks back then? Did people have checks that wrote checks?

EB: Yeah.

MK: Did, 'cause I remember talking to somebody who I think, it was years ago, they said that they had check writing machines? 'Cause the people were immigrants they couldn't write out the number in long hand. So they would actually have a machine that would do that. Do you remember any of that?

EB: I remember there's a machine that would print the amount of money out on the check. And I remember seeing one of those machines.

MK: But your dad didn't have one?

EB: No, no. I know he had a checking account, on the bank. I think it was right around Hancock and Chene that was a bank that went under during the, and he lost all his money in that bank. And then he used to deal with the bank on Medbury and Chene.

MK: Yep there's, yeah.

EB: I remember I used to have to run to the bank to get change and things like that. My good buddy next door, Jenny Levinson with the wallpaper painting store, she used to send me to the bank every now and then.

MK: You know, I don't know if I told you this, I don't know if I told you this, but I met Jenny's sister. And I met the family, Goldie her name was. And--

EB: Last name **Gloren**?

MK: No, uh, no. Her name was Levin. Her sister's name was Levin.

EB: Oh the Levinsons, she wasn't married.

MK: She was married Levin.

EB: Oh that's, okay.

MK: Yeah, she's in her 90s. But what's more, I met a niece of Jenny's who had a box of letters from Jenny Levinson, to Jenny Levinson from her husband in Poland.

EB: Oh yeah.

MK: So there's like, I made photographs of about 100 letters and postcards that are written from Poland to Chene Street to Jenny Levinson from beginning summer 1939 to 1942. You know, letters from her husband to her. And then of course they stop. They trace his history too you know. Because he lived, to ship from Poland, not far from Warsaw. And then, you know, when the war broke out he was still living where he had been living before the war, and then they moved him into the ghetto. You know so, first the letter are in Yiddish, and then they are in Polish, and the last ones are in German because the Nazis would censor them. They're all addressed to Chene Street address and to her. And I have a whole history now of Jenny's family. I have the records of when they arrived in the United States you know, from Poland. Um, the name is spelled SOHNLEVENSOHN, Levinson, it's long. And so I've got quite a bit, and I've a lot of photographs from Poland of Jenny. I have photographs of her and her husband in Poland.

EB: If you remember, one of the stories I wrote about was about Jenny and what happened to her and how she went to Poland. How she met her husband.

MK: I remember.

EB: Do you remember though?

MK: Sure, sure.

EB: I did my best on, Jenny was a special friend of any, everybody. She was just the nicest, in fact, Julie, my wife, met her. You know we walked in the store one time and yes, everybody that knew Jenny liked her. She was a good person.

MK: She was on the street 'till the 1980s. That store was open until the mid 1980s.

EB: She must've died about 5 or 10 years ago.

MK: '93.

EB: I'm not off by much am I.

MK: No.

EB: She was special, nicest, she was probably my best pal, as an adult, that I had on Chene Street. I could walk in her store and she'd be sitting on a chair right by the door with her feet up on the, what do they call the heater? It was an air, that's where the heat came up. What do they call--

MK: Vent? The heat vent?

EB: Not a vent. It was made out of metal, it was about that long.

MK: Radiator?

EB: Radiator. And she'd be reading the paper. And I'd be sitting at the edge of, like at this spot here, I'd be, she'd be here sitting here and I'd be sitting over there. And she'd be reading a paper and we'd talk and all. She treated me like an adult, I was a teenager then. I know she was very interested in opera. Every Saturday she had the opera on the radio. She was a very high class woman. Just a, she had a bad break when she went to visit in Poland, her future husband, well they got married there. And what happened to him. You know he was taken to the concentration camp and killed. She never heard from him. His name was Perla, which probably means Pearl in English.

MK: Right, right. Did, when she was in the store, do you remember her father at all? Louis Levinson?

EB: Oh yeah.

MK: What was he like? What kind of a guy was he?

EB: He was a big tough guy. Of course I was a little kid then. But he was a likeable guy, but he looks, he was the kind you didn't wanna fool with. But he put his daughter in business on Chene Street. He was on Chene and Piquette.

MK: Right, right.

EB: Yeah I remember seeing him. And I talked to him a few times. He was a nice man.

MK: Did he come down to her store?

EB: Yeah. He'd come down to visit. She was loving it. She ran it very well. She had wallpaper and she had paint. She had wallpaper. And that's, he handled the same thing. Wallpaper was a big thing around Chene Street.

MK: Um hm. I was gonna ask, and I'm sure I have asked you but, do you have any photos of all of your dad or mom? Anything?

EB: Yeah! Julie, on the wall we have.

JB: I'd have to look it up. I can look and see. But I have some on the wall.

MK: Yeah, but not ones that are behind glass. That can be made copies of.

JB: All right, I'll look.

MK: Okay.

EB: I got a picture of my mother in my bedroom. She was a very pretty woman. But--

JB: Take that one upstairs in the bedroom. It's hanging up on the wall.

EB: It's just a picture of my--

MK: It's behind glass though right?

JB: Yeah

MKL: Yeah, yeah. See that's the problem. I wouldn't mind seeing it, I'd like to see it. But I can't make copies you know, over the glass.

EB: The older I get, the more I appreciate my parents. Dad was a very smart man. but he never owned an automobile. That's a no no. You got to own an automobile. Anytime they wanted any kosher meat, my dad would have to get two streetcars, one, two, to go to Westminster. That's a street, it starts at Oakland Avenue. That's the main street in Westminster and off of Oakland Avenue to go get kosher. And he'd have to take two streetcars to do it. And we didn't have a refrigerator, we had an ice box. He should've

had a refrigerator, he should've had an automobile. If I could've influenced him now, you know knowing, now, I would've been after him to get a car, I would've been after him to get a refrigerator. In fact, that old store did not have any furnace. It had pot belly stoves. So, he was not progressive in that way.

MK: Sounds to me like you, had you stayed in that store you could've, you know, fixed it up and made it--

EB: I was moving away from Chene Street. Because it brought back a lot of sad memories for me. I always thought that if we moved away to another area and I wouldn't have been surprised if the area didn't turn out to be Hamtramck. My dad and mother could both speak Polish and that was a must in that neighborhood then. And probably would've, but I wouldn't want to live above the store like we did on Chene Street. I'd rather we have a home somewhere else and, with a car, commute back and forth. And I probably could've influenced Dad. He was very hurt you know, when my brother got killed. It really affected him. When I think about it, we never talked about it because I didn't want to upset him. And my mother had a brain tumor and she, I'm trying to think, did she know my brother got? I don't think she ever knew because my dad didn't want to tell her and she was, sometimes she, what was, Julie! I'm trying to remember what she had. She'd like black out.

MK: Um hm. She died from that?

EB: Yeah. She had a brain tumor. When Julie comes back here I'll, I forgot. It was a common disease. I remember when my mother passed out sometimes, it's that disease that you can swallow your tongue.

MK: Oh, epilepsy?

EB: That's what she had. I couldn't think of the word for it.

MK: So she had epilepsy. She had, what do you call them, seizures?

EB: Yes, yes. I remember one time she was in bed and she had a seizure and I was begging her to come out of it. 'Course she had no choice in it. But they'd only last a few minutes.

MK: How old were you then?

EB: I was back from the army then. I was, all right I had to be about 21, 22.

MK: So that's '46, '47?

EB: Yep, yep. And then when dad did sell the store. There's a story attached to it. There's stock buyers who'd come in and buy your stock. So they came in and they checked the stock and they said okay, we'll give you x amount for a pair of shoes. And he

said let me think about it for a day or two. Which they didn't go for a good price. And when he called them up and said he said okay I'll take it, they said you don't get that price anymore, what a bunch of bastards. That's the kind of people they were. And I know he sold a lot of stock to them. They, the stock buyers were Gratiot Avenue somewhere.

MK: Do you remember what year he actually sold that store?

EB: Okay, I came back in '45. I would say about '46.

MK: And did your mom die before that?

EB: No.

MK: So he sold the store and then they moved?

EB: Yeah but sometimes my mother didn't know who she was. I'm trying to remember. Yeah, we both moved, yeah, oh, Julie and I were, it was a two-family house they bought on Hazelwood and if you remember the baseball player Dizzy Trout he lived across the street from us. I remember he sat his luggage on his porch when he was getting ready to go to Florida for practice. I don't remember seeing him, I guess I saw him a couple times, but I don't remember. I remember the luggage on the porch.

MK: So you lived on Hazelwood?

EB: Yep.

MK: You don't know the number do you, on Hazelwood?

EB: Julie might remember.

MK: Between what and what street? Do you remember what it was?

EB: Between Phelps and--

MK: And that would have been like 1946?

EB: '46, 4 – we lived there a few years.

MK: And your mom passed away there, when you were living on Hazelwood?

EB: I'm trying to think. Let's see. I think Dad passed away first?

MK: Did he?

EB: Yep.

MK: No kidding.

EB: Yep. Because Mom got so bad I couldn't handle her anymore; we sent her to a nursing home on Cass Avenue. Was it Cass or 2<sup>nd</sup>? One or the other. She passed way thereafter. She was there about a month or two or three, something like that. They called up and said she's passed away.

MK: So she passed away when she was living on Hazelwood?

EB: I don't know. I don't relay, I could've been the next place, we moved to Carter.

MK: To Carter?

EB: It was just east of Dexter. Rright on the corner of Dexter and Carter lived a famous Michigan football player, Germany Shulz. That was way back. But he lived right on the corner there. I remember seeing a big old man. He was big. I never talked to him but I used to see him.

MK: Was that neighborhood Jewish?

EB: It was a mixture. There was a lot of Jewish people there but most of Dexter was, you might say south Jewish. We were on, was it Joy Road or Claremont up near Dexter? I think Joy Road. If you went north of Joy Road it got very Jewish. If you went south of Joy Road there were maybe some. Maybe 30-40% were Jewish. I remember when I used to ride the Dexter bus when I'd have to go to Hebrew school, I passed a beautiful stone house on Montgomery and Dexter. There was a stone house there. And I said, some day I'm going to buy that house I just loved it so much. Of course I didn't; I always loved that house. I remember seeing it. That was closer to West Grand Boulevard, that house. My memory of Vicksburg was the other street. That's where the house was, on the west side of Dexter. But Dad passed away first and then Mom did.

MK: What did he pass away from, do you know?

EB: He had lung cancer.

MK: Lung cancer, did he smoke?

EB: Yep. Fact is when I went to the hospital with my cancer, I had it in the inner cheek on the right side of my face in the neck and in the jaw, first thing they said to me is do you smoke? I said no, I quit 30 years ago. They said that's probably what caused this. After not smoking for 30 years it still came back, still hit me. They asked me if I chewed tobacco, I said no. I tried it as a young lad a couple times, but it didn't appeal to me.

MK: What kind of cigarettes did your dad smoke, do you remember? What brand?

EB: Wings.

MK: Wings?

EB: Yep. They used to have a picture of an airplane on a little card that came along with the pack of cigarettes.

MK: Do you remember what color the package was?

EB: I don't remember. White, they're all white. Except Lucky Strike was green and gold and red. He smoked a few different kinds. I don't remember seeing him inhale but I guess he did. Most of the time he would not inhale. But I took the habit up from him. And when I saw what happened to him I quit. I remember one day I bent down to pick up something in the kitchen and a package of cigarettes come out of my shirt pocket. And landed on the floor and there's only two of us in the kitchen and I didn't want my dad to know I smoked. So he said, what are these cigarettes doing on the floor, are they yours? I said no. He says, well they must be mine and he put them in his pocket. But I think he knew I was sneaking around smoking. We all started when we were about 14 or 15, a whole bunch of us. The guys.

MK: I have a, actually, a picture from 1933 of a group of women. This is something that the Simian society, the **Hosain** society, and in this picture I think Zosia Hoffman is in. I wonder if you could recognize her? You knew the Hoffmans, right?

EB: Sure!

MK: I wonder if you would recognize her? I think she's in the picture.

EB: I liked that woman a lot. She was wonderful.

MK: Let's see if I can find the photo.

EB: They were always big in Polish up there.

MK: I think she's in the picture, let's see if you can recognize her. I thought that maybe this might be her, but I'm not sure.

EB: No, that doesn't look like her to me.

JB: I'll look for her in a second--

MK: Oh.

JB: Erwin's mother.

MK: Oh yeah. These are great.

EB: Well if Mrs. Hoffman's here I cannot –

MK: Okay she may not be there. I was just wondering. Good.

EB: But these could've been younger pictures of her.

MK: Right, from 1933 so,

JB: If Erwin knows about those pictures.

MK: I'm wondering –

EB: That's the back of the house, yeah.

MK: Is it possible for me to borrow these at all? Or will you feel uncomfortable about that? 'Cause I would scan them.

JB: No, as long as you return them.

MK: Yeah I'd scan them get them right back.

EB: Gentry store, I'm standing in front of Gentry Store.

MK: Right. Let's go through these from the beginning.

JB: I'll look for more.

MK: Let's start with that.

EB: He and I were not friendly, I didn't like him.

MK: What was his name, your mother's brother?

EB: Isidore.

MK: Isidore?

EB: Yeah.

MK: Oh all right, I know what you mean now.

EB: I didn't like him one bit, very strict.

MK: The Banks?

EB: Hm?

MK: Banks? The name Banks?

EB: Oh Banks.

MK: Right. Okay. So what about here, who's in this picture here?

EB: I don't know if, that's my mother, I don't know if that's me or my brother. That's not taken at my house.

MK: What about these two pictures? Who's that?

EB: That's me.

MK: Wow, okay.

EB: I must've been about 13.

MK: Well it's 1940 so, you were--

EB: Born in '24,

MK: So 15, 16. What about that picture?

EB: That's a picture taken in Highland Park when I was at my aunt's house.

MK: That's you though?

EB: Pardon me?

MK: That's you though.

EB: That's me. And I think that's my cousin Victor's car. This was on Penaton Street in Highland Park. I loved it over there, that was a beautiful street. Nice people there. This was a Ford car, I remember.

MK: And who's in this picture?

EB: Ah ha, this is me with June Luenberg.

MK: June Luenberg?

EB: Yeah. And Loraine Davis.

MK: And who is Loraine? I know we talked about June Luenberg?

EB: Yeah, she was, she went to high school with me and she was in one of the pictures with me. We were sitting in front of the high school.

MK: Right.

EB: She was, Loraine Davis, her father owned a shoe store. Her father owned a furniture store. And she went to Eastern High School.

MK: Okay.

EB: And I think she lived on Vern Street. The Van Dyke-Harper Area.

MK: Vern Street. All right. Who's that?

EB: That's, both of them are me. This is me at the back of the house.

MK: Okay. On Chene Street.

EB: On Chene Street. And this is me in front of Jenny's store. I think I took a picture of Jenny that day. That's when I was getting interested in cameras and developing my own pictures.

MK: What about that one?

EB: Ray Smith.

MK: Oh yeah, I remember you talking about Ray.

EB: Yeah. This is the back of his house. His mother had a used clothing store. And that's me.

MK: That's, so Ray Smith.

EB: We just, we graduated the 8<sup>th</sup> grade that day. Ray Smith had a girlfriend living upstairs there. Her name was--

MK: Right. And where was that house at?

EB: Hancock and St. Aubin, right on the corner.

MK: Which corner was it, remember?

EB: Yeah, would be the northwest corner.

MK: That's great.

EB: It's the back of the house.

MK: Right. What about, who do we got here?

EB: Oh that's my game. We were climbing trees.

MK: Who is it? Do you recognize him?

EB: Well, I think this one was called Chester. Now this was the kid, his family just came over from Poland. He spoke English, his parents had a hard time. He was kind of a nice kid, I liked him. I think his last name was **Stepeakowitz**, don't ask me how to spell. CWIET, something.

MK: Okay.

EB: I don't remember. That's me over there.

MK: And then who's next to you?

EB: I don't know. I think that is Raymond Belogh, but I'm not sure.

MK: Biele or?

EB: Belogh.

MK: Oh Belogh.

EB: I misspelled it for you.

MK: Right I remember now. Sure. Okay.

EB: And this other picture up above, a picture of me sliding into a base, although I'm not. All I did was kick the dirt to make it look like I was sliding.

MK: Right, where is this at?

EB: This is at on the playground.

MK: At Ferry Field? Or where?

EB: No. This, Ferry Field didn't have any swings on it. I don't remember where this –

MK: Warner Park, the one on **Hunter**.

EB: No, no.

MK: Or Callahan? On Elmwood?

EB: No, this could've been by the market but I'm not sure. Up from the market.

MK: Okay.

EB: But I was interested in photography, I was doing a lot of photography then. And that, that's my girlfriend, Julie. Isn't she pretty to look at?

MK: Beautiful.

EB: Very pretty girl.

MK: Beautiful.

EB: Julie again. 1941, that's before I knew her. These are all Julie. This is Julie. Yeah. And more Julie. Okay we went to Jefferson Beach and we had, this is my friend Dan Hodack.

MK: Dan Hodack?

EB: Yeah. And this is Julie again, with me.

MK: Okay, good. These are great photos.

EB: ... Julie here.

MK: That's Julie and that's

EB: That's me.

MK: Oh.

EB: It was taken in Pennsylvania. By the fence there. Julie lives in Pennsylvania. And um, I don't know were we married then or not? '43, we got married in '43. Uh, I don't know if we were married yet. That's Julie at the beach. In the army, that's a gas mask I've got on here. I was in Texas. Damn was it hot there. There it is with a gas mask again. Shepardsfield, Texas. That was the air force. These were guys I met in the army.

MK: Which one is you?

EB: This is me.

MK: Erwin on the right.

EB: Here's me with a sub-machine gun.

MK: Um hm.

EB: Outside the barracks.

MK: Um hm.

EB: **Ethan Pose** is how I remember him. He was a nice guy. And that's me on the left.

MK: Okay.

EB: And I don't remember this guy. I remember him, but I don't remember his name.

MK: Right.

EB: Still a nice bunch of guys. Here I am with the machine gun again.

MK: Um hm.

EB: There's a right soon. And again, when I was in Shephardsfield. Same thing, all Shephardsfield. This is the group I went to, this is mechanics, airplane mechanics. And I'm in there somewhere, I don't know where I'm at. I'm buried there. I think this is me here. And that's one of the buildings they had the mechanic school at.

MK: Um hm.

EB: See, there's a bunch of soldiers marching in the background. I don't know, there's a bunch of them back here.

MK: Yeah yeah.

EB: Here we go again. I'm in that picture somewhere.

MK: Do you know where you are?

EB: Oh boy. I remember this guy here.

JB: **...**

MK: Um hm. These are great.

EB: Some nice pictures of you Julie.

JB: Oh really?

MK: Yeah. Lovely.

JB: Thank you.

EB: She was very pretty. She was working at the base there, at the piano. When we got married and, you ever had 1000 guys looking at you at the same time? She had it. They'd see her and they'd be marching by and they'd all whip around. That's, she's there at the base. That's her, right after we got married.

MK: And that's you?

EB: Yeah.

MK: Wow, great. Those are nice pictures.

EB: Yeah, a photographer from the base took it.

MK: Oh yeah.

EB: Is that Danny, my son? Our son?

JB: I guess. ...

EB: He's a doctor now. Let's see. Him again.

MK: Um hm.

EB: Yeah, that's all him. He was always was good kid. Never gave us any trouble. That's Julie, that's when we lived on Grandy.

JB: Do you remember Grandy?

MK: Yeah, where on Grandy did you live?

EB: When I came home from the army I got discharged. Julie was living with a nurse. The nurse she owned the home or she was renting it?

JB: I guess she was renting I don't know.

EB: Anyway, Mrs. Reid was her name. And Julie was staying at her place in one room, she was renting a room there. And that's when I come home and we stayed there about a month or two.

MK: Where on Grandy was it?

EB: Was it Fredrick and Farnsworth?

JB: Are you talking about the number?

MK: Yeah.

JB: [laughing]

MK: Between which and which streets?

JB: Um, ask him.

EB: I think it was between Farnsworth and Frederick. Or it could be Fredrick and Kirby. No, I think it was the first one.

MK: And her name was Reid? Mrs. Reid?

EB: R-E-E-D.

JB: R-E-I-D.

EB: R-E-I-D. She was a nurse.

MK: Okay. And she owned the house?

JB: I don't know.

MK: So this is where these are at?

EB: yep. I'm sitting on the back porch with my son.

MK: Um hm. Great. So there are no pictures of your dad then? I've got pictures of your mom but not pictures of your dad?

JB: No, just that one there. And there.

MK: Can I see it?

JB: .....

MK: .....

JB: ....

MK: That's your dad?

JB: That's my dad.

MK: ... That's great. We were talking about Christmas time at the store and what your parents did. So um,

EB: Uh, my parents used to, right around Christmas time, pass out calendars with a purchase of the shoes. And then one year they got into giving a dinner platter. And that went over big. I got that wrapping, I remember my mother wrapping up in newspaper, she, at the wrapping counter next to the, that's where they kept the dishes. That went over big. Um, nobody ever had enough dishes in those days. So they used to buy it, there was a store on Ferry Street right across from the market, the Chene-Ferry Market. It's a little hot so,

MK: It's okay.

EB: So they used to go there and buy the dishes there. There was a store right on the corner of Ferry and Dubois, or Dubois, that used to sell the dishes. They'd go there to get it. We've got salt and pepper if you want that.