

**Interview with Mr. Ed Nowak
conducted by Marian J Krzyzowski
for
the Chene Street History Project
October 1, 2002 & August 6, 2003**

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MK: So this is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm at the home of Ed Nowak. It's October 1, 2002, and we're here to talk about Chene Street, Nowak Hardware, and all the neighborhood. Why don't you begin, maybe, by me asking you about your family history, your background. I assume you're Polish, but I don't know that for sure. And I was wondering if you could just give us a little background as to, you know, how you identify where you came from, and how you sort of ended up on Chene Street.

EN: Okay, well my dad and mother both came from Poland. At that time I think Poland was partitioned. My mother came from the German side, my dad came from the Russian side.

MK: Do you know what villages or towns they came from?

EN: Yeah, my mother came from Chełmno. Which is on the Pomorze. Now, my dad I think came from Bydgoszcz as far as I can remember. Now, they both came in the 1920s as far as I can see. My dad I understand started over at Lendzon's dime store working in a basement. Then in 1926, he opened the hardware store.

MK: What was his name?

EN: Felix.

MK: Felix Nowak and your mom?

EN: My mom's name was Irene and they're both Catholic. We were raised Catholics and still are Catholics. Starting from there we went to St. Stanislaus grade school.

MK: Where did you live?

EN: I lived right above the store. Right above the hardware store. I lived there until 1967. [laughs] It was quite a long time.

MK: So what year did they open the store, do you remember?

EN: 1926.

MK: Wow. That's a long time.

EN: Yeah. At that time, the registers were in the back. Primarily, my mother and dad were selling housewares. I have an old picture that I looked at and they mostly sold pots and pans and cleaning supplies. They were that way until my brother and I took over. My dad died in--well, my mother died first. She died in '45. My dad died in 1947.

MK: And your brother's name was--

EN: Chester. Now, at that time the community was very very vibrant. We had everything you could want on Chene Street. Shoe stores, clothing stores, meat markets, flower shops, doctors, dentists, and the thing is, when you came into the neighborhood, you didn't have to talk English because every store wanted to talk Polish. So, you could get by with just a Polish language. It was that way probably up until after the Second World War when they started changing in the fifties. At that time we had the Chene-Ferry Market where all the farmers came in with their produce from the farmers from their farms and Saturday was a very very busy day. Wednesdays and Saturdays, the parking lot on Palmer between Chene and Dubois was constantly filled with cars and people used to want to drag those little shopping carts around on two wheels. They used to bring all their things home, they didn't need a car because everything was within walking distance. Theaters, I think we had five theaters on Chene Street at one time. Clothing stores, Rathnaw, Witkowski Clothes. Meat markets, too numerous to mention besides the sausage stop and the restaurants, candy stores, bowling alley.

MK: As a kid, what of the stores do you remember going into? Which ones did you like? Which ones do you remember the most?

EN: I probably remember going to the farmer's market, the Chene Ferry Market. We used to see pigs cut up in half laid out on the tables. We can't do that now for health reasons but they did at that time. My mother and dad used to buy whole chickens, have them slaughtered and bring them and dressed and slaughtered at the market and bring them home and then have our chicken dinners on Sunday. Then I remember going to the ice cream parlors naturally when I was a young kid. It used to be Liberty Dairy over up on Grandy and I think it was Grandy and Lyman. You used to get an ice cream cone for a nickel. We had two potato chip factories there. New Era on Hendrie and Grandy and then we had Deluxe Potato Chips were on Kirby and Mitchell I believe and then there was another, Better Made used to be up on McDougall at Kirby I believe it was too, so we had like I say, it was everything that you ever wanted. A couple of playgrounds there that kids could play baseball. We used to play on the Ferry School lot and the Majeske School up on Lyman. You probably know about that one, if you lived on Lyman, and let's see what else.

MK: What about the movie theaters? Which movie theaters do you remember?

EN: Well, I remember Iris Theater probably the most.

MK: Can you describe it?

EN: That used to have a balcony. [laughs] Teenagers or about to be teenagers used to go up and neck in the balcony 'cause that had a balcony you could get out of sight of everybody. Go up in the last row and nobody bothered you. Home Theater, we used to go sometimes from school. They had a movie day once or twice a year and we used to walk from St. Stanislaus to the movie theaters. That and King Theater, which was Fredro Theater or King Theater. Either one of those two would once or twice a year, the nuns would take us to see a movie. This was in the afternoon during the school hours. Then they also had Ritz Theater. Ritz Theater they used to, I remember, they used to give out all these plates, dinnerware, stuff and glassware that the women used to collect. And I think the other theaters.

MK: Iris did too. My mother, I was telling somebody else, my mother when we came to the U.S. in '51, we lived on Lyman, she would go to the matinees at the Iris and every time she went, she'd get a dish or a saucer, or something like that. She got a complete set that way.

EN: You know that's worth a lot of money now.

MK: No kidding.

EN: Yes it is. Yeah, it's a collector's item. It's what they call cut glass or something like that and it's worth a lot of money.

MK: Hm.

EN: Yeah.

MK: So, do you remember the inside of the Home Theater at all.

EN: Well, the Home theater was basically, you know, just tapered down. It didn't have a balcony, same thing with the King Theater and the Ritz Theater. They were smaller theaters. The Iris was like a second run or third-run theater. They used to start at downtown with the big theaters, then two steps down would be the Iris, and then it'd go to the Home Theater and King Theater.

MK: The Iris had an organ in it, too, didn't it?

EN: I don't remember an organ to be honest with you.

MK: Oh, okay.

EN: I don't remember an organ. If they did, they never played it when I was in there, so.

MK: What about the other stores, like, you know, the, anything where you got toys and where you bought candy. What kind of, what?

EN: Well, toys were, we got the toys ourselves from our hardware store [laughs]. So I really didn't.

MK: But you started out as a furnishing store not a--

EN: Well, yeah, but--

MK: When did you, when did you--

EN: It probably changed when we started growing up in the late '30s, early '40s. My mom and dad started handling toys and things for kids. Because I remember a lot of wagons, bicycles, and tricycles and things like that that they got into that type of merchandise.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: And I'm trying to think now. Well that lasted probably up, well when my brother and I took over well then we started going heavy into hardware 'cause we thought that's where the business would come from so.

MK: Can you describe the store for me, if someone hadn't, you know, let's say 1955 to 1960, to walk up to the front of the store what would they see.

EN: If they walked in front of the store they'd see two show windows. The entrance was recessed. So it had a little, little entrance way. Then you'd walk in you'd see counters in the center of the store. And wall cases on both sides. The store was approximately 27 by about 50. With a full basement. We used to keep all our excess inventory down in the basement. The register was in the back where we had our nail counters in the back of the garage we used to our our pipe threading machine our glass and things like that for cutting. We used to do all our work in the back repairing windows and screens and things like that.

MK: How many people worked in the store?

EN: In the small store we had I think 4, maximum. My brother and I, a couple of employees. And then the wives would help out occasionally when we needed them.

MK: I spoke to Mary Ann White, she said she worked at your store for a while.

EN: Yeah, she did but I think she worked--

MK: The new store?

EN: Just as we transferred over over to the new one. She had, I think she worked in the older store for, golly I don't know, maybe a year or so. Because I remember we had a party when we finally moved over to the west side of Chene and we invited all the people

that helped us move over to the new store. We might have had a few more employees now that I come to think of it at the, at the smaller store. Because I remember, we had quite a few people that helped us move over and after we did, we went over to the Polish Century Club and had a dinner for everybody who in--

MK: What year did you move?

EN: '60, 1960--4, no, I'm sorry, 1974.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: 1974. We took over what used to be an old A&P, a Kroger market.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: And it was vacant for two or three years. And at that time there was, the city was trying to help Chene Street rebuild, too. And they had a task force, if you notice, all the paintings on some of the buildings that were done by one the artists from the city. The same one that did the People Movers. I don't know if you know his name, I forget, the name escapes me right now. But they put up a, they tried to get everybody to update their buildings. They had grants, matching grants. If you put up a new awning or something like that they would match whatever you paid for the awning. They would give you half. You know, to try to induce the business people to update their buildings.

MK: When you were still at the old store. Did all your employees, were they Polish-speaking, was that, you know, was that?

EN: No, no.

MK: No?

EN: No, no, no. They were English. We had one employee I think that was, that was Polish-speaking. We had a couple Black young people working for us. My mother died in '45, my dad died in '47. I was 16-years-old, my brother was 20. That's when we took over the hardware store. And everybody, when you tell that story to everybody, they're kind of a little surprised that two young guys could manage a hardware store and make a go out of it. [laughs] At that time, but we did. Luckily we were both hard workers. Uh, and we, we made a go of it.

MK: So did you, did you graduate from St. Stan's?

EN: No, I went to U of D High School.

MK: Okay. So after, after St. Stan's through 8th grade and then U of D High?

EN: Yeah, and then my brother went to Orchard Lake, he went to Orchard Lake.

MK: To a--

EN: Orchard Lake High School.

MK: Orchard Lake High School? Oh.

EN: Yeha.

MK: Okay. And for that whole time, where did he live?

EN: When he went to Orchard Lake he lived on campus.

MK: Yeah, but when he was back with the store?

EN: Okay, he got married, I think it was.

[Phone]

Break

MK: So.

EN: 1950--I think he got, okay. You got it running?

MK: Yeah.

EN: He got married I believe in 1949. He lived above the store.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: He lived there until 1962. I got married, and I lived above the store 'til 1967. And, uh, then we moved over to my present location now

MK: And, does, did somebody else move in upstairs?

EN: No, it was vacant. We were using it for storage.

MK: I see.

EN: At the hardware, yeah. When we moved out we used it for storage. At that time we were very very big in toys. We used to, Christmas time we used to tear down all the shelves that we had up there and put nothing but toys up. So it was kind of a hassle because if somebody come in for a hardware you know we used to have to run down to the basement or up the stairs or in the back room to get it for them because we were so loaded with toys.

MK: Can you describe Chene Street during the Christmas season, say, back in the '50s and what was it like, what did it look like if you were to be growing up there on the street?

EN: Well they used to have stores that were, had had decorations hanging in their windows. They were all dressed up for Christmas time you know with lights and ornaments. The Polish glass ornaments they used to hang up. Outside of that, I, we never had any--

MK: Did you stay open late or anything like that?

EN: Yeah, well at that time we all stayed open 'til 8:30-9:00 o'clock.

MK: Wow.

EN: Yeah. We started closing early, I think, it was 1967 after the riots. That kind of made everybody close early. But at that time it used to be a 9 to 9 affair for most of the store owners.

MK: So, when, you know, if you look back on the time that you remember the store. You know, you're talking almost 75 years.

EN: Right. 75 years.

MK: Can you talk about the trans--kind of what business-wise, what was going on. When was it, when was it at its peak? What happened?

EN: Well I think the peak years were probably right after the war. I think it started changing in probably about 1955 or so. What happened, you know, the young men and women who came back from the war. They moved, got married and they moved out into the suburbs. Their families, their parents still stayed in their original homes. Now, their parents probably were well in their 40s or late 40s when their kids came home from the war. But they stayed there probably another 30 years would've brought you to about 1980. And then, I think that's when you saw the demise. The biggest thing was when General Motors plant came in. They took out 1300 families from the neighborhood.

[telephone rings]

Break

MK: We're talking about the Poletown plant.

EN: Oh yeah, they took out 1300 families, and, once they did that, the retail business went down on Chene completely. The farmer's market, took 'em another 2 or 3 years or 4 years. They closed. The supermarket we had closed. They just couldn't make it.

There was not enough traffic to sustain it. Thing that kept us going were, we had quite a few good commercial accounts. So we, didn't hurt as badly because the commercial accounts kept us going. They kept us going 'til about 1998, '99, and then they started leaving, too. Some went bankrupt, Frederick and Harrud meatpacking place, they used to be up on Frederick and Riopelle. They went under and they were one of our biggest accounts. And then, quite a few others that went out.

MK: So you were at the new store from what, 197--

EN: '74.

MK: To 1998?

EN: No, 'til, well, we closed up last year, which was 2001

MK: Oh, wow.

EN: Yeah.

MK: So, '67 it sounds to me like you say was one milestone, kind of. People--

EN: Right.

MK: You know.

EN: Yeah, yeah.

MK: The mid-'50s, '67, the Poletown Plant coming in the late, you know, mid-'80s.

EN: Mid eighties, yes, that's what really I think tore the neighborhood apart.

MK: But you still hung on there for, God, another almost 20 years.

EN: Like I say, that's what kept us going were the commercial accounts. We didn't get any business from General Motors. But we did from the surrounding shops that were still there. But then eventually one by one they started, you know, either closing up, they didn't have the business or some moved out and--

MK: Were you down there on a regular basis? Did you go to the store?

EN: Oh yeah, oh yeah, every day. Six days a week.

MK: Every day until you closed?

EN: Yeah.

MK: Mm-hm. And the new store, how many people did you have working at the new store?

EN: At one time we probably had as many as 12 part-time, not full-time, but part-time. We probably had 4, 5 full-time people, and another 5 or 6 part-timers.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: And, we're, at one time we're connected with the schools where they had kids that they wanted them to learn retail business and they would subsidize their salaries to a certain point where they would come in, they would subsidize. Instead of us paying them, they would pay to get the experience and being able to work in a retail establishment.

MK: One of the things that happened of course over the same period of time that we're talking about is, as you were saying, the the people who lived there originally, most of them Polish, ended up moving out.

EN: Right.

MK: After the African American population moving in. I also recall there were probably some Yugoslavs.

EN: Well most of the Yugoslavs, there weren't so many of them.

MK: So tell me about, what, demographically, what happened on the street?

EN: Well, Yugoslavs moved in. As a matter of fact they bought most of the bakeries that were, at one time they were Polish. They bought most of the bakeries. They were Yugoslav. Most of the people when the Polish people moved out, the Yugoslav people moved in. And they were good customers, too, they were good people. Kept their homes up and in decent shape, and their lawns and front yards. Then when they moved out again.

MK: When was that roughly?

EN: Probably when the Hamtramck plant moved in.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: After, if they didn't sell their house they became absentee landlords. And then they were renting to renters who didn't care about the properties. And that's when things really started going down hill.

MK: Was it, you know, what about safety on the street? At what point did safety become an issue? Or did it become an issue?

EN: Yes it did. Very much so.

MK: Can you tell me more about that.

EN: Well we used to have the women that were going home with their little shopping carts, they were being knocked over and their purses stolen and things like that.

MK: When did that start?

EN: That would probably start in the late '70s. Middle '70s, late '70s where it really wasn't safe anymore to walk down the street. Matter of fact, I don't know, I don't think I can count on two hands as many times as this store was broken in to. We had them come all the way through the front windows, through the roof, through the back door. And the biggest one we had was somebody stole a hilo from one of the meat-packing plants in the neighborhood. They drove the hilo right through our back door. Lifted the whole back door along with the frame and all right out of the back end. And they really caused more damage than they did stealing merchandise. The alarm system scares them off. But in the meantime you end up with all this damage to your building. The roof, the holes in the roof. I don't know how many we've had. So it's always a constant battle to try to secure your building. You didn't know how to do it anymore.

MK: What kept you there, I mean, I would imagine, maybe I'm not, you know, I'm not tuned in enough. But what kept you from moving the store to some other location? Like a Nowak Hardware somewhere, you know, St. Clair Shores, or wherever, you know.

EN: Yeah. I think it was false hope. You know you hear all the things about the City of Detroit coming back, the casinos being built, you thought that would have been an impetus for more businesses. The GM Plant, we thought that would help. What happened with the GM Plant is they built easy access on and off so people got off the expressway right into the plant. Off the expressway out of the plant right on the expressway again. They didn't have to travel down any of the streets, down Chene Street. Then not only that, when they built the plant, they cut off the access to Hamtramck. 'Cause Chene used to run into Joseph Campau right through to Hamtramck. But when that happened you couldn't, I couldn't draw any people from the north anymore. I had to, all my advertising was centered south. And the problem with the 48211 zip code is that it's the poorest zip code in the city. With the least amount of homes. I think the last count was like 3000 people population in the whole zip code. So that's when, you know, we just couldn't make it anymore. And once we started losing our commercial accounts, that's when we knew it. And I was, I was at the age where it was too late for me to start over.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: You know, my son, he says, if you want, if you'll work I'll go with you Dad. But I says, son, I don't want to. I don't want to be in the hardware business anymore. I'm just too old for it. My brother died in 1991. So my son came in as my partner.

MK: What's his name?

EN: Kenneth.

MK: Kenneth?

EN: Yeah, Ken. And he stayed with me until we closed.

MK: Can you tell me a bit about, you know, about some of the other stores on the street. We sort of touched on a little bit of the movie theaters and and so on. I'm wondering, you know, even within your block, what do you remember the stores, which ones stick in your mind?

EN: Well I remember the pool room next door to the old hardware store on the east side of Chene.

MK: What, what was on the name of it, do you remember?

EN: Palmer Recreation.

MK: Okay. Did you go in there?

EN: Yeah, when I turned 18, yeah, I was, old enough to go in there. So I, we used to go shoot pool. That used to, well I wasn't really good at it, but I was fair. And then we had a shoe shine parlor next door to that. And then the barber shop next door to that. So I remember getting my shoes shined in the barber shop. We had a lawyer's office down next to that. We had a car wash next to that. A Chinese hand laundry. Well I used to take all my laundry over to the Chinese hand laundry because I was single and I lived above the store. I had a small apartment above the store where my brother lived in the back and I lived up in the front end. So we had the front entrance so I really didn't bother them going in and out. And I used to take my laundry down to the Chinese laundry that was there. And there was a restaurant with good hot dogs next to that. And a gas station on the corner. And on the other side of the street Palmer Bakery naturally. And then we had, there was a finance company there, Associated, Finance at one time next to the bakery, Zarembski's Department Store where everybody got their Communion outfits. Oh I remember getting mine and my brother's over at Zarembski's. And that was one of the department stores, the department store on Chene Street as far as for children's go. And then next to that was the bar and another barber shop. Another small restaurant. And, you had a travel bureau and then there was another hardware store, Hass' Hardware. Then you had the Ritz Theater and New Elk Bar. Oh yeah, Ed, next to that was that the bridal shop, I can't remember the name now. And then Werner's ice cream store. Then

on the corner of Hendrie you had Trudy's Flowers. I remember that because I got my wedding flowers from her. And, basically, that's it.

MK: Do you remember, you know, there was a store, I, and maybe it's a travel bureau. A guy name Leslie Socha.

EN: Socha, yeah.

MK: Socha, Polish Pavilion.

EN: Yeah, Polish Pavilion.

MK: Do you remember that?

EN: Boy he was a travel one. We owned the building.

MK: I see.

EN: Yeah.

MK: Because he used to be, he was at the Palmer Bakery was right next to it.

EN: Next, next door to Palmer Bakery.

MK: But then he moved down the street I think, didn't he, or something like that?

EN: No, I think he moved out, completely out of the neighborhood.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: Yeah. He moved out of the neighborhood.

MK: What do you remember about him? And that store?

EN: Well that store I remember, well he used to set up a lot of trips to Poland. And then I think if you wanted to send money he was able to send money over something like the Western Union or whatever way they did it. I don't remember or recall that to be honest with you. But he was there for quite a few years.

MK: What I recall about him, the reason I'm thinking about is, I, as a kid, remember seeing old 78s in that store. He had like, he was also selling.

EN: Record shops.

MK: Yeah, record shop, it was like a record--

EN: Yeah, record store.

MK: Record, all these, like, brown paper--

EN: Yeah.

MK: You know, things with 78s in it.

EN: Right, yeah, yeah. Then above you know, we used to, we ran the hall above the bakery and Socha's place. There was Nowak Hall. We, at one time, Lutnia choir used to be there. And then they moved out and we had vacant second floor we didn't know what to do with it. And we said, we'll make a hall out of it. So we ran a hall for probably 20 years or so. I got married there. Bunch of my friends got married there. And at that time you know you could hire your own cooks. And bring, they would buy the food and the same thing with the beer. You could bring your own beer and wine and now it's all catered so you can't do anything. But at that time you could bring your own food and drinks in. And I remember many a time I used to have to close up at 2:30 in the morning. [Laughs]

MK: What about the Palmer Bakery, remember that?

EN: Yes I do, very well. Adamczyk's.

MK: Can you say anything about it, who was it, who ran it?

EN: Adamczyk. Yeah, they had two daughters and a son. The daughters worked in the bakery probably constantly. Junia, and Mania. They called them always by their Polish names. They still, I still do when I see them. They're both still with us. Yeah, and they both went to St. Stanislaus.

MK: Did their parents own it? Is that how--

EN: Yeah their parents owned it.

MK: They're the ones that started it?

EN: Golly, ever since I remember. So that'd been in the early '30s.

MK: Junia.

EN: Junia and Mania.

MK: Junia?

EN: J-U-N-I-A.

MK: Okay, and Mania.

EN: Right.

MK: And I'm wondering, too, at some point, is there a way of tracking down to talk with them?

EN: Oh yeah, I have Junia's phone number.

MK: So if you could then I'd I'd appreciate it.

EN: Yeah, I can give it to you.

MK: As a kid, my mom and I, she had one of those two-wheelers buggies, you know.

EN: Right, yeah.

MK: We still, Palmer Bakery was always the bakery we shopped at.

EN: Yeah, yeah.

MK: That was, among all the other bakeries, that was the one we went to.

EN: Bread 11 cents, and they'd slice it for you.

MK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EN: Can't believe it.

MK: What about the butcher stores. There's a lot of butcher stores on Chene, I mean, Ochylski, and Jaworski, and Kowalski, Kowalski?

EN: Right.

MK: What do you remember of the butcher stores? Which ones did your--

EN: Well I remember Jaworski for their kielbasa. I thought it was always better than Kowalski's. And Ochylski Meat Market there, I remember my mother going there. And they had that and the place next door, they had Premier, they had the pickles in the barrel. [Premier Dairy – MK] I remember smoked herring that they used to have all the time. And I never cared for it but my mother and dad used to buy it. So that was quite an experience. When you walked in, you know, you could smell all these different smells of food that you don't get nowadays in the big supermarkets.

MK: Can you describe it more, a little bit more of the store? Was that the store that had sawdust on the floor?

EN: Oh they all had sawdust. Oh yeah. They all had sawdust on the floor. Yeah, they all had sawdust. And he had you know, the butchers were all in their little aprons and all. And they'd slice up and cut up whatever you wanted however you wanted it. And they're all usually family-owned, so the proprietor was always there so you always got good service and good meats or good products whatever you're looking for.

MK: One other thing I mentioned to you earlier was, I know a number of the stores on the street were owned by Polish Jews.

EN: Yeah.

MK: You know, I can think of Max's.

EN: Max's, right.

MK: Three Brothers. There was Cohen's Jewelry.

EN: Right.

MK: There were probably a bunch of others. I wonder if, and I think most of those people also originally lived on the street, they lived in the stores that they operated.

EN: Well I know Max's did.

MK: No, but--

EN: Three Brothers? They don't?

MK: Do you remember the names? Who were the three brothers?

EN: I don't. I don't.

MK: You can't track some of those down?

EN: That I don't. You got to remember, they're, you know, I was in my early, late teens or early 20s and, I don't, I wasn't that involved. I remember going into the stores. but I don't know their last names. I know Max's Jewelry, he's passed on.

MK: Rosenbaum?

EN: Yeah, Rosenbaum, right, yeah.

MK: Wonder if, someone from his family is around. I would like to track them down.

EN: Yeah, because I, I remember when we had the riots of '67. I remember I called him two or three times told him that they were breaking into his store. He says, well I'm not coming now, I'm afraid to come down. 'Cause we were living above the store at that time. And looking out the window we could see everything that went on.

[Break]

[During the break, Mr. Nowak recounted how he witnessed the looters and he pointed out that they were white people from the neighborhood. They were neighbors. He got very angry as he talked about it. But he refused to have it go on the tape. MK]

MK: Beside. do you remember Cohen's Jewelry at all?

EN: No I don't.

MK: No you don't.

EN: No I don't. No, no.

MK: Ehat about, do you remember Mr. Zukowski's store?

EN: Oh absolutely, sure.

MK: Peoples' Bookstore. Can you tell us a little bit about that store?

EN: Yeah I used to go in there and get a lot of greeting cards. Anything you wanted in Polish you would be able to pick up from him. Polish books. I remember going to his store to get *opłatek*, for Christmas time. We used to, used to have a *opłatek* all the time. And anything Polish, you know, you want to have, you want a Polish flag or things like that. You want greeting cards in Polish, he would have it. Stamps, he would have. So it was just a very handy store to have because if you wanted something out of the ordinary he would have it. Records in Polish, you know, things like that.

MK: Do you remember his father, Martin Zukowski, the old man who started the store?

EN: I vaguely remember seeing him there. But like I say, you know, I was still young or very young at that time. 'Cause he was there for a long long time. I remember he got shot once, I don't know, probably in the '70s or something. You know, so it's, I remember Sleder's Drug Store.

MK: Yeah, I know, can you tell me about Sleder's?

EN: Yeah, well we used to go to, our medicines we used to go there all the time. My mother and dad used to go.

MK: Why Sleder's and not Przybylski's?

EN: It was closer. Just a block away, the other one was 2 blocks away. [laughs] You know. I think that's the reason. And I think it was a little more customer-friendly because it had, it was a wider store. Although Przybylski's we used to, they used to have the post office at Przybylski's so we used to go there, you wanted to mail a letter a thing like that. Pay bills, you could pay that at Przybylski's drug store.

MK: Do you remember Mr. Przybylski and his sons, or not?

EN: No, no. No, I remember the man that took over, I forget I can't think of his name right now. He belongs to the Polish Century Club. He's still active. Boy I draw a blank. Maybe I'll think about it later. But that was a really going store at the time, too. Both stores were doing very well.

MK: What about, you said that your dad began as Lendzon's dime store.

EN: Yeah.

MK: Can you, what, what was that store like, what, what was it like?

EN: Well there again they had, a post office in there also. I think they had it before Przybylski's did. And they had, I don't remember now if they had the hardware in the basement and the dry goods on the first floor. But they had a wide staircase that led down into the basement. And all the counters were set up. It wasn't for storage, it was a regular retail space. The post office was on the first floor. And it was, just, almost a miniature Woolworth, you know, just like the one that was on Trombly. [The Woolworth was on Lyman – MK] Had everything you wanted for a dime store.

MK: Well then you had a Woolworth's across the street down the block.

EN: Between Kirby and Frederick.

MK: Right.

EN: Yeah.

MK: Do you remember that one?

EN: Sure.

MK: Can you say a little bit about.

EN: About the same thing, just a regular Woolworth's store, of that era, you know, that was about 60 feet wide and 100 feet deep. And there again they had everything the dime

store would want. It was probably similar to the one that was up on Lyman and Chene at that, it had, almost, well, Lendzon's went out of business real early.

MK: When?

EN: It probably went out of business in, mid-'50s. So the other two Woolworth's hung on for maybe another 10 years maybe or so and then they closed up also. Matter of fact we bought the Lendzon's building. We owned that one and then we bought the Martin building, no Martin restaurant I remember very very well 'cause I used to go there to eat two or three times a week. And what I remember they always had good Polish food not only that on Wednesdays and Saturdays you couldn't get a seat at the counter because all the vendors from the market, from the Chene Ferry Market, used to go in there for lunches. You know, and it was hard to get a seat. And they always, what always amazed me is that, they used to drink their tea out of a glass instead of a cup. The Jewish people, mostly the vendors on the market were mostly Jewish people.

MK: They were?

EN: Yeah, the vendors. Now the farmers were mostly Polish. But the vendors were.

MK: What kind of vending did they do?

EN: Well they, fruits, produce, mostly you know fruits and vegetables. The ones that would go down to the terminal. Something like you'd have at Eastern Market.

MK: Eastern Market.

EN: Yes. Yeah, you call them vendors because they buy their, they don't grow it. So, but I could never understand why they would would drink, well I guess cream is, something that, not according to their dietary laws I guess they were afraid of the cups being, having cream in it or something so they used to drink it out of a glass.

MK: So they were kosher, pretty much kosher people?

EN: I don't know, I, they--

MK: Well was Martin's a Polish restaurant?

EN: Yeah.

MK: Do you know who owned it?

EN: Kowalski.

MK: They did?

EN: Yeah, now, he bought, I don't, the original, I guess the original owner must have been Martin. But I remember Kowalski in my era, the Kowalskis owned it.

MK: They, the sausage people?

EN: They were Polish people.

MK: But they weren't related to the Kowalski's who ran the--.

EN: No, no, they're not the sausage people. No, no, no.

MK: Yeah, yeah.

EN: No, that was Vern and, I believe, Steve Kowalski. I think they're both passed away now. Their father died, too, I think.

MK: What about the Round Bar? Can you tell me about the Round Bar?

EN: Round Bar used to have dancing in there at one time. What made it unique is they had the balcony above the bar just as the name implies was round. And more of an oval shape than round. But they used to serve food, and just had a feeling of old world atmosphere. You walked in there, sitting in the balcony. Walk up the steps to the balcony. And you'd be able to look down over the bar. It was really neat. I was sorry to see that place go because it was different, you know, something that, a dining experience that you usually don't find some place else.

MK: What kind of food they'd serve?

EN: Polish food, mostly Polish food.

MK: And do you know who owned it?

EN: No I don't. No. I remember the lady, I know who she was but I can't remember her name now. I wouldn't know who it was.

MK: Somebody keeps telling me Zosia, is that?

EN: It could have been Zosia, yeah. I don't know if that's the same one that opened up in Hamtramck or not.

MK: I don't either, that's why I'm wondering.

EN: I don't know, to be honest with you. Yeah, I don't know.

MK: And then next, down the block was the Fredro and the King, right?

EN: King.

MK: Do you remember when it was still the Fredro, or not?

EN: No, King Theater, no. And I remember there was a small candy store next to that, and there was one next to the Home Theater too. They used to make candies. I don't remember the name of that. Liberty, Liberty Candy, or something? And then there was another candy store kitty corner from the Home theater right on the corner was another candy store that used to make their own candies.

MK: What about the Chene-Trombly market?

EN: Chene-Trombly Market?

MK: Do you remember that?

EN: Yeah.

MK: Can you talk a little bit about it?

EN: I never went in there to be honest with you. I know of them more in the late years when they were the number one--

MK: Lotto.

EN: Lotto agent in the city, in the state. Not only the city but the state.

MK: I remember them well because we used to every Sunday after church go down and get our bagels.

EN: Uh-huh, bagels, yeah, yeah.

MK: Bagel shop down there.

EN: See, we never, I never really stopped there, shopped too much, yeah. She passed away here just about, what 4 years ago 5 years ago, yeah.

MK: What about.

EN: Ed passed away what about 15 years ago or? Just before the plant came in, you know, when they, 'cause they were already moving to the new location when he died.

MK: There was a barber on your side of the street a little further, his name was Ed Nietek I think.

EN: Niedek. Yeah.

MK: Do you remember?

EN: Yeah, oh yeah.

MK: Where was he at? Where was where was he located at?

EN: The barber shop?

MK: Yeah.

EN: Right off of, closer to Hendrie. There was a gas station.

MK: The same block as you?

EN: It was the same block as my old hardware was in.

MK: Yeah.

EN: Yeah. And then he lived on Hendrie for quite a few years. But he's passed away.

MK: He has?

EN: Yeah, yeah, he's gone, yeah.

MK: He was my barber, he was the barber I went to.

EN: Yeah, yeah, Ed Niedek, oh yeah.

MK: What was the name of the, there was a, what was it, Ed's Barber, I can't remember what barber shop was.

EN: I don't remember it either to be honest with you. But there were two of them at one time. There were two barbers. He had a partner. And I don't know whether they, the partner died or he split up. But he ran it for quite a while after that.

MK: Somebody once told me that, and I think I vaguely recall as a kid but I can't, you know, kind of like a blur. There was a cigar store Indian on the street.

EN: Yeah.

MK: Where was that at?

EN: [laughs] Vaguely, I think that was, that was on Hendrie. And I think it was right next to Trudy's Flowers on Chene and Hendrie. It was Trudy's Flowers and then a small store next to it was like a cigar store. If I remember right, I, I mean, you'll have to check

with somebody else. That's my recollection. Recollection of where it was. 'Cause I know after he left Trudy opened it up and she took the other part of the building, you know, for her flower shop.

MK: What about Werner's. Can you say anything about Werner's?

EN: Yeah, I used to go in there all the time. My favorite was a butterscotch sundae with vanilla ice cream. I used to go there all the time. Well all the kids from the school from St. Stanislaus used to go there all the time. George, well Mrs. Werner ran it for I don't know how many years. George her son ran it, and they closed up and moved out. He started running a bar up on Kelly and 7, Kelly and 7 Mile.

MK: Is he still alive?

EN: George is, yeah, yeah. As far as I know. I think he sold the bar but I, you know, you'd have, you'd have to check at the bar I guess to find out where he's at. But as far as I know, he's still around.

MK: I remember I used to go there with my mom. And the deal was that if we were quiet, 'cause she used to buy paperbacks.

EN: Uh-huh.

MK: The westerns.

EN: Yeah.

MK: On those spinning things. And if we were quiet, you know, she'd look through her book, she would get us an ice cream, you know, and a comic, 'cause they had comic books.

EN: Yeah, comic books, yeah, right. Oh yeah, I remember that, yeah.

MK: Can you describe the store at all, kind of, booths and what, what it was like.

EN: When you walked they had, the counter was on the left-hand side. And then, on the right-hand side they had a counter maybe 10-15 feet on the right hand side and then they had booths along the wall, past the counters, yeah. And I think they had a few tables and chairs in the center. But mostly ice cream and candy. No food. They didn't serve any hamburgers or hot dogs or anything like that most of the places do now.

MK What about the New Elk Bar?

EN: New Elk Bar?

MK: What do you know, what you do remember, what do you know about the New Elk Bar?

EN: New Elk Bar I didn't.

MK: It's still other than.

EN: Yeah, it's still there. Mo is the one that owns it. He's been there for quite a few years. I used to go into Tik Tok Bar which was right next to Zarembski's. And a fellow by the name of Frank used to own it. They used to have a shuffleboard machine there all the time and when I would go for a drink with somebody I usually went over to Tik Tok Bar. So that was just a neighborhood bar. It was a clean bar, though, you didn't have any any problems when you walked in there so it was pretty nice. Same thing with New Elk, you know. New Elk I didn't, I was not much of drinker so I didn't walk into the bars too often. But when I did I used to go at the Tik Tok Bar. And then I remember the kid that used to, the young guy that used to do the laundry at the Chinese Laundry. He was in there all the time. I walked in, come on Ed, have a drink. So I'd buy one, and he'd buy one. You know.

MK: Were most of the people in the neighborhood Polish?

EN: Yeah, yes, I would say probably 80%, 85%.

MK: And most of the stores were Polish?

EN: Most of the stores were Polish-owned, yes. I remember when I was a really young kid at night one of the things the store owners would close the stores I remember my dad and mom used to take a couple of chairs and sit in the front of the store. And you know, people were walking by constantly all the time. You'd know everybody that lived there in the neighborhood, just about. I remember sitting out there with them for, for, quite a few years. And, then things changed, you know.

MK: Do you remember a family named Raimi, owned stores on the street.

EN: Raimi had draperies or something?

MK: Yeah.

EN: Yeah.

MK: Do you remember them at all?

EN: Vaguely. I remember the name but I don't.

MK: The reason I mention this is 'cause I've tracked down the son of one of the Raimis.

EN: Uh-huh.

MK: There were two Raimi brothers.

EN: Right.

MK: That owned different stores on the street.

EN: Where were the stores? I didn't know?

MK: The one Raimi store was down by Ksiegarnia Ludowa.

EN: Yeah, okay.

MK: And then the others were further up. And the the son of the guy that owned the one by Ksiegarnia Ludowa was a retired professor from University of Rochester. They were Jews, there were Polish Jews.

EN: Okay, yeah.

MK: But the other, the other, his brother, the other guy, you know, his dad's brother, the grandson is Sam Raimi who is the director of Spiderman.

EN: Oh okay.

MK: Yeah, and they had stores, they had stores on Chene Street and then they moved from Chene to somewhere else. But they were very pretty successful. They started on Chene Street.

EN: Because I know, I remember the name, I remember the name.

MK: What about like Margolis furniture. What do you, do you remember them>?

EN: Well the thing is, you know, it's funny you talking about Jewish storeowners. All of them talked Polish. I think they were all Polish Jews that were there.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: Margolis I remember 'cause I bought a refrigerator from him when I first got married. And Maliszewski I bought furniture from him. We had the two big furniture stores on the east side of Chene between Palmer and Ferry.

MK: Can you describe the stores?

EN: Well they, they're both, the Margolis had two two stores, two floors, I'm sorry, two floors. And they were probably, what, about 80, 60, by 100 feet deep. Full basements in

both. And same thing with Maliszewski and Maliszewski. No, his was only one story. He had second story for storage then he bought the building next to him and he had two stores. They were probably about 80 feet of furniture stores. But they were both successful too. Matter of fact Ed Maliszewski when he left Chene he started a carpeting business for a year in St. Clair Shores up on Mack.

MK: Because Margolis also had a, ended up with a furniture store over on Van Dyke I remember.

EN: I don't know if that was his or his brother's or something.

MK: Oh. Did you know Margolis at all? And Maliszewski? Did you see the people themselves?

EN: I, well I know him casually you know from dealing with him in the--

MK: What, what was he like?

EN: Very nice.

MK: Polish Jew?

EN: Yeah, Polish Jew, yeah.

MK: Spoke Polish?

EN: Most of them did, you know, most of them did. They had to to get along on Chene Street. Because I don't think they could exist without being able to speak the language, you know.

MK: Do you know what happened to that family?

EN: No, no I don't. I have no idea.

MK: What about Maliszewski, what was he like?

EN: Maliszewski was, yeah, very nice, nice gentleman. Very quiet spoken. He was all Polish. He wasn't a Polish, he was Polish, yeah. And I remember buying furniture from him too. You know, so, we both were, my wife and I were satisfied with the, you know, the things we got, both from Margolis and Maliszewski.

MK: What about Max's Jewelry?

EN: Max's Jewelry.

MK: What do you remember? Can you describe what Max's looked like?

EN: I got my diamond ring there, my engagement ring at Max's Jewelry. [laughs]

MK: Can you tell me about it?

EN: A shop on Chene Street, yeah, he had, he's the only store I know that had the curved glass windows in front. He had a deep entrance way, too, with curved-glass windows in the front. And then, well, when you walked in you had the counters with jewelry on both sides of the store. And then towards the back he had his little work area where they would, you know, the jeweler would repair things. And like that. Very well run. He had a big, big clientele. Matter of fact, one of the fellows that worked for me worked for him for quite a few years. Alan Tetkowski, he runs that Bargain Dollar shop on the service drive and near Mt. Elliott. I don't know if you ever, no, don't know. He would know more about Max's Jewelry. If you want to find out a history of Max's Jewelry 'cause he worked for him for quite a few years.

MK: Alan Tetkowski?

EN: Tetkowski, yeah.

MK: Yeah, I know, I know what you're talking about. That little, that's got all these statues and little things on the outside.

EN: Yeah, yeah. It was, second-hand, or distressed or whatever you. He pulls it all out in the morning. I asked him how long it takes him, he says about an hour and a half. [laughs]

MK: So what about some of the other places on the street? Do you remember anything else? You know, I'm thinking, you know, let's say, did you ever go to Witkowski?

EN: Witkowski clothes?

MK: Can you describe the.

EN: When I grew up, when I got older I should say, I used to buy my suits from them. And they were on the corner of Piquette and Chene.

MK: Adele, isn't it Adele?

EN: Or Adele, Adele, Adele, I'm sorry you're right, Adele. Yeah, and well there was, what can I say, it was a clothing store. It had everything for men that you wanted. They weren't so much into children's clothes as is just a men's store. Same thing like Rathnaw Clothes, I mean Rathnaw clothes I got my tuxedo from there, I rented a tuxedo from him when I got married. And that was like I say, I shopped Chene most of the time I was there. I figured well I got to patronize the people that patronize me, so, but they were,

this is why I say we had everything you could ever want on Chene Street. You didn't need to travel out of the neighborhood to get it.

MK: What about, did you ever get down into Chene-Trombly Rec?

EN: Yes, I used to bowl there.

MK: So tell me a little bit about what that was like, what did it look like? I think it had a restaurant, a bar in there too.

EN: Yeah, there was bar in that, right down the left, be to the left side of, what the heck did they call it, Liberty Lounge or something or, well anyways, I remember bowling there. They had two floors of bowling. And the thing, the only bad part of their alley is they had not enough room to expand to put in automatic pin-setters 'cause they were just right up to the alley with the building. And when automatic pin-setters came in they just, they couldn't make a go of it anymore 'cause they used to have pinsetters that used to set the pins for them all the time. And I remember you'd get some of these guys that threw heavy ball, and the pinsetters would holler, "Take it easy, what are you trying to do, kill me?" You know, 'cause the pins would start flying, I don't know how those kids or guys stood behind the racks there and let those pins flying around and the guy would come up with a ball that would traveling real fast and those pins start flying around. I'm sure they had a lot of bruises. But they used to have big tournaments. Was it Norris that owned it I believe? [It was Paulus – MK] I can't think of, anyways, that used to be the place to bowl. They used to have all the pro bowlers at there at one time. A lot of the Polish bowlers that you read about they started out going to Chene-Trombly.

MK: What about, going back to bars, it just occurred to be, the Starlight?

EN: Starlight on--.

MK: On Palmer, wasn't it there, right on, right next to, across the street from the gas station, next to Margolis.

EN: Oh, that was, no, well--.

MK: What was it, John?

EN: John's, Uncle John's Bar.

MK: John's, that's what it was. Uncle John's Bar.

EN: Uncle John's Bar, yeah.

MK: Do you remember that?

EN: Oh I remember that very well because we lived right across the street from them and I'll never forget this one time in the winter. John throwing a guy out because I guess he's drunk. Older guy. And he throws him out to the curb and the guy brushes himself off and walks back in the bar and a few minutes he's tossing him out again. [laughs] The guy kept walking in 'til he finally, I guess he got tired of being thrown out of the bar. But it was the middle of winter, there was snow on the ground about 2 feet deep. And I could never understand, how could you throw a guy like that out of the, take all his money, get him drunk, then you're kicking him out of the bar. That used to be the bar that had, the, what you say, a lower class of clientele. The people that would really get drunk there.

MK: Who was Uncle John?

EN: John was, what's his last name, now. His brother owned the car repair business right in back of the gas station next to my small hardware store. I'm terrible on remembering names now. He's gone, they both passed away. Him and his brother. His brother had the garage there for years. And then Uncle John, his brother owned the bar for quite a few years until he passed and then once he passed away the bar closed. The bar closed.

MK: What.

EN: Go ahead.

MK: What about doctors and dentists on the street?

EN: Okay we had Jablonski, dentist, I remember him, I used to go to him, he was, what I remember most about him was you walked you got scared because he was about 6 foot 4, looked like an ex-football player. And if I remember right he had a scar on his cheek, running down his cheek. And you walk in there, ohhh, holy cow. And there was another one.

MK: Where was he?

EN: He was on, what's it, Piquette or Adele and Chene? A second floor office. And there was another one on Kirby and Chene on the corner, upstairs that I started going to later than that I forget what his name was now to be honest with you, I can't remember his name. But we had two dentists and a doctor. We had a doctor in the office next to Miller Funeral Home. I don't recall what their names were.

MK: Is that the same funeral home that's in Hamtramck?

EN: No.

MK: No?

EN: No, no, no.

MK: Did they go down to Van Dyke, was that the same one that went down to Van Dyke?

EN: Not that I know of, no.

MK: What do you know about the Miller Funeral Home?

EN: When the father, you know, the father died, I think the boys didn't go into the business.

MK: What do you remember of the Miller Funeral Home?

EN: Miller Funeral Home, well he was always competing with Wasik, you know, they were both so close together, only a block apart 'cause Wasik was on Medbury. On Medbury Street near Dubois and Miller was on Chene right next to the corner on Medbury. They're both nice gentlemen. They're both nice gentlemen.

MK: Wasik was in which building? Is that that building that's still standing there across the street?

EN: Across the street from--

MK: From St. Stan's.

EN: The high school, yes. Originally he was on Dubois Street in the middle of the street, then he moved around the corner to be right across the street from the church. And he probably had the bulk of the business from St. Stanislaus because of the location, it was directly across the street.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: But I remember, well Miller was pretty active in our Chene Business Association that we had years ago.

MK: So let's talk a little bit about the Chene Business Association. When did it start? Who was involved in it? What was the point of it?

EN: It started, well that's when we were concerned about the business climate on Chene Street. And at the time my brother was president and we had probably 50 or 60 members at one time.

MK: What year was that? When, when did it start?

EN: Probably in the '50s, late '50s. And matter of fact we had most of the farmers even from the farmers market, belong. Because they were concerned, too. They wanted traffic to come down to Chene Street. We tried some promotions to bring them down to the

Ferry Market. And we tried promotions. We were getting out newsletters to the neighborhood and people come down. We threw out a flyer had a list of businesses in it with some specials that they were featuring.

MK: Do you have any of the flyers?

EN: I don't know, I'll take a look, we'll see. If I don't maybe, I might know somebody that might have some so I'll--but there again, you know you just, you start piling up the paper you start throwing it away. You never know that somebody's going to come along and want to do a history. [laughs] So that lasted for a while. We used to have a, used to be Comerica, uh, Commonwealth Bank on the corner of Medbury and Chene and then it changed to Comerica Bank and it was there for years. Matter of fact it's funny because one of the assistant managers there, his name was Nowak, too. And they used to always kid us, oh, are you a relative of a bank manager there? I said, no no no no relation. But when they changed to Comerica, everything lost the atmosphere after that. You know, just, it seems like, the neighborhood was never the same. And the death's blow like I say happened when the GM Plant went up so.

MK: When was when was the business association most active? When do you think it was the most successful?

EN: Probably late '50s early '60s. Yeah.

MK: And your brother was president?

EN: Yeah he was president at the time.

MK: Were you ever an officer in it?

EN: No, I was kind of, well I was running the business while he willing to run the association.

MK: Who else was active in the association?

EN: Oh, Miller Funeral Home was active, this insurance agent Gaca, he was secretary, like secretary. And one of the bank managers used to be the treasurer. I forget what his name, I would have to, I think I have some minutes of those meetings. I'll have to look them up. I think that I saved, I didn't throw those out. So when I run across them, I still have one small building on Chene Street. Next to Lendzon's. In between where the Salvation Army was and there used to be a roofing place at one time.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: I stored some of the the papers and some of my old invoices and things. But I only go back to about '92 I think because everything else I threw out. I just wasn't used to saving. You know. But I've got boxes you know piled up that high with invoices. But,

we still, if I look back and find anything, when I do I'll bring it to house here and I'll call you and you can come, when your, your convenience, you know, come down and take a look at it.

MK: Mm-hm. Sure. So, Gaca, who else was?

EN: I'm trying to think now--Like I say, the manager from the bank. You know I can't honestly tell you.

MK: Somebody I think you mentioned to me somebody else mentioned to me, name of Rick Hodas.

EN: Rick Hodas, yeah I did--

MK: What's his story? Who is he?

EN: Well he was, when GM was trying to, talking about building the plant he was one of the, him and another guy were instrumental in starting the Poletown task force trying to save the neighborhood, save from you know being demolished. It never, never happened. Now I understand he's got a lot of things from Chene Street. He's researched it quite a bit. He bought Zarembski's building which Mrs. Szymanski owned. You know after Zarembski, Szymanski was the daughter. And I think she had a lot of pictures and a lot of things and it might be good to get a hold of him. Now I don't know how anxious he'd be to give up what he's got or what I don't know.

MK: I wouldn't actually want it, I just, I look at it, scan some of the things.

EN: Right, research, right, yeah, yeah.

MK: You know, keep the the stuff, what I want to do is scan the stuff.

EN: Right.

MK: Put it into this database people can--.

EN: Are you going to make a book out of this or anything?

MK: There may be a book coming at the end of.

EN: If you ever did, I'd like to buy a copy.

MK: Oh, yeah, absolutely. No, no, I'd I'd make sure people got a copy of it, you know. The first thing is this database, but down the road yeah, I'm looking, you know, I'm going to submit a proposal sometime halfway through the year to one of the foundations because I'm doing all of this on kind of on the shoe string right now. I've got a half a dozen students I got for free from the University.

EN: Right, right.

MK: So I'm going to turn them loose on data and collecting stuff, doing some of these interviews. But then I want to, you know, get some money to hire somebody to help me do this.

EN: To help you out.

MK: Because I've got other responsibilities.

EN: Yes, I'm sure you do.

MK: I'm doing this, kind of love you know, more than anything.

EN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[break – phone rings]

MK: Could I get a hold of this Hodas?

EN: Sure, I've got his phone number.

MK: Can I tell him that I got it from you?

EN: Sure.

MK: Okay.

EN: I don't have it here, I have it downstairs.

MK: And did he own any kind of business on the street?

EN: His mother owned a shop on Chene Street for years. I think it was, like between Lyman and Milwaukee or Piquette and Lyman or somewhere in there?

MK: Okay. How old a guy is he?

EN: Probably in his late 40s.

MK: Okay.

MK: How do you spell his name do you remember?

EN: T-E-T

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: K-O-W-S-K-I.

MK: Okay, great. Good. He still lives in the area, in that Walnut, the Walnut exchange.

EN: Yeah, walnuts, yeah, walnuts, that's what ours was at one time.

MK: Yeah, I remember mine, our phone number on Elmwood was Walnut 1- 5889.

EN: I remember when I was a kid we had this phone that stood straight up, you know, like you see in the movies, the old-times movies where they had to lift to lift the headset off. Dial the number on the bottom.

MK: Any other, any other businesses or stores that, that you can sort of think about, reflect on. Let's see, we went through a lot of these. Do you remember Sfire Brothers?

EN: No.

MK: Okay.

EN: I remember Mazurka Bar. That used to be where Jaworski's was at the time, you know, they took over the bar, that, matter of fact, Ed. Sandomierski, very good friend of mine, he just passed away here about a year ago. He owned Mazurka Bar for quite a few years. Greenwich Restaurant, I remember that was between Medbury and Harper. Greenwich Restaurant at one time. [It was between Kirby and Frederick – MK] And Charlie's Candy Store next to King's, yeah, I didn't remember the name of that. I remember the candy store. Lipan Radio.

MK: Yeah, I talked to Louie Kulma.

EN: Oh did you?

MK: Yeah, I interviewed him for a couple hours. Called down to Florida.

EN: Yeah.

MK: And did a phone interview with him.

EN: Did you?

MK: I was great, it was a lot of fun. A lot of interesting things.

EN: White Castle, yeah, that used to be between Milwaukee and East Grand Boulevard. And Cunningham's Drugs was right on the corner of Milwaukee.

MK: Do you remember there used to be for a while next to Home Theater there used to be a bakery called the American Bakery?

EN: Yeah.

MK: What do you remember about that bakery?

EN: Not much.

MK: Not much.

EN: Yeah, I never went there, yeah, yeah. I don't was it called the American Bakery?

MK: In the '30s and '40s and early '50s it was, it may have changed later.

EN: Okay, yeah.

MK: But--.

EN: Yeah I remember St. Joseph's hospital on Milwaukee and East Grand Boulevard. That was another one of our accounts you know and they when the plant went in they took us out. They used to buy their maintenance supplies from us. They used to buy a lot of rock salt for their parking lots. Pypkowski meats, near Harper, we used to buy a lot of, we used to buy a lot of meats from them, too. Dane Donut. You said you.

MK: I'm going to be talking with Ronnie.

EN: Yeah if you talk to, what's her name.

MK: Trudi.

EN: Trudi.

MK: Minkiewicz.

EN: Minkiewicz. Plumbing shop Grzegorzewski, he's passed away. Now Paul, Paul is still there.

MK: But that's not the same one that Ed Niedek was at, is it?

EN: Yeah, I think it is.

MK: It is?

EN: Yeah, yeah, yep.

MK: Paul's last name, do you know what it is?

EN: Zamierowski.

MK: Zamierowski?

EN: Yeah, he's active at St. Hyacinth's.

MK: Okay, I'm going to be going there to the festival this weekend.

EN: Oh okay, you ask Fr. Frank and he'll probably tell you.

MK: Do you remember above the, on the corner of Ferry and--

EN: Chene.

MK: And Chene.

EN: Yeah.

MK: Was like this kind of real solid building with a round edge to it.

EN: Round, round.

MK: And upstairs, this was my doctor, we used to go to Haszczyc, Vladimir Haszczyc. He owned, he owned the place upstairs.

EN: Okay.

MK: Do you remember this place, Dobiesz Millinery?

EN: Oh yeah, Dobiesz Millinery, sure, right next door.

MK: What do you remember about?

EN: Well nothing but hats for ladies. You know they used to do quite a bit, big, you'd walk by and you'd always see these ladies hats on these little stands in the window. Yeah I remember them very, very well.

MK: Do you remember the people who owned it?

EN: Mrs. Dobiesz I guess, that's all I know. [laughs]

MK: What did Three Brothers have in it?

EN: Three Brothers had probably a a more like work clothes and things like that they didn't have the upscale clothing. That's my recollection of it to be honest with you. Kovitz, Kovitz I remember. What were they into, I don't recall.

MK: I don't remember either.

EN: I don't remember that either. Crosstown Bar, see, Junia Adamczyk bought the Crosstown Bar after they sold the bakery. She owned the Crosstown Bar with her husband for quite a while. Of course Dom Polski you know used to be on the corner.

MK: Did you go to Dom Polski?

EN: Yeah.

MK: Can you talk a bit about, I went as a kid, too, but I wonder what you remember of.

EN: Well I was at the dances mostly.

MK: So tell me about the dances.

EN: Well the dances were mostly on Saturday night. Weddings, lot of wedding receptions were there. And a big hall, you know, as when you walked in they had a basement also. I think they served the food in the basement and the upstairs was for the hall, for the dancing. And mostly weddings that we went to over there. But that was the time it was the place to get married because it was very well recognized and it was a good facility for a wedding. The problem there again is no parking. But of course in those days people didn't have all the cars, you didn't need all the parking.

MK: Speaking of that, do you remember the streetcars?

EN: Oh sure I do.

MK: So tell me about the streetcars.

EN: Up and down Chene I remember taking the streetcar to Tiger Stadium and coming back on the Baker line. We used to come down Grandy. So you'd go down Chene downtown to Tiger Stadium. Come back the Baker line up Grandy. Then it would cut into Chene just near Milwaukee. And I don't know how far down it went down Joseph Campau because I never went that far on the streetcar. But the Baker line is the line that used to run down Chene. And I remember because when we first moved over here I couldn't believe how quiet it was compared to Chene Street with all the bars and everything else. We moved out here I said, listen to the quiet. I mean when there's a streetcar it used to rumble by like a train going by. But I remember it was a lot of fun. You hop a streetcar and you didn't have to wait very long for streetcars to come by.

MK: When I was talking to somebody else somebody told me that the streetcars would, they'd take the workers down to River Rouge, to the Rouge plant.

EN: Okay.

MK: Because they used, Baker Street is actually in Dearborn. It goes all the way down to Dearborn and turned around and came back.

EN: Okay.

MK: But then when it came back it would pick up women working at the cigar factories. Somebody told me there were all these cigar factories on Grandy.

EN: Yeah, R.G. Dunn Cigar Factory.

MK: Was, was.

EN: Between, on Grandy between Ferry and and Palmer and Ferry. Big two story building. Then they moved down to near Warren where the, Detroit, what do they call it. It's a city-owned building that. [He's talking about another cigar factory. R.G. Dunn was on Milwaukee west of Chene. Mazer-Cressman was on Grandy near Theodore and Webster, Eisenlohr was on Grandy near Farnsworth. – MK.]

MK: FIA.

EN: Yeah, yeah.

MK: So they were originally where now?

EN: Between Palmer and Ferry.

MK: On Grandy?

EN: On Grandy, yeah. And I remember Goike's Snuff used to be on Grandy 'cause my dad was a snuff sniffer. And I remember he always poured out a little of it, sniff. I tried it a couple times boy you start sneezing like crazy when I was a young kid.

MK: Where was Goike located?

EN: On Grandy.

MK: Between.

EN: Yeah, just just close to Ferry. But the building is still there.

MK: What the other, the cigar, what was the name of the cigar factory?

EN: R.G. Dunn.

MK: R.G. Dunn?

EN: Yeah that's gone, that burned down, yeah, that's gone. It's a vacant lot there now.

MK: Speaking of Grandy and, what about the Ivanhoe Café?

EN: Yeah it's still there.

MK: Yeah did you ever go there?

EN: Oh yeah I've gone there quite a few times now. Yeah Sobczak, matter of fact, the parents, well Sobczak is the one that owns it now. Before what was his name. Anyways the parents owned it for years. John Sobczak was the bartender. And his wife Lucille. When the parents died John took the bar over. They used to always throw a Commodore Ball every year. And they'd rent a place out here in the suburbs usually, have about 4-500 people at their banquets. And it's funny because everybody you talk to you tell you're going to the Polish Yacht Club. That was the Ivanhoe Café. So Yacht Club, are you going to a Yacht Club. I say, well I don't belong but I go there often. Oh yeah. Lot of boats. I said, oh yeah sure. Their insignia was a sausage with a sail with a stick and a sail stuck into it you know. They called it the Polish Yacht Club.

MK: You went to St. Stan's but did you ever go to St. Hyacinth?

EN: No.

MK: No affiliation with St. Hyacinth.

EN: No, matter of fact my dad, you go into St. Hyacinth and you look up on the second story windows. My dad donated one of the stained-glassed windows.

MK: I saw the Nowak, the name.

EN: Yeah, that's my dad.

MK: So that's your dad. So why did he go over there and not St. Stan's?

EN: Good question. I think probably because it was closer for us kids to go to school. You know, it was only two blocks. Whereas Hyacinth would have been like six blocks away. So, matter of fact one of my grandchildren was baptized at St. Hyacinth. Daughter wanted to get the baby baptized and I asked Fr. Frank if he would do it and he said yeah. So we had the baby baptized there.

MK: Well great. I appreciate your patience.

EN: Oh not at all. You know, I'm just sorry I can't remember some of the names.

MK: This is this is great. We've got quite a bit. Not only your own memories but a couple leads here. I'm going to ask you know the Adamczyk, the two of them, you said they're both alive?

EN: Yeah, you want their phone number?

MK: That'd be great.

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski, and I'm again visiting with Mr. Ed Nowak at his home in St. Clair Shores and today is August 6th, 2003. And we are following up on some of the businesses that we did not talk about before, at our last interview. And you were just starting to talk about Palmer Rec. Where was Palmer Rec?

EN: Palmer Rec was between Palmer and Hendrie on the east side of Chene, right next to the hardware store, the first location. [5714 Chene – MK]

MK: What do you remember about the place?

EN: Well I remember that's where I learned how to shoot pool.

MK: And when was that?

EN: That was back in probably the late '40s.

MK: Uh huh.

EN: And they used to have a bunch of guys there used to belong to the Kirby gang and the Piquette gang. I don't know if you've heard of those?

MK: Yep, I've heard about the Kirby gang.

EN: Yeah, yeah. They used to have them shoot, quite a bit of pool.

MK: Any of the people? Any of the guys that hung out there?

EN: No I don't.

MK: You ever hear of Mordells?

EN: Oh yeah, Mordells? Sure. Tony Mordell.

MK: Yeah. And a Harrison, I think, or Williamson, Williams? Was also part of that? Williams, yeah.

EN: Oh.

MK: But did Mordell's hang out at the pool hall.

EN: At the pool hall, yeah yeah. They did, and I'm just trying to think of the guy. Preebie was that guy that owned it at one time. And I think there was, the counter man was Whitey. So that's what I recall.

MK: What did the place look like? You know, what did it look like from the out—

EN: It had six pool tables.

MK: So when you walk in, do you walk in like a regular store front?

EN: You had a store front and then three pool tables on each side.

MK: Uh huh.

EN: There was living quarters in the back.

MK: Uh huh.

EN: Good friend of mine used to live in the back.

MK: Who's that?

EN: Kajorski.

Mk: Uh huh. And when did he live there?

EN: Well, he lived there probably until the '60s.

MK: Uh huh.

EN: The end of, well, the end of '50s. You know so, probably 1960 or so would've been the last year.

MK: Were there any snooker tables?

EN: Snooker tables and regular tables, yeah.

MK: What was the atmosphere like? Who hung-out there?

EN: Mostly the kids off of Chene Street. Most of the guys off of Chene. In that time, there were very few women in a pool hall, not like today you see them all over. But at that time, you know, you had, a lot of the guys were shooting pool for money too.

MK: Did you shoot pool for money?

EN: No, no. I was never that good of a pool player.

MK: Did your brother go in there too?

EN: No he didn't, surprisingly he didn't. 'Cause I was younger than he was, well he was already married. So he didn't go in.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: He had his wife and family at home. Because I was four years younger than my brother.

MK: So how often did you go in there?

EN: Maybe once, twice a week.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: Couldn't get into the bar when you're between 18 and 21.

MK: Right.

EN: So you went to the hall, it was the next, next thing you could do for recreation.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm. Did Palmer Rec., how long did it stay open? Do you remember? When, when. Were they still there when you moved across the street?

EN: I think so, probably maybe 1970, '75 at the latest. I couldn't give you a guarantee, I don't know.

MK: Remind me again, you had already moved moved across the street was when?

EN: '64.

MK: '64.

EN: No, I'm sorry, '74.

MK: '74.

EN: 1974.

MK: So they were still around at that time?

EN: Yeah, well I don't know if they were or not. I can't really say. They must have been because when we moved I think they were still there. So maybe they, by the end of '74 is when they--

MK: Mm-hm. What about the rest of the block, wasn't a radio repair shop on that block, too?

EN: A radio repair?

MK: Yeah, radio and TV repair? Or am I be mistaken?

EN: No there was a Chinese laundry.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: There was a vacant lot and then on the vacant lot they built an auto wash.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: It was right in the middle of the block. And there was a lawyer's office, Lubinski.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: And then next to that was a shoe shine parlor and a hat-blocking place. A barber shop, the pool hall, our hardware, and a gas station on the corner.

MK: When you turned 21 did you go to the bars?

EN: Yes I did.

MK: Which ones did you did you?

EN: Not mostly in the neighborhood. We used to go out, where the girls were.

MK: Where were the girls?

EN: Well we used to go to Conant and Six.

MK: Okay.

EN: Plus we'd go to the Polish picnics at some park.

MK: So Conant and Six, is that Buddy's?

EN: Right across the street from Buddy's.

MK: Right across the street from Buddy's?

EN: Right straight from Buddy's. Matter of fact when we go to the bar after we got through with the bar we'd go to Buddy's have a pizza.

MK: What was the name of the bar, was it called Conant?

EN: Conant and Six.

MK: Who who owned it? What kind of bar was it? Was it a Polish guy or not?

EN: I don't think he was Polish. I can't think of his name. I know I heard it many a times. I can't think of it. Matter of fact a lot of, lot of times after the bar closed they had the cleanup crew in there and we'd play cards, pinochle. I used to love to play pinochle. So we'd play pinochle until maybe 3-4 o'clock in the morning. And then go home.

MK: So, of the Chene Street places, you didn't go there.

EN: I used to, Tik Tok Bar.

MK: What was that like?

EN: Frank Pasternacki. He used to own, they had a shuffleboard. We used to like to play shuffle board. And we'd go in there for a couple of drinks and shuffleboard. It was right directly across the street from the hardware. And we used to live upstairs. So.

MK: What was the bar like on the inside? How did it, how was it set up?

EN: The bar was pretty nice. It had, the bar was on the left side as you walk in. And then tables on the right. Shuffleboard against the right wall. And then they had the storage in the back end.

MK: Did they serve food?

EN: At that time, no. They did later on but, not then. Not when Frank had it they didn't.

MK: Mm-hm. And I thought I asked you this but I don't remember. You know when, for lunches or dinners did you cook for yourself or did you go out to any of the.

EN: No I used to go to Martin's quite often.

MK: Okay.

EN: And, go to Joe's Sizzling Steaks.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: Between Garfield and Forest. Wonderful steaks. I wish I could find a steak like that again. They were really good. It had a distinct flavor to it. Served it sizzling hot on a metal plate. It was very good, very tasty.

[Break – phone ring]

MK: I don't think I asked you this before either about doctors and dentists when you were there. Did you go to a local doctor, local dentist when you were.

EN: Used a local dentist.

MK: Which one?

EN: Jablonski.

MK: What do you remember about Dr. Jablonski.

EN: Oh he was a big guy. Probably six foot two or six foot four. You know, very, imposing looking when you walked you got scared because he was so big and you were a little kid you know. He was on the second I think, above Adele if I'm not mistaken. Yeah, he was a good dentist. And there was another one on Kirby and Chene on the corner and I can't think of his name now. They had offices in that corner building on Chene and Kirby. I can't.

MK: Guzowski? Guzowski?

EN: It might be Guzowski, yeah. Guzowski. I went to him, too. He wasn't as bad to walk in as Jablonski was because Jablonski kind of intimidated you when you walked in.

MK: What about doctors? Did you ever see doctors in the neighborhood?

EN: No, no.

MK: What about the stuff, did you ever buy clothes, you know, your own clothes, stuff on the street.

EN: Yeah. We used to go to Zaremski's for kids' clothes. And then I would go to Witkowski, rent a tuxedo from Rathnaw. So I did, I used to get my shoes from Jaglowicz.

MK: Which Jaglowicz?

EN: The one up between Hancock and, between Theodore and Warren. And east side of Chene.

MK: Was there ever a Jaglowicz shoe store up towards you? I know it, who was that?

EN: Might have been a brother or something.

MK: Yeah.

EN: The only reason I know now is when they tore one of the buildings down his sign is.

MK: That sign.

EN: You can see it, yeah. I said, well I'll be darned, I don't remember one being there. You know.

MK: And there's also Ustarbowski Shoes.

EN: Yeah, yeah.

MK: Which was across the street and down the block.

EN: We went a couple times but I think my mother like Jaglowicz better than--.

MK: Than Ustarbowski.

EN: Yeah.

MK: In terms of Max's Jewelry. Do you know what ever happened to any of that family. Do you have any contact with you know.

EN: I had contacts with Ross, with the owner of the jewelry for quite a few years.

MK: What was his name?

EN: Charlie Ross.

MK: Charlie Ross?

EN: Rosenbloom or Rosenbaum.

MK: And where did, where was he at?

EN: He, Max's Jewelry was right next to Van Dy.

MK: Yeah, I know. You said, is it Charlie Ross? Charlie Rosenbaum.

EN: Rosenbaum.

MK: Where, would you have a, do you know where he lived or where he's from?

EN: I don't know where he lived, no.

MK: Was he a son, of Max? You said Charles Rosenbaum.

EN: I don't know. All I know is that you know he stayed there for quite a while after the riots he moved on Dequindre and I believe 11 Mile or so. He opened up a jewelry store there. Matter of fact during the riots I called him a couple couple of times to tell him. I said, "Charlie they're breaking into your place." He said, "I'm not coming down." He was afraid, you know.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: But I found the people that were there, they didn't bother, you know. Because like I said, mostly the whites that were going in to rob. [Mr. Nowak is referring to the statement he made in the original interview but didn't want to go on record with it. He did today. -MK]

MK: Yeah I talked to a guy named Leonard Raimi. He owned Central Stores, on the corner there.

EN: Right, right, yeah. Yes I know.

MK: And he's another guy who told me the same thing.

EN: Yeah.

MK: 'Cause he said he was there during the riots. In fact, he said he put up a couch and he had a shot gun behind him.

EN: Right, yeah.

MK: He was in the building during the riots.

EN: Yeah, nobody bothered him. Because like I say 'cause they were, they were just seeing what they could get away with. Somebody would come by throw a brick through the window, run away. Wait about 10-15 minutes, nothing happened, he'd come back. They'd grab something out of the window. Run away and come back. It was one of these cat-and-mouse games where they saw nobody around they'd just take. Wide open. A&P's, they did the same thing with A&P. They just, running down the street with

shopping carts full of merchandise 'til the National Guard came. National Guard they put a stop to all of that.

MK: Do you remember, speaking of dentists, do you remember if there was a black dentist on the street?

EN: Sure.

MK: Smith. Do you remember him at all?

EN: Yeah, yeah.

MK: Do you know how he was viewed in the community, I mean.

EN: He was viewed very well. Had a very good reputation. Matter of fact we were, we had a couple of meetings there at one time I guess in his office upstairs. Or in his living quarters upstairs and very very nice. Plush for Chene St., yeah. Oh he was well-regarded, well-regarded.

MK: And also there was that store across the street, Oliver's?

EN: Oliver, right.

MK: The guy originally was a mover, he had a moving company. And do you remember anything about him and how you know when he moved in what was that like?

EN: Yeah, he went into antiques. He used to work for DuMouchelle. As a matter of fact he used to store some of his furniture in the hall upstairs, above the bakery, yeah. 'Cause he had no place to put it. So he used to store some of the merchandise there. Then when he passed away, the daughter took it over.

MK: Right.

EN: You know. But that's what he used to do is dabble in antiques.

MK: Were those the first two black business people on the street? Smith and Oliver? Or do you remember others who may have been on the street? On that end of the street where where you guys were at.

EN: Yeah, yeah. As far as I can remember, yes.

MK: Well when did you when did you get rid of the hall? When did sell, when did you sell that?

EN: We didn't--the building itself?

MK: You mean, you just, you didn't own the building?

EN: We owned the building and the upstairs was vacant. Lutnia at one time, singing society was there.

MK: Right, you told us that.

EN: Yeah. And then they moved out and it was vacant, vacant, vacant and we decided, well, we've got to get some income out of it. So we turned it into a hall, you know. We tore out some walls, partitions to open it up. Put equipment in, and then we rented it out for weddings and showers.

MK: And how long did it operate as a hall, 'til when?

EN: Probably up 'til '60, '62, '64. 'Cause I moved in here in '64. No, '67. So it was probably 1965 maybe or so. Because once I moved, when I was across the street it was easy for me to take care of it, you know. But once I moved here, we just discontinued renting it.

MK: And did you, how long did you own the building? When did you sell that?

EN: Well my dad had it for years. Sold it about 10 years ago.

MK: Not that long ago then.

EN: Yeah.

MK: So when you were still living, when you were still operating your business it was there on.

EN: The new place, yeah.

MK: Yeah.

EN: Yeah we still owned it, yeah.

MK: The new place that you that you got consisted of what previous businesses, what other, what other buildings were there? There was the Kroger Store there.

EN: Yeah, and the A&P.

MK: And A&P.

EN: Yeah.

MK: And that's all.

EN: That's all.

MK: Because Martin's then would have been next door to you.

EN: Right.

MK: Okay, and then after Martin's was there something else or was Sleder's, was there something else between Sleder's.

EN: Yeah, there's was like a workman's store, in other words they sold workman's clothing. And I think it was clothing that might have been clothing that might have been turned in by the uniform companies.

MK: Okay.

EN: You know after they got a certain amount of usage, he would buy those and sell them. And that's what it was.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: Mostly workman's clothes.

MK: And then there was Sleder's, right?

EN: Then there was Sleder's, yep.

MK: And then after Sleder's it would have been what? Is there a shoe store there or was that the Mazurka right at right next to Sleder's. Was there something else between, between the.

EN: There was a shoe store.

MK: There was a shoe store there?

EN: Shoe store. Yeah. And then the corner was, you know, but, Jaworski's, at that time or Koszorek's. Either one of the two.

MK: Right. When you were buying bread. Where did you go? Palmer Bakery?

EN: Palmer Bakery.

MK: Yeah, we went we went to that one too.

EN: Did you?

MK: Yeah, that was that was my mother's favorite bakery. She'd always go to Palmer.

EN: And when they quit, we went over to Van Dyke Bakery. They used to make good bread too.

MK: As far as you know, I know we talked a little bit about this but about crime. Back in the '40s and '50s, was there ever an issue?

EN: I had one hold-up in, in the old store.

MK: You did?

EN: Yes, yeah. And it must have been, probably late '50s.

MK: What, what happened?

EN: Well the guys come in and made us lay down on the floor, clean out the register, opened up the safe.

MK: Gun?

EN: Guns, yeah, yeah.

MK: Did they ever catch them?

EN: Nope. Nope. That was the only time I was lucky in all those years.

MK: Wow. And in the new store of course you told me that that that they broke in.

EN: Oh break-ins, yeah that was, that was, once or twice a year you could count on it.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: Every which way. Through the front windows, and we'd block those off, they'd come in through the roof. You'd block them off, they'd come in through the back door with a hilo, ya know. It's a, when they want to get in, they're going to get it. I don't care what you do.

MK: When was there any kind of a loose association or did you guys just kind of keep track of one another the hardware store people in the neighborhood. I mean, they had Wilkowski down at one end.

EN: Right.

MK: You had, was it Hass?

EN: Hass.

MK: Hass. You had Lipke down on on on McDougall.

EN: Yeah, and Niedziela.

MK: Where was Niedziela?

EN: Niedziela was on Piquette and Elmwood I believe.

MK: It was? I never heard of that.

EN: Yeah, Niedziela Hardware.

MK: Mm-hm. So did you guys kind of keep track of what each others were doing?

EN: Not really. Not really. I mean, each one of us had our own thing to worry about so we never.

MK: Mm-hm.

EN: Never bothered. Hass went into, well his dad died, he went into more model cars and stuff like that so. So it never really bothered us as far as competition goes .

MK: There was also Lenhardt's, right? Lenhardt?

EN: Lenhardt's was down there close to Milwaukee, yeah. Just where the street angles in.

MK: Uh-huh.

EN: Yeah. Then we used to have the Baker Streetcar running up and down. It'd go south on Chene and come back north on Grandy.

MK: Mm-hm

EN: I used to go to Briggs Stadium, or Tiger Stadium now.

MK: So how did you get to Briggs Stadium? What was the route?

EN: Baker, Baker Streetcar.

MK: All the way down?

EN: All the way down.

MK: Where would it stop by Tiger Stadium?

EN: You ask me that. I don't. [laughs]

MK: I mean by Briggs Stadium.

EN: It must have been close enough to walk, so. That's all I can tell you.

MK: Uh-huh. It would've run, was it running down Michigan Avenue? No, it wouldn't have been running on Michigan.

EN: It probably had to.

MK: It probably did.

EN: Probably had to.

MK: Yeah.

EN: I remember the trackless trolleys down Warren. They used to have the buses with the, you know with the wires. They used to go down Warren Avenue.

MK: After the Baker streetcar got removed, after the streetcars left...

EN: Right.

MK: Was there a trolley bus on Chene? Or was it just a regular bus?

EN: No, it was regular buses. Regular buses, yeah.

MK: Okay so.

EN: Trolley buses as far as I remember were only on Warren.

MK: They would have been like, what, crosstown kind of a block.

EN: Yeah, cross town, I think that's, that's what they call it crosstown, yeah.

MK: As far as entertainment goes, um, besides you know going over to Martin's for dinner, something like that.

EN: Right.

MK: Did you ever go to any any any of the places in the neighborhood for entertainment?

EN: To the shows.

MK: Just the shows.

EN: Mostly the shows, yeah.

MK: But not like to music to hearing music at the.

EN: No, I don't think there was any at that time. Mazurka was the only one that I know that had music in it.

MK: Did the Warsaw have, the Warsaw have music?

EN: Yeah, I never went in there, Marian, I really can't tell you.

MK: I thought like Dom Ludowy or Dom Polski.

EN: Dom Polski, yeah, for dances, yeah.

MK: You know I was just in there about three weeks ago.

EN: Were you?

MK: Yeah.

EN: Yeah.

MK: The guy who, a guy bought it, a guy owns the places.

EN: Black guy?

MK: No white guy.

EN: White guy, I'll be darned.

MK: From Royal Oak. He was looking for a place, Brian Dulsky, his name. Young guy.

EN: Uh-huh.

MK: Bought it and he's sunk about 400,000 bucks into it.

EN: Yeah.

MK: But you can't tell, you know.

EN: Yeah, I know.

MK: You know.

EN: It's going to take more than that.

MK: Yeah, but you know they there were there, I went down there because I got invited. They were filming a documentary on Polish-American music.

EN: Okay.

MK: And the woman who was in charge, I had interviewed her and this guy Stas Wisniach who was an accordion player

EN: Yeah, yeah.

MK: He used to play down at the, at the Dom Polski.

EN: Yeah, yeah.

MK: And he also played the Warsaw and played the Mazurka.

EN: Right.

MK: So he's still alive and so they had a deal for him there. You know, they filmed him playing on the stage and so on.

EN: Right.

MK: Uh, it was, you know.

EN: It's funny because here about three weeks ago at St. Clair Shores park they had the Polish Muslims playing.

MK: Oh yeah.

EN: And they bring a lot of the old neighborhood into play. As a matter of fact they even mentioned Chene Street. I was, almost fell out of my street you know

MK: Right. They're pretty amusing.

EN: Yeah.

MK: They're pretty funny.

EN: Yeah they were funny, yeah. Especially for people that lived in the neighborhood.

MK: Right.

EN: The Polish people, they remember all that.

MK: Remember all that stuff, yeah. So I was in there. What struck me about the Dom Polski was that it looked as big as it did when I was a kid.

EN: Yeah.

MK: I remember as a kid how big it was. I went in there, I'm still, I'm just, it's still huge.

EN: Yes it is.

MK: It's a huge place.

EN: They used to have the chairs down in the basement. And dancing upstairs.

MK: And then they had that hall behind the stage, too.

EN: Yeah.

MK: Like a gym kind of hall.

EN: Yeah, yeah.

MK: With a little balcony and stuff.

EN: Well there's a basement part too.

MK: Right.

EN: You know that uh, I remember going there a few times. The Central Citizens Committee at one time used to hold some meetings there. And I remember going down there.

MK: What about Dom Ludowy, do you remember that at all?

EN: Dom Ludowy yeah but I never never frequented it. Never went there.

MK: Never went there?

EN: No, no. Nope. You know I found that box. Shut that off for a second.

[break]

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm winding up my interview with Mr. Ed Nowak. I'm at my office in Ann Arbor and today is July 20, 2004. The first question I have is actually, I never put down your mother's maiden name. I don't know if you knew it or not. I don't have it in my records.

EN: I knew it but I don't want to give that out because it's used for an I.D. all the time.

MK: Okay. She was born in Chelmno, Poland?

EN: Yes.

MK: And did they come directly to Detroit? Or did they go somewhere else first?

EN: No, as far as I know, they did.

MK: And your dad, before he actually got into the business, opened up the store in '26, what kind of work did he do?

EN: He worked for a dime store, which is Lendzon's.

MK: Oh, okay. And he worked at the one on Chene Street, then?

EN: Yes.

MK: Okay. Then when he was working there did they live at 5706 or not?

EN: 5706 was the hardware address, yes.

MK: Yeah, but did they live there?

EN: Yes, above the store.

MK: Okay. And I noticed in one of the photographs, it's a great photo because I didn't realize when I looked it at, it's an old photo of the 5706. Right next door to it is an old building that no longer is there. The gasoline station replaced it.

EN: Right.

MK: And that was the Werner's barber shop. Frank Werner and Irene Werner when they moved to Detroit, that's the first location they were at.

EN: Yeah, I don't remember that.

MK: Yeah, I interviewed Ted Werner and he told me that's where they began. And I looked closer and there's a barber shop pole on that building.

EN: Where the gas station is now?

MK: Yeah. Yeah. That was the very first location of Werner's.

EN: I'll be darned.

MK: So you might want to take a look at the photo because you can see the barber shop pole on it. But that's where Werner's began.

EN: Okay.

MK: I have some questions also about Nowak Hall. I know that you owned it. Did you own that whole building or when did you—

EN: We owned the whole building.

MK: And did your parents own it before you guys did?

EN: My parents owned it before I did.

MK: Would you have any idea when they bought that building? When they had it?

EN: I think it was during the Depression, really.

MK: Okay. So they took over and began renting the upstairs as Nowak Hall during the '30s.

EN: They used to rent it to Lutnia, the singing society.

MK: Right. So that was Lutnia's rented space for a while?

EN: Yes.

MK: Okay. And I assume that was like into the 1940s, or something like that?

EN: Right.

MK: And after Lutnia moved out what did they do with that?

EN: We converted it into a hall. My brother and I.

MK: Okay, so you and your brother, so Lutnia was still renting there as long as your parents were alive, right?

EN: No, this was after they passed away.

MK: Okay.

EN: After they passed, right.

MK: And how long did you end up owning Nowak Hall, till when?

EN: The building?

MK: Yeah.

EN: Probably 1990.

MK: Okay, so you had it all along, same time as you had the other business.

EN: Right.

MK: And I assumed it was just used for weddings and receptions and things like that.

EN: Showers, weddings.

MK: Were there any things like other kinds of like dance schools or language schools or other things that used that building that you're aware of.

EN: There was a dancing school in there.

MK: That's right. I remember seeing the ads for it.

EN: Right.

MK: That's right. In the early '50s, I think.

EN: Yeah, the guy moved to Chicago.

MK: You remember his name by any chance?

EN: Oh boy, I don't. But there was a dancing school.

MK: That's right. That's right. I remember it now —

EN: Yes.

MK: And your brother and you in the '50s. I remember you were both pretty active in the Foresters, St. Stan's Foresters.

EN: Right. Catholic Order of Foresters.

MK: Right. Were there any other organizations you guys, besides this Chene Business Association you guys, that you guys were active in, and the Foresters?

EN: Well there would have been the Polish Century Club and, but I wasn't. My brother didn't join till later. Of course the Chene Business Association.

MK: Right. So you were a member of the Polish Century Club?

EN: Yes.

MK: And how long, do you know how long that was for? Did you have any kind of officer standing in there or not?

EN: Well I was, at one time I was on the Board of Directors.

MK: On the Board of Directors?

EN: Right.

MK: Okay. And you mentioned that your brother after he got married lived upstairs for a couple, until '62 or something like that. And then he moved out. And you lived there 'till 1967. When did you get married?

EN: '62.

MK: In '62.

EN: Right.

MK: So you and your wife lived upstairs until 1967.

EN: Right.

MK: And then you moved out.

EN: Yes.

MK: Okay. I think that about answers those questions that I had. You know, when I draft this thing up I may send a copy to you?

EN: Yeah, I'd like to get a copy of the letter.

MK: It'll be a little while before it gets run, cuz the Werner thing's going to come out in this next issue, that's in sometime early fall. And the next one I want to do is your store. And then I'll probably do the Modern Bakery, and Bristol Bar. You know, as long as they want them I'll keep turning them out because it helps me organize my material.

EN: [laughs] Right. Okay. How far are you from the completion on your history?

MK: Well I'll tell you it's a ways. I've interviewed 330 people so far, and I'm in the middle now of developing this pilot project, and you're in the pilot project. The pilot is a four-block stretch of Chene from Kirby to Hendrie, and from Grandy to Dubois. So it's those blocks. I've got the two maps now. They're on the website. And I've created, each of the buildings is a data cell, so we're now loading the information into those buildings. So for 5706 I'm loading all your photos. I'm going to probably load this text into it. I've got a bunch of ads that I've collected from your store from Dziennik Polski, from the football/basketball programs at St. Stan's, from some of the yearbooks, and so on. So all that material's going to get loaded into it. Into the address, you know. So I've got something for pretty much every address on the street now, and the houses that are in those blocks.

EN: Hey, you're pretty thorough.

MK: So hopefully by the end of this calendar year we'll have this pilot piece up and running. So I'll be able to take it and show somebody, and show, here's what the pilot looks like, and I'm going to expand it to the entire neighborhood. But we can kind of manage it, this eight square blocks. And I'm hoping to have something up and running by the end of the year, calendar year. And I'm also digitizing the interviews from these neighborhoods. So your interviews with me, I'm going to digitize them, and take out little clips, and put it in there. We're going to put the clips in, along with the photos and you can click on it, you know, you'll be able to see all this stuff when it's up and running. But for now it's just these four blocks I'm working on.

EN: Okay. Well when you get it up and running let me know.

MK: Absolutely.

EN: When you get it on the web.

MK: It'll be fun. I'll do a dog and pony show, probably, with it. In the meantime, though, I'm still interviewing. I've got people lined up through October so far, for interviews. And my guess is by the time I'm done I'll have close to five or six hundred interviews.

EN: I know you're going to do a heck of a job there, I tell you, digging this stuff up.

MK: It's a lot of fun, though, I tell you. It's a lot of fun.

EN: Yes it is.

MK: You know, and it's--

EN: It goes back a long way.

MK: It does, and it makes me think about my childhood and it brings back a lot of stuff for me too.

EN: Right. Right. Oh you mentioned some of these things I forgot about, you know. You got to jog your memory and you remember.

MK: That's right. And you know, some day, one thing I want to put in your spot on the map is my train set. I photographed my Lionel train set that my dad bought at your store. That'll be one of the things that I put in there.

EN: So many people'd come in and say, you know my dad bought my first bicycle from you, you know. So I'm working at [unintelligible] on Miller Highway now. One of the customers, I walked in the other day. One other guy walks in, he says, "Hey, you look familiar." I says, "Yeah." He says, "Were you ever on Chene Street?" I says, "Yeah. I had the True Value Hardware Store." He says, "Oh my God. My wife worked for you as a cashier." So I didn't recognize the husband. She's the one that died right in the store.

MK: No kidding!

EN: She had a heart attack.

MK: Who died? Do you remember the name?

EN: Yeah. Christine Hardaway.

MK: Hardaway?

EN: Hardaway, yeah. Yeah.

MK: Huh. When was that? When did she die in the store?

EN: I don't know, maybe '94?

MK: So it was the new store.

EN: Yeah, the new one. Yeah.

MK: Yeah, I just interviewed Marvin Moza, who owned New Elk Bar.

EN: Yeah, he finally sold it, eh?

MK: Yeah, in January.

EN: Where did he go? Did he go anyplace?

MK: No, he's still living over on Dubois. I went over to Dubois to his house and interviewed him there.

EN: I don't know, he's still there?

MK: Yeah. His wife still works for the, some big law firm downtown.

EN: Okay.

MK: But he's still living there, yeah.

EN: What's he doing, though?

MK: Playing golf.

EN: [laughs] Oh, okay. Hey, I played golf this morning.

MK: Tuesdays are his golf day, too.

EN: That/s funny.

MK: I interviewed him on a Thursday. He said, you can come by on most days but don't come by Tuesday. He also takes care of his grandkids.

EN: That's funny because the bar's closed. I drove by a couple of times. But it's locked up, you know. There's nobody there.

MK: Yeah, I don't know. He—

EN: Maybe it's just opened up at night, you know.

MK: Some African American guy bought it. Some DDOT bus driver.

EN: Okay.

MK: Yeah. But it's closed. I mean as far as he's concerned. He's not in it anymore.

EN: Yeah because he was doing fairly well there, I thought.

MK: He was doing okay, especially on weekends he said it was a crowd.

EN: Yeah, he used to get the crowds.

MK: But he said it was just too much hassle. Said he got busted in thirteen times. It just wasn't worth it.

EN: That's just like me. I got busted into. After a while, you get fed up.

MK: So which hardware store are you working at?

EN: At Hammer Time, up on Warren and Outer Drive.

MK: Wow.

EN: It's just two days a week, four hours a day, just 8 hours a week, so—

MK: Somebody you know?

EN: Yeah, one of the guys at True Value, before, I knew from the conventions and stuff like that, so. I went in there one day, jokingly, to pick something up, I says, "Hey, I hear you're hiring." He says, "Why, you wanna work?" I says, "I wouldn't mind covering for, you know, a few hours." He says, "How about four hours on a couple of days?" I says, "Fine." So that's what I'm doing.

MK: Wow. How about your son Ken, is he--

EN: He's over at Lowe's.

MK: He's at Lowe's?

EN: The on 16 and Gratiot.

MK: Yeah. Okay.

EN: So he's well taken care of now.

MK: Good. Good. Okay, well I'll let you go. Thanks for this, and I'll probably be sending you something this fall. Probably like about a two-pager and I may attach some of the photos that I'm going to give to the St. Stan's folks. In the meantime I'll certainly let you know when that pilot thing is up and running and, you know, give you a whirl at it.

EN: Bye, Marian.

MK: Thanks a lot.

EN: Thank you.

