

**KENTWOOD HISTORIC
PRESERVATION COMMISSION
[KHPC]**

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
(053-2004)

ADELAIDE GLEASON

INTERVIEWER: JOYCE THOMPSON

September 23, 2004

Transcribed by: Sandy de Ryke
de Ryke Transcriptions, LLC, June 2006
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**KENTWOOD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (KHPC)
ORAL HISTORY**

Subject: Adelaide Gleason
Interviewer: Joyce A. Thompson
Date of Interview: September 23, 2004
Place: Home of David and Adelaide Gleason, 2428 Cascade Springs Drive, S.E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Transcribed by: Sandy de Ryke of de Ryke Transcriptions, LLC, June 2006

AG Adelaide Gleason
JT Joyce Thompson

[I REMOVED CRUTCH WORDS AND FALSE STARTS FROM THIS TRANSCRIPT]

JT: Today is September 23, 2004 and this is the taped oral history of Adelaide Gleason. We are at her home, 2428 Cascade Springs Drive, S.E., in the living room. My name is Joyce Thompson and I will be recording this oral history for the Kentwood Historic Preservation Commission. This tape will be transcribed, a copy given to Adelaide Gleason so she can revise or make corrections or deletions that she wishes. When Adelaide is satisfied oral history is completed, she will be asked to sign a release so it will become part of Kentwood's archives. Is this arrangement satisfactory to you, Adelaide?

AG: [Nodded head affirmatively.]

JT: Okay. What is your name and age?

AG: My full name, or just -- ?

JT: Ah, huh, your full name.

AG: Adelaide Effie Grooters Gleason.

JT: Age?

AG: I'm seventy-seven.

JT: And date of birth?

AG: Nine, twelve, twenty-six.

JT: And where were you born?

AG: Excuse me. 12-9-26.

JT: Nineteen twenty-six. And where were you born?

AG: I was born at 3615 Kalamazoo, S.E., Grand Rapids.

JT: Parents' names?

AG: Ruth Alfereta Grooters and Embert Grooters.

JT: And their place of birth?

AG: Ruth was born in Battle Creek, Michigan, and Bert was born in Burnips, Michigan.

JT: Parents' occupations?

AG: My mother was a housewife, domestic engineer. My father took his apprenticeship as a machinist and owned his own machine shop, Grooter's Machine Shop.

JT: Where was that located?

AG: Madison and Cottage Grove in Grand Rapids. Then at eighty-one years of age, that is the business was eighty-one years old and it was auctioned last fall.

JT: Eighty-one.

AG: It closed after eighty-one years.

JT: That's a long time. That's a long life.

AG: My brothers ran it after my father was deceased.

JT: Are they retired?

AG: Semi-retired. Charles had it last and he's semi-retired.

JT: What adjectives would you use to describe your dad?

AG: He was a very kind man and a very giving man.

JT: Appearance?

AG: He appeared as a working man and always from the machine shop, of course, because he worked in the shop also.

JT: How about adjectives to describe your mom?

AG: She was very prim and proper. She was brought up by a mother who was a college graduate and went to finishing school.

JT: How did your parents shape your character?

AG: They had a big influence on my life. My father being a businessman and my mother --

JT: So you said they really shaped your character. How was that?

AG: We were taught our manners, we were taught to help other people. They were very definite about a lot of things, how to act and how to live your life and be a good person and always to vote.

JT: Work ethic? They gave you that too?

AG: Oh, yes. We were not to be prejudiced.

JT: All right, tell me about your siblings, their names.

AG: I had a brother Ralph. Ralph passed away when he was fifty-four, it was his heart. And I have a brother, Gerald, who is now eighty. We call him Jack. And I have a brother Charles who is, I think, seventy-eight. And I have a sister, Lois, and Lois is younger than I am by about three years.

JT: So, you were the fourth child --

AG: Yes.

JT: Growing up. So, how did this affect you growing up being the fourth child, the older siblings? Tell me about that.

AG: Well, my brothers always protected me in my teens, Charles especially. We shared a car in high school and if he didn't like some boy that wanted to ride with us he said, "Where do you live?" and dropped him off. He was very, very protective of me and my other brothers were too. Although they picked on me when I was little, it was nice to have older brothers.

JT: That was good. You knew you were loved.

AG: Oh, ya.

JT: So then, did you babysit Lois?

AG: No. I don't remember babysitting her. We raised my mother's brother from the time he was fifteen and he babysat all of us until he married and then my older brother, of course, was there and so, I don't ever remember really babysitting Lois.

JT: Your mother was around, your mother was there.

AG: Yes.

JT: It was nice to have a girl in the family, though.

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: Were you close with her growing up?

AG: Not very much. We're really opposite people, I guess, and so, no, we were not very close. Of course, I was in high school when she was in grade school and I was out of the house when she was in high school, so we didn't have much in common.

JT: Growing up, it took both of you reaching adulthood to bond. I understand. So, think back amongst your siblings. Can you remember a memorable moment, something that comes to mind growing up with your brothers? What comes to mind?

AG: Well, I think the one thing I remember that I always got a kick out of is Ralph building an airplane out of orange crates. And 36th Street was much higher at that time, it was called Allen Road. So, I was little enough he put me in it and he said, "Okay, now, I'm going to push it and its going to take off." Well, of course, it didn't, but I remember thinking it's going to, but it didn't.

JT: Okay, this was an orange crate, correct?

AG: Ah, huh. Oranges crates. He took the wood out of all the orange crates and made an airplane. He had wings on it and he had a body on it.

JT: Wheels?

AG: Ya, he did. Cart wheels on it. He was very, very inventive.

JT: And you were at the top of this hill?

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: And you were going to glide down this hill?

AG: He thought I was going to take off the hill when he pushed it.

JT: So, it was hilly you were saying.

AG: Ya. 36th Street they took quite a head off that hill from our house.

JT: So, that was very hilly.

AG: Ya.

JT: Well, this whole area the way the glacier dug it out and everything. I can understand that still. I'm thinking, how old were you at that time?

AG: I probably was maybe six or seven. I was going to be the pilot, of course. Ralph was seven years older than I was. He really thought it was going to take off too, I'm sure.

JT: That's too much. So, your grandparents, who were they?

AG: My grandparents my mother's father passed away before I was born and her mother lived with us and she passed away when I was about three and a half, but I have a very vivid picture of her in my mind, sitting next to the stove in the living room with her arms folded, where she always sat. I can see her yet doing that. I was little. I couldn't have been four yet.

JT: What was her name?

AG: Effie.

JT: Effie. Oh, that's your name.

AG: And Adelaide is from her mother.

JT: It's not a very common name.

AG: Ya.

JT: But, it's a pretty name.

AG: My father's mother passed away when he was five so I never knew her. He had a stepmother that I knew and I remember his father and, being Dutch we used to go over there lots of Saturday nights and have coffee and a cookie. We could not have more than one cookie, even if my grandmother offered it. We must only take one cookie.

JT: Where did they live?

AG: They lived at Diamond and Fountain.

JT: So, into town. How did you get there?

AG: We drove the Model A Ford.

JT: So, you went to town in your Ford. Was it a dirt road, a paved road?

AG: It was all paved, I think, except -- because my mother wouldn't go any further than the paved road when they moved on Kalamazoo Avenue. That was the end of the pavement at that time.

JT: Oh, yeah, it stopped. Right?

AG: Ya, right there. No, it was all paved to get to my grandparents.

JT: Why didn't she want to go on roads that weren't paved?

AG: She didn't want to live on an unimproved road with the dirt and the dust and --

JT: Oh, I understand that.

AG: She told my father she'd go that far. She really didn't want to live in the country, but he did.

JT: That was country back then.

AG: Ya, he wanted to raise silver fox, which they did too. They raised silver foxes back when they were so popular.

JT: Oh, for like --

AG: To wear.

JT: Ornamental fur?

AG: People would come out and pick them out right on the animal. So, they maybe wanted a matching scarf with the tail tips, the silver fox.

JT: Right. That was an extra income too.

AG: I'm not so sure. I sometimes wondered if it was an automatic savings. They paid their house payment once a year back then.

JT: Really?

AG: Ya, a lot of people did that back then. Then they would think, "Oh, boy, I hope there's enough, when we sell the pelts, to make the payment and the taxes." Once a year.

JT: It's now split up. Summer, winter, whatever payments.

AG: The taxes, but we make house payments every month now. Back then a lot of people they were set up on once a year on the house payment on contract.

JT: So, when you're thinking of your parents and grandparents, do you have any family memories of your parents and grandparents?

AG: Mostly the cookies on Saturday night with my grandparents, was about it. But, my own parents I just have a lot of fond memories. We all must have music lessons. We all must go to college, we all must be educated. So, those kind of memories.

JT: Okay, I was thinking of your grandparents.

AG: Oh, my grandparents?

JT: With your parents. All of you.

AG: Just that --

JT: Just that thing, the cookie incident, okay. All right, where was your family home again? Tell me.

AG: Thirty-six fifteen Kalamazoo.

JT: Describe that house. How did it look outside?

AG: It was a Dutch colonial house. We had a three-acre yard, landscaped. We had a barn just to the south of it.

JT: Inside.

AG: Inside? Well, it had a living room and formal dining room in the front and kitchen and a bathroom and a bedroom on the back and then it had four bedrooms upstairs.

JT: Was that where your bedroom was?

AG: Ah, huh. Upstairs.

JT: Did you share with Lois?

AG: Yes. Well, until I got in my teens.

JT: The best place to be in that house.

AG: The best place to be?

JT: Ah, huh, in that house.

AG: I don't know. I never thought of that. In case of what?

JT: Oh, what was your favorite place? Some people might have had a favorite place at their home that they really, really liked to go to. Where was yours?

AG: We used the living room. The living room was where we all --

JT: Congregated?

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: After dinner or just during the day?

AG: Any time.

JT: Any time, okay. Was there a least favorite place to be at home that you never wanted to go?

AG: I never liked the basement in that house.

JT: Why is that?

AG: Well, it wasn't finished and it had the furnace and the coal had to come in through there. We didn't have a furnace until actually in my early teens. It just was unfinished and kind of shallow and --

JT: Dark.

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: Oh, coal. Ooh, you had to have a coal room.

AG: Well, the coal room was outside of the house.

JT: Oh, it wasn't inside!

AG: Uh, uh. Then there was a door opening where my father would shovel the coal into a -- oh, what did he call that? It would run it automatically for the day but you had to put the coal in the hopper. But, that was after we had stoves in the house. We had a wood stove that we put coal in too in the living room and then we had a cook stove in the kitchen that we would put coal and wood in too.

JT: Oh, coal and wood.

AG: For heat. That was the heat.

JT: And that was your cooking stove too.

AG: Well, no, my mother had an electric stove with a -- it think it had a right-hand oven -- I can't remember if it was a right-hand or left-hand oven, that went up higher than the burners and since I could remember she had that electric stove to cook on, but we did cook some on that wood stove.

JT: So, the chores you had to do, what were they?

AG: Oh, my. Why do you think people want to know all this stuff?

JT: Just wonder. I'm trying to get a picture of what it was like when you were younger. What kind of chores did you do?

AG: I had to cook and I had to do dishes. I had to clean and I had to iron, I had to hang up clothes. My father took the laundry in every Monday and they picked it up at his shop and Cole's Laundry did it wet-wash. And then we hung it up and, of course, anything that had to be starched, we starched and then we ironed.

JT: So, you didn't wash it at home?

AG: Nope.

JT: The laundry did it.

AG: Ever since I could remember. My mother had a new washing machine, but she never -- I don't ever remember her using it. Her sister come one time and used it.

JT: Was it a wringer-type machine?

AG: No, it had an automatic wringer on it.

JT: So, you learned to cook.

AG: I sure did.

JT: How old were you when you first started?

AG: When I could stand on a chair to cook.

JT: Were you interested in it or was this something you had to do?

AG: I had to do. We had a lot of people live with us in the Depression. My mother's brothers and the whole family and sometimes cousins come to Grand Rapids to try to get work.

We had so many that the men would sleep in the barn and the women and children slept in the five bedrooms. We might have fourteen, fifteen at the table at night.

JT: Oh, your mom needed help. I can see you peeling potatoes.

AG: We cooked potatoes in canning kettles. I can cook for a restaurant with no problem.

JT: So, mom's cooking. She, obviously, must have been a good cook.

AG: She was a good cook. She didn't bake a lot. It was meat and potatoes and vegetable and fruit. Tried to be healthy.

JT: When you think of mom's cooking, what do you remember as your favorite food?

AG: She could make wonderful biscuits. Melt in your mouth. And apple pies. If she made pie it was delicious. I don't know her favorite, really.

JT: Your favorite.

AG: What my favorite would be is anything sweet..

JT: Any meat comes to mind that she made very well?

AG: I remember, my father being Dutch, he remembered how they cooked. They boiled the beef first and then they'd put butter in the frying pan and brown it after it was boiled to tender and then they browned it and served it that way. And I miss that taste every once in a while. That's a little something --

JT: Very unique.

AG: Ah, huh. But, that's the way the Dutch people fixed their meat.

JT: So, was the boiling a type of tenderizing?

AG: Ah, huh. Well, again, cooking it until it was done. Like you say, I don't know if it was -- not necessarily tenderizing, it was just the way they cooked.

JT: Any particular cut of meat or was it all --

AG: Like a chuck roast.

JT: Oh, that'd be thicker.

AG: Ya, a thicker piece like a chuck roast.

JT: Do you ever do that?

AG: Once in a great while. I haven't done it for quite a while now, but I used to do it once in a great while because I missed the taste of that.

JT: If you did it when you were younger, of course, you'd know how to do it. It's just that it must be a long process.

AG: Well, we only had that on Sunday and then father would get up early and he always just turned it on and put it on low, simmer. Just let it simmer and then about noon it'd be done.

JT: Christmas and Thanksgiving, were those special dinners?

AG: Very important special dinners.

JT: Tell me about those dinners.

AG: Well, sometimes we had oyster stew on Christmas Eve because that was a tradition in my mother's family, I guess. And, we had the big turkey dinners and a lot of relatives would come. We would set up the table. My father had a whole group of boards and saw horses that he set up right straight through the living room and dining room and put the French doors open between the two and we might have twenty-five people for dinner.

JT: Wow, that's a big crowd.

AG: Right.

JT: Oysters. Where would you get oysters?

AG: Oyster stew. I don't know.

JT: That's different. Is that something you still do now?

AG: No, I don't, but my mother often did. She liked that oyster stew on Christmas Eve. We always had Santa Claus on Christmas Eve too. My father would dress up in a Santa Claus suit on Christmas Eve and he would go out the back door and come around the front and ring some jingle bells and I remember thinking, "That's my father's boots he wears in the barn that Santa Claus has got on" and it made me realize it was my dad.

JT: After you got old enough to realize.

AG: Ya, I was real little when I --

JT: Right.

AG: They never really tried to convince us there was a Santa Claus either. This was for fun.

JT: So, you had a tree and everything.

AG: Oh, yes.

JT: But the activities, the festivities were at Christmas Eve.

AG: Christmas Eve was our big thing.

JT: So, what did you do on Christmas Day?

AG: Played with our toys. Made a big dinner. We had a big turkey dinner again.

JT: Do you carry that tradition right now with your family?

AG: Well, my husband was raised that Christmas Day was the toy and the Christmas and so our children we brought up that Christmas morning was their big thing.

JT: So, you switched.

AG: Yeah, we switched.

JT: No problem.

AG: No. Well, for years we went home for Christmas Eve and my brothers then took over the position of Santa Claus as they had children. Until both of my parents were deceased we did that.

JT: Oh, how nice.

AG: So, on Christmas Eve we stay at home.

JT: That's a nice remembrance.

AG: Ya. My father tried to put the tree up by himself after mother was gone and it looked like he did.

JT: Do you have any ornaments from your parents?

AG: What I had I gave my daughter and it wasn't very much. They were sold at auction when I was out of town.

JT: Were they the glass ornaments?

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: Very special. I have some from my grandparents. That's what came to mind, way back.

AG: We had one that was a gondola and it had the sparkly string that went up and I can remember that. I used to think, "Oh, that was my favorite ornament." But, what my mother would do is after Christmas she would go downtown and she would pick out the nicest ornament she could find, once a year on sale, and that's how she added to the collection.

JT: Right, right.

AG: She always liked the best of everything. No problem with that.

JT: I think she might have transferred that. Tell me about your childhood toys. What do you remember?

AG: Well, we didn't have a lot because I was raised during the Depression.

JT: I know. We'll talk about the Depression later.

AG: But, we always received one big toy at Christmas and then each one of us one or two things and usually the big toy was something like a Karem board set, if you know what that is, and one year I think it was Monopoly. And then we would each get maybe new mittens and a hat or something like that. They would always choose one game really for the whole family of us.

JT: So, that's your Christmas Day activity, playing your new game.

AG: Yeah.

JT: So, you said you got mittens or some type of article of clothing. Is that something your mother made or purchased?

AG: She usually purchased them because she didn't knit or crochet. She embroidered, but she didn't knit or crochet, so they were purchased through the catalog.

JT: Oh, through a catalog. Sears?

AG: Sears or Montgomery Ward.

JT: Was that something you looked at as a child, the Sears catalog?

AG: Oh, ya. And in my teens, I bought most of my clothes, early teens, from the catalog, my suits and things when I first started dressing on my own. I still do.

JT: A catalog shopper from way back when, huh?

AG: Ya.

JT: As opposed to going downtown and purchasing, right?

AG: Yes, until I got to be -- well, I got my driver's license when I was fourteen so then I went downtown and shopped.

JT: I remember they were called Wish Books.

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: Because you could wish.

AG: The Wishing Book, ya.

JT: I remember that. Did you have childhood pets?

AG: Yes, we had cats, quite a few cats. They were really barn cats.

JT: I was going to ask you that. Not household?

AG: No. And then we had a dog. We had a dog we all loved and he got hit by a car on Kalamazoo Avenue down by the creek and so then we didn't have a dog after that.

JT: Oh, my. Was there a lot of traffic for this, or was it just that he just got --

AG: Well, my brothers had the paper routes for the Grand Rapids Press and my brother was on his bicycle and he crossed the street down there and that was M-37, there wasn't a lot of traffic, but the dog ran right in front of the car, I guess, to cross with my brother and he got hit.

JT: Well, I can understand why your parents wouldn't --

AG: Yeah.

JT: Okay, tell me about what were fashions like back then. What did you wear when you were a youngster?

AG: Little?

JT: Ah, huh.

AG: Well, I wore long underwear and I wore long black stockings.

JT: I saw that in the picture.

AG: And black bloomers.

JT: Why not white?

AG: Probably because we get dirty too quick. I don't know.

JT: But you had the black.

AG: I had black, ah, huh. And, I don't know, just kind of dresses.

JT: All dresses.

AG: All dresses.

JT: You had pinafores.

AG: And then, of course, as I got older it was the bobby socks and the --

JT: Anklets, ya, the anklets. Saddle shoes?

AG: Yes, I had saddle shoes. We went through a stage in high school where we had to have moccasins and if you had white ones you were really it. If you had brown ones you weren't quite there.

JT: So, when did you wear your first pair of nylons?

AG: I think I was about thirteen, in there somewhere. There were three of us girls that were going to go to the Ionia Fair with my brothers and we decided to wear nylons, of all things. With the garters that you rolled, you know. I think I spent all night pulling up those nylons on those garters that rolled. Oh, it was crazy. Why we wore that to the fair -- we were getting dressed up.

JT: Well, you were a teenager and that was a teen thing to do.

AG: Oh, yes.

JT: You thought you were the --

AG: Impress somebody.

JT: Cat's meow! So, you remember that.

AG: When you bent your knee it had a permanent bag in it. It didn't go back like our nylons. They were silk, really is what they were. They were silk stockings and they bagged so easily.

JT: I can't remember. Did they have the seam in the back?

AG: Yes. Ya, we had to have a seam. Trying to keep that seam straight.

JT: That took all day.

AG: Oh, it was terrible.

JT: I'll have to check the back. Okay, tell me, your family home, is it still there?

AG: Yes.

JT: It is still there.

AG: And a young couple bought it and they have raised their family there now. They've had it for over thirty-five years. I don't know how long exactly.

JT: All right. Moving on.

AG: They love that house.

JT: Okay, tell me where you went to grade school as a child.

AG: Bowen two-room school, Paris Township, Kent County.

JT: And how did you get to school?

AG: We walked. It was a little over a mile from our house.

JT: All weather.

AG: Oh, yes. All weather.

JT: And, who did you walk with?

AG: Well, I walked with my brothers to start with and I did not have a girl to play with or walk with until I was in the third grade. One moved in near us. It was all boys up 'til then.

JT: So, tell me what a two-room school was like. Because people don't understand, so describe that to me.

AG: Well, each room -- you went into a foyer and then you could go hang your coats and then that opened up into a room. That was the same on both sides. And each room had desks that faced the center wall between the two rooms. And this school had a sliding door in that partition that you could open. And, when we had our Christmas plays and programs,

the men would build a stage on one side and they'd open that up and put a curtain that you could pull and my father was always in on all this with his mechanical genius. I think we practiced for a month for every Christmas program. It was really neat.

JT: Obviously, two rooms, two teachers.

AG: Right. And the higher grade teacher was usually considered the principal.

JT: Oh, okay.

AG: I don't know why.

JT: I was looking at the pictures you were showing me, that you must have had to climb the steps to get to the foyer, correct?

AG: Yes.

JT: So, it was a little bit of steps.

AG: Right.

JT: And those steps you can see the children. That's where the pictures were taken.

AG: There must have been about eight, nine steps there, I would think.

JT: Yes, it looked pretty steep. There were a lot of rows of children. So, especially if it was two rooms, that's a lot more student body than just the one-room school.

AG: The school had quite a basement in it too and that basement didn't start right level with the ground, it was above the ground a ways.

JT: Did you have a recess part out of the day?

AG: Yes, we had recess.

JT: What did you do for recess?

AG: Well, we had swings and we had flag poles and we played games -- run and tap and all that kind of stuff, baseball.

JT: Red Rover?

AG: Ya. Red rover, that's right. [laughing].

JT: Good old Red Rover.

AG: They didn't want us kickin' the can, but we could play Red Rover.

JT: King of the Hill in winter.

AG: Ya.

JT: Something like that. Who were your classmates? Do you remember that?

AG: In my class?

JT: Ah, huh.

AG: Well, there was Suedella Feenstra and there was Henry Demmink. D-E-M-M-I-N-K, I think. And there was Kathleen Westra and Marilyn Looman.

JT: This is all in your grade, huh?

AG: I'm trying to think of the girl's name, the Dutch name?

JT: Did the older children teach you?

AG: No.

JT: No? That's right, they have their own teacher.

AG: That's right.

JT: So, your favorite teacher that you can remember? Did you have one?

AG: At Bowen School?

JT: Ya.

AG: No.

JT: Favorite subjects?

AG: Art and music, but we didn't have much. I really don't know. I like reading. I did okay in math.

JT: So, least favorite? Least favorite subjects?

AG: No.

JT: Were you a good student?

AG: Ya.

JT: Good. Do you have any of your report cards?

AG: I think I have one somewhere and I think I had all As and one B.

JT: Good for you. You told me your mother was very involved at Bowen. I'd like you to talk about that. How did she get started with her involvement?

AG: Well, I think the PTA, the Parent Teachers' Association -- I think she started it, to be honest with you, if I remember right. And, they had a meeting once a month.

JT: Do you remember the year?

AG: No, I don't. I was young.

JT: How did she hear about a PTA?

AG: I really don't know. She was a reader, she read all the time. And she knew if there was a new school law put out or anything and she was instigative in bettering the school. We had big new blackboards and, I think I told you too, a radio in each room in case the President spoke.

JT: Because of the PTA involvement. The PTA did this.

AG: The PTA, yes, did it all. And then she was instigative in getting the bathroom inside of the school and getting rid of the outhouses, and I can remember those arguments with the School Board. Then, she also insisted on another escape from the basement, there was only one escape and so she was instigative in getting that put in.

JT: Well, this all betters the school.

AG: Oh, yeah. And then she found out we could transfer schools to any school we wanted to at the seventh grade level, and Bowen did go through the ninth grade yet at that time. So, my one brother was old enough, he went through the ninth grade there, but then we transferred and went to other schools.

JT: I'd like to talk about that in a few minutes. I remember you said your mother had a radio put in. Wasn't that unusual?

AG: Yeah, it was like having the first TV in a school room.

JT: Right, right. What did you listen to on the radio?

AG: I remember listening to Roosevelt, President Roosevelt talked, he made a speech. It was important for us to hear the President. Anything historical that come across the radio.

My mother would watch for all that news and inform the teachers. Some of the people out in the country thought that that was pretty bizarre, but to her it was important that we heard these things and knew what was going on.

JT: I just had a thought -- you must have had a radio at home.

AG: Yes, we did.

JT: When did you listen?

AG: Not a whole lot at home; some.

JT: What programs?

AG: I can't remember now. I really can't remember what programs. There was some programs that were musical around six o'clock and I'm trying to think of the name of one of those, but I don't remember now. We'd listen to that type of thing. Maybe to the Lone Ranger, we'd listen to that.

JT: I bet your brothers loved that one.

AG: Oh, ya, ya.

JT: They probably took over the radio. You probably didn't have too much say.

AG: Well, I started playing accordion when I was about ten and a half, eleven years old and I practiced a lot. They didn't like that a lot.

JT: I can see you being diverse there too. From Bowen where did you go?

AG: Godwin School.

JT: Godwin School, and then you said that your mother was influential in that respect too. She wanted you to go to Godwin for a better education, correct?

AG: Ah, huh. But my sister was still at Bowen School when I transferred in the seventh grade. She still went there until she got to the seventh grade.

JT: So, you went from Godwin through -- ?

AG: Twelfth grade.

JT: Twelfth grade. How was that different?

AG: It was pretty different because I had all the different subjects in a different room and study hall and it was totally different than having the one room.

JT: It must have been scary at first when you first started.

AG: It was. I wondered if I'd find the right room and where was my locker.

JT: How did you get to school?

AG: We rode our bicycles most of the first year, I think it was, then my father bought us a car.

JT: No sidewalks or anything.

AG: No, we went on gravel on 36th Street.

JT: All the way on 36th down --

AG: I think to Eastern it was gravel. I can't remember, but I think it was gravel up to Eastern.

JT: So, you rode your bike in all kinds of weather.

AG: Oh, yeah.

JT: Winter?

AG: Well, then we walked and that was two miles.

JT: Yes, that's a long distance.

AG: But, when it got cold that year my father bought a car and my brothers could drive it, and we had the first car in Godwin High School.

JT: What kind of a car?

AG: Model A Ford.

JT: Model A, that's right.

AG: My father drove a Model A too. When a lot of people started getting V-8 Fords. We had a Model A Ford longer because we didn't make payments on it. We housed and fed everybody else. Drove a Model A. (During the Depression.)

JT: The black color? Had to be black, right?

AG: Oh, yeah, the black.

JT: So, going back to Godwin, did you have favorite subjects in seventh through twelfth, or did it depend on the year?

AG: Not really. I went through high school on what they called unified studies.

JT: What's that?

AG: That's where you decided what you wanted to study and what you wanted to do about it and then when we got through high school they said it was a failure.

JT: A failure?

AG: Ah, huh. Godwin was quite an experimental school.

JT: So it didn't count?

AG: I don't know. And when my son was over here (Ridgeview Jr. High), they started that and I thought, "Oh, man. Here we go again." We decided to go to the library to study, so we would get our library permit and we would have the lady in the library sign it and we'd go out the back door and go to the drugstore.

JT: Oh!

AG: Ya.

JT: That's close by.

AG: Ya, right on the corner. So, that's where my class spent most of its time was in Lamoreaux Drug Store.

JT: That's a memory of high school.

AG: That was my favorite subject.

JT: All right!

AG: They combined history and English I think they combined, mostly. I did like literature, I liked literature quite well.

JT: You must have liked to read. You said read as a child, do you remember any favorite books?

AG: No.

JT: So, do you remember when your family got that first TV?

AG: It was after I was gone.

JT: After you were gone.

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: Do you remember what year that was?

AG: No.

JT: You were out of high school at that point in time?

AG: Ah, huh. I don't know what year they first got it.

JT: Can you think of any other first events in the family that you remember? Like first events like the first TV, the first, I don't know. Does anything come to mind?

DG: Airplane ride.

AG: What?

DG: Airplane ride.

JT: An airplane ride?

AG: Well, that's true. My father and mother both were great for whatever was new and the first plane that would take passengers that come into the airport was right by the Godwin School.

JT: So, they were how old?

AG: Pardon?

JT: How old do you think they were?

AG: How far back would that be?

JT: Ya, how old do you think they were?

AG: I must have been only five or six and my father took the whole family for an airplane ride, except my mother wouldn't go and I remember her standing down there. Then, when we told people that we had an airplane ride they wouldn't believe us.

JT: Now, was this where the old airport was?

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: What do they call it now, Roger B. Chaffee Drive?

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: Right, because the airport was right there.

AG: Yup, yup. That's where it was and it was the first airplane that would take passengers, you could pay to have a ride. And, like I say, our neighbors wouldn't believe us that we went on an airplane ride.

JT: Well, that was unusual back then.

AG: Oh, ya.

JT: Well, your dad was really progressive.

AG: Yeah, he was. We must do these things, and not often. But, when something big like that come up he scraped up the money and he would take us.

JT: I remember you said you had the music lessons.

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: He was very adamant about that. You had to have a little bit of culture.

AG: Yup.

JT: Now, you told me something about this on your early years on Kalamazoo Avenue, that you went to see your grandparents, but what did your parents and your family do for recreation other than just seeing relatives, or was that it?

AG: We didn't go a lot. My father tended to be a workaholic.

JT: Well, he had the machine shop.

AG: Ya, that's true. He raised the silver fox and then we had our own cattle for milk and beef and butter and some pigs for pork and we did a lot of canning and everything of that meat because we didn't have freezers back then. We canned. We canned and we canned and we had a big garden and we canned all that.

JT: So, basically, it was like a farm.

AG: Ya. It was thirty acres.

JT: You didn't tell me.

AG: Oh, I'm sorry.

JT: Thirty acres.

AG: We only had thirty acres there.

JT: Right there on Kalamazoo. That's a lot!

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: Well, you said you had a barn, I remember that. How many cattle?

AG: Oh, we usually had about three milking cows and then we'd raise a couple for beef.

JT: Did you have extra help other than the family to help you?

AG: Just the garden. My father would have a man put that in on shares they called it. But that's all, just putting in the garden and doing it. Us children did the haying, we cut hay, we put it in the barn. I never milked a cow, but my brothers did. I helped feed the pigs and do all that kind of stuff.

JT: Because you weren't allowed to milk the cow or you didn't want to milk?

AG: No, just didn't have to because there were three of them that were older. Then, by the time I was getting old enough, after World War II then we stopped farming anything like that.

JT: You must have sold some of that thirty acres too about that time, huh?

AG: Yes, my father platted that and put in, let's see, Newcastle, Tallman, and Giddings Streets. And, there's little Grooters Street up there too.

JT: So, that really was your plot of land.

AG: Ah, huh. Three acres I told you about was just yard. We mowed and landscaped. But, as far as going places we had a standing July the fourth with my aunt and uncle and cousins from Hastings, we always went out to Ramona Park they called it, the park at Reed's Lake.

JT: Yes, I heard that was called Ramona Park.

AG: Ah, huh. We took a picnic lunch, the whole family, and then we rode on the rides, the big derby racer and the slides until the fireworks come. Then when the fireworks started we watched the fireworks. One time our Model A Ford caught on fire on top, on the canvas top, because of the fireworks coming down on it. I remember my dad pulling grass and swattin' to get that out.

JT: Oh, that would have been terrible if that got on fire.

AG: Ya, it was smoking.

JT: He was worried.

AG: Ya.

JT: Ya, he was worried, absolutely, I can understand that.

AG: We did do that every Fourth of July with that one family and somebody's sister.

JT: Now, wasn't your father into a hobby after work?

AG: Well, he got into antique cars.

JT: Antique cars.

AG: My older brother started it first and then my father got into it.

JT: Did he buy them?

AG: He bought them and he restored them and he worked on them and had a classic --

JT: In the barn?

AG: No, in the attached garage. He put on a breezeway and a big attached garage there at the house and that's where he did it.

JT: Oh, well, it must have been his hobby.

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: So, he put that on in later years?

AG: Ah, huh, later after we were grown.

JT: Right, exactly, okay. You said he had a garden?

AG: He didn't do any gardening. He had a man put in about a five-acre --

JT: Okay, he didn't do that, okay. It almost sounds like happy times.

AG: Ya, we had a lot going on.

JT: And, like you said, work, your parents worked.

AG: Ah, huh. They taught the work ethic to all of us.

JT: So, tell me about your first job experience.

AG: My first job?

JT: Ah, huh.

AG: Well, I did a lot of babysitting to start with.

JT: Okay, starting when, at what age?

AG: Oh, my, probably ten, eleven years old.

JT: For neighbors?

AG: Ya, some neighbors and my uncle that we raised got married and had children and I'd babysit their children a lot, my cousins.

JT: So, babysitting was your first.

AG: My first paid job.

JT: Do you remember how much you were paid?

AG: Fifty cents a night.

JT: Fifty cents a night!

AG: Ah, huh, and if it was 'til two in the morning it was fifty cents. And maybe you went there and fed the children their dinner and give them their baths and got 'em all in bed -- fifty cents.

JT: But, that was good money back then.

AG: Four, fifty cents, two dollars could buy a cheap dress, if you really shopped.

JT: So, you saved your money?

AG: Oh, yes, and then I started --

JT: You had a piggy bank?

AG: And then I started dressing myself out of my babysitting.

JT: Going to the catalog, you said.

AG: Oh, ya. Then, my next job was washing dishes in a restaurant.

JT: Where was that?

AG: Godwin Coffee Shop. And I could do that because my mother knew the owners and they were nice people, otherwise, she wouldn't let me do it.

JT: So, you did it after school?

AG: Well, at noon too from school, and then after school Friday nights and Saturdays. But, it was a only a very short time. I think I did it for a couple times or something and then she wanted me to be cashier and host for the restaurant and I waitressed too.

JT: How old were you at this point?

AG: I was probably fourteen. You could get a working permit when you were fourteen.

JT: You had to get one of those, huh?

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: So, when you were fourteen you did that, okay. Then, what came after the dishwashing job?

AG: Well, when I was just turning sixteen I got a job teaching accordion for J & J Music Store.

JT: Where was that located?

AG: On Division one street back from Fulton, what was the name of that street? I can't remember, Division near Fulton, anyway.

JT: Okay. How did you hear about that job?

AG: Well, the gentleman that taught was drafted and the owner of the store asked my uncle when he brought my cousin in for clarinet lessons if he knew of a good accordion player. And, my uncle said, "Oh, yes, my niece." So, I went down and applied and played for him and got the job.

JT: Of course, you were taking lessons from ten or something.

AG: I had stopped taking lessons by then.

JT: Okay, but you started way back, so you became very accomplished.

AG: And I practiced so much.

JT: Right, right.

AG: That was usually thirty to thirty-five students a week, plus go to high school.

JT: That's a lot!

AG: Ya, it was.

JT: Exactly.

AG: And I had to wear heels and hose and dress up.

JT: Oh, be a professional.

AG: Yes, like an older person. Then I started taking playing jobs at that point too. Well, even before that I did too.

JT: And, where did you play?

AG: Oh, I used to play for a lot of Bell Telephone's dinners. I remember this one gentleman, he knew my parents and he was always calling me to play for them, and cocktail hours at the Bar Association at the Peninsular Club. Back then accordion players were real popular.

JT: Oh, *very* popular.

AG: And I strolled, I could stroll and play for dinner hour or cocktail hour or whatever.

JT: Okay. Can you remember some of the music you played?

AG: Oh, sure. I still play.

JT: Tell me, what are the names of the songs?

AG: Oh, like *Sentimental Journey* or *Five Foot Two*. I played older ones too, *Let Me Call You Sweetheart* and *My Wild Irish Rose* and all that too.

JT: Yes, the accordion was very popular. It isn't now

AG: I think when the Beatles came in with the guitars, everybody had to play a guitar.

JT: Right.

AG: But, back then everybody wanted their child to play an accordion. Everybody thought their child should.

JT: Oh, yes, I can recall that. So, that led to the next job. Tell me about that.

AG: Well, then I got married and got into building houses with my husband and I worked on the job every day from eight to five.

JT: What did you do when you built a house?

AG: Well, I was the person on the other end. We did everything, we put the sub floor on, we raised the rail, we laid the basement up on blocks, mostly then. Then, we did buy forms and get into pouring walls.

JT: That's a lot of work!

AG: I know it. It ruined my back.

JT: How long did you build houses?

AG: Well, until I was about twenty -- I must have done it for about six years in there -- after World War II.

JT: Okay, you started around World War II.

AG: Ya, the War was over.

JT: So, 1945 to early 50s?

AG: Fifties, ya.

JT: So, can you think of where one house would be right now? Can you remember where your houses were?

AG: Well, one of 'em was on Chamberlain south of 28th Street, when that street was put in.

JT: Were these two-story homes, four-story homes?

AG: Ranch, mostly ranch.

JT: Mostly ranch homes, okay.

AG: Cape Cod, ranch. Oh, we built Alger Heights Hardware, which I don't know what they call it now. It's still there. Then we got into pouring basements and doing just flat cement work, like a whole street full on 32nd west of Clyde Park.

JT: That's still a hard job.

AG: Yes.

JT: Was it unusual for a woman to be doing this?

AG: Yes, a lot of people thought so. I didn't.

JT: Oh, I know. I know that. Nah! Because I don't think it was done.

AG: No, uh, uh.

JT: But, the War, more women did things at that point in time too, so they were getting used to women, right, women workers.

AG: Yes, Rosie the Riveter.

JT: Yeah, Rosie the Riveter. So, you had to wear pants back then, huh?

AG: Oh, yeah, had to wear jeans.

JT: Good old Levi's.

AG: Ya, ya.

JT: So, after that what happened?

AG: Well, I went into real estate. I got my real estate license and sold real estate.

JT: You must have thought you died and went to heaven from the other job.

AG: Real estate is hard work, it really is.

JT: Ya, but physical.

AG: Physical, ya. But, I still like the physical work. And a lot of times I bought houses and stuff and redid them and sold them and I did a lot of work on them myself.

JT: So, you went into realty.

AG: Ah, huh, which I liked very much. I did a lot of buying myself.

JT: Was this in the 50s?

AG: Pardon?

JT: This was the starting of the 50s, right, that you started this realty? Being a realtor?

AG: Let me stop and think here.

JT: When did you start?

AG: No, I started real estate in '55, actually, I started real estate. I'm trying to remember the car I bought.

JT: And how long did you do this?

AG: Well, I've had my license a lot of my life and I did let it go once, I think when I bought the manufacturing plant. I can't remember now. And, I've had it right up 'til just recently again. I bought a manufacturing plant. I thought first I'd buy the buildings and then I thought, "No, I might as well buy the whole thing." When I bought that I thought, "Well, I'll get this built up and sold by the time our daughter is in college and then, hopefully, we can do some traveling. So, my husband was sold out of his job about thirty days before we sold the manufacturing plant and then we started to travel. That was in 1979.

JT: Let's go back to when you first started in real estate. Was it that unusual for a woman back then?

AG: They were starting.

JT: There weren't too many women around doing that.

AG: The second largest office in town hired me as a sales manager over their women because they felt like they weren't handling them too well and I think they had about seven when they hired me. Anyway, two of them promptly quit because they were old enough to be my mother. I was the youngest real estate sales woman in town then, it was so unusual. But, anyway, they hired me as sales manager.

JT: Who did you work for?

AG: DeGraaf & Jonkems.

JT: DeGraaf & Jonkems.

AG: That's when they were second. I'm quite sure they were second largest in Grand Rapids at that time. Actually, I got quite well acquainted with them because Chet DeGraaf sold some of the speculation houses that we had.

JT: Well, it helped to be in real estate to find your property for your factory.

AG: Right, it really did, and in houses I bought, redid, and sold. Because you know what's out there and you know what's coming.

JT: Well, you had your finger there. Okay, tell me about that factory. Where was it located?

AG: Straight Street.

JT: Straight Street. What did you manufacture?

AG: Machinery tooling.

JT: How big of a plant was it?

AG: How many square feet?

JT: Workers, employees, that type of thing.

AG: We usually ran about eight or nine. We had cutting, it was all on steel that we worked, of course, and we had a cutting plant to cut up the steel and we had a machine shop to do machining and we had a heat treat plant and we had a grinding plant to grind the finished product.

JT: Is that shop still there?

AG: Still there and going well.

JT: Okay. Didn't you do some innovative -- ?

AG: Diversifying the product?

JT: Yeah, that's what I'm talking about. The product, what was it?

AG: I think it was about ninety-five percent woodworking, tooling, machinery tooling and we diversified it and made the blades for Wolverine World Wide's hog skinning machinery and we made cookie scraper roller blades and we made some carbide-tip work press blades for automotive.

JT: How did you find these ideas?

AG: Some people come to us and wanted to know if we could do it. When I bought the company I decided that I was going to make one sales call every day, which I did, and the company had a few original manufacturing equipment accounts and a few dealers set up. So, I did, I tried to make a sales call at least once a day, plus run the place, which was hard to do. But, then I advertised. I finally put a big ad in the -- what do they call those books?

JT: Trade books?

AG: A big trade book, yeah.

JT: Right.

AG: And that really made a difference.

JT: They didn't know about you. How would they know?

AG: Ya, ya. Then, Black & Decker went on with a lot of things they were making and we got more work. Black & Decker bought out a big company and they were failing with it pretty bad and we got a lot of their work too then.

JT: Well, that kind of ran your life for a while.

AG: Oh! I had a bull by the tail.

JT: I don't think you could have too many vacations.

AG: Oh, we took some.

JT: Did you really?

AG: Ya, we even went into the bottom of the Grand Canyon by Indian horseback on the west end.

JT: You must have had managers at that point.

AG: I had a woman that was top-notch.

JT: You had an assistant, or whatever.

AG: She was an accountant, she was good.

JT: Good, so then you could get away for a while.

AG: Well, I think the longest I went was a week, then I called in every other day.

JT: Right.

AG: And she got so she could quote jobs, but if I called in she would tell me what she was quoting on and how much and we'd go over it and she'd be right there where I'd put it too.

JT: Good. You sold that, you said in 1979, right?

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: Okay, you even told me you had experience dealing with antiques.

AG: My goodness, yes.

JT: How did that come about?

AG: Well, my mother started collecting antiques, her and her girlfriends, just things they liked. And, then pretty soon you have too much. One day I was there and I remember I was nineteen years old and I was helping my mother clean up the basement and I --

JT: This was on Kalamazoo, right?

AG: This was on Kalamazoo, and I said, "What are you going to do with all this?" She said, "Well, I would like to start a shop." So, we got a permit to start a shop and we did it in the breezeway of the garage at that time. So, we had the shop nineteen years, then my mother wasn't too well and decided we shouldn't have the shop, then I handled the estate sales and such. It made it 26 years in all for me that I was in the business. And, then I really quit when I got the manufacturing plant.

JT: Where did you find your antiques? You had to go shopping!

AG: Oh, ya, we went to auctions and we followed ads and we had people call us and just every which way.

JT: So, this is when you were in real estate, correct? You were doing this too?

AG: Ah, huh. Well, basically, the big part of it was when I was building houses. Well, and then real estate too.

JT: Right. So, you had to go to all these auctions.

AG: That was the one thing my mother and I had in common. It was a friendship thing we had a lot of fun with.

JT: Yeah, I think that's neat.

AG: My dad and I it was business. He talked business to me.

JT: And your mother was the antiques.

AG: My mother was the antiques.

JT: Well, the cooking and the canning.

AG: Yeah. We bought a lot of books. Mother liked glass, I liked furniture. Now my daughter has the whole collection of books that we had. I gave them to her so she'd have them and she's interested in antiques and does some lovely things in her home.

JT: All right, tell me how you met your husband, David.

AG: Oh, my goodness. Well, I took a hundred lessons in on a real estate deal. This man didn't have enough money, so that was part of my commission, and the hundred lessons was at Arthur Murray's. And so I went to take my hundred lessons and here was David.

JT: So, where was the studio?

AG: Oh, downtown somewhere.

JT: Downtown, okay.

AG: I don't remember.

JT: So, you went to Arthur Murray's Studio, and alone, to take your lessons.

AG: And here was David and Cha Cha, a thousand and one lessons, I think.

JT: So, you met at the dance studio.

AG: He was newly out of the Air Force and he decided everyone was having fun dancing and he wasn't so he was going to learn to dance. And me with my hundred lessons -- I think I took about nine of 'em and he swept me off my feet.

JT: So you never took the other --

AG: Arthur Murray still has the other ninety-one, I think.

JT: You should go back.

AG: Ya, I think I should.

JT: So, when did you marry David, what year?

AG: I married him in 1957. I think it's about, this year is it forty-seven years, forty-six?

JT: So, you said he was in the Air Force?

AG: Yes.

JT: Was this the Korean War that you're talking about?

AG: Yes. He was in SAC where they kept the airplanes in the air at all times of the -- well, the Cold War, really, is what I think it was.

JT: You had fun dancing together, okay. When you married, where did you live?

AG: I had a house on Fuller just south of Fisk, now what was the number, I don't remember the number.

JT: Okay, so you lived in Grand Rapids.

AG: Ah, huh.

JT: Your children. How many children did you have?

AG: Two.

JT: And their names?

AG: Ken, Kenneth.

JT: And you had your daughter.

AG: Laurie, Laurie Annette. Dave wanted to name her Laurie Adelaide and I said, "No." I said, "How about Annette?"

JT: A compromise.

AG: But then she has a daughter that her middle name is Adelaide.

JT: Oh, well, there ya go. Effie, Adelaide. Got to keep it in the family, all right, no problem.

AG: Oh, ya.

JT: All right, tell me some memories that you have of the four of you as a family. What comes to mind when they were growing up?

AG: Well, we had a cottage on a lake.

JT: Where is that cottage?

AG: Newaygo.

JT: Do you still have it?

AG: Nope.

JT: So, they remember going to the lake, going to the cottage. Swimming? Boating?

AG: Ya, doing all of that. Building it, we took a barn down and built it out of barn beams, and fieldstone fireplace and all that stuff.

JT: That doesn't surprise me, Adelaide.

AG: True. That's true.

JT: You're *very* industrious.

AG: I had to show David how to do cement and I hadn't done any in a long time and my back was bad and I didn't realize how bad it was, and a fella jumped off the truck and helped him screed the last piece of it. But, anyway, then David learned how to do cement work, and he's an engineer.

JT: Yes, I was going to ask you what was his occupation.

AG: He's an electromechanical engineer, aircraft instruments.

JT: And his company was?

AG: He worked for Lear Siegler and National Waterlift and Lear Jet..

JT: Here in Kentwood?

AG: Yes. He ended up being the Chief Engineer at R. C. Allen's instrument division and they sold that division and moved it to Kansas and that's when I had the manufacturing plant and they wanted him to go and he said, "I don't think I can. My wife's running a manufacturing plant."

JT: So, he basically retired.

AG: We retired close together.

JT: Close together, so you remember as a family the four of you, the cottage. Do you remember anything else?

AG: Oh, we took quite a few trips.

JT: Tell me about those trips. Where'd you go?

AG: Oh, we had a travel trailer and we went out west and we went to Yellow Stone and we did the Tetons.

JT: You went camping.

AG: Ah, huh, yup.

JT: You camped.

AG: Right.

JT: That's a long trip!

AG: It is.

JT: That's something for the kids to remember.

AG: Ah, huh, ya. We usually tried to make a trip in the summer. On vacation when he was working and I was working too, but he had less time to get away than I did.

JT: How far west did you go?

AG: I think Yellowstone and the Tetons.

JT: You didn't go to California?

AG: We didn't take them to California, no. We took 'em through Arizona.

JT: You never went east?

AG: We've been so many places since I can't remember now. Oh, we took 'em to Washington, D. C. My cousins from Hastings all moved there so we really saw D. C. They knew where to go.

JT: Do you remember how old they were when you did D. C.?

AG: Well, I think Ken was about twelve or something, maybe, and we took him, we didn't take Laurie, she was too little. And then we went again and we took just Laurie when she got older. They're seven years apart so, same thing, difference in interests. Then we took Laurie after Ken was gone from home, she was probably about twelve, thirteen.

JT: So, you say you're semi-retired nowadays, right?

AG: Well, I really am. I'm really retired.

JT: And your hobby?

AG: Well, I love to do my water colors. That's the dam (the Cascade Dam) down here.

JT: That's a picture of the dam down here? That is one that you did?

AG: Yes, ah, huh.

JT: Very lovely. I like this picture.

AG: I did it off from a picture, but it was not during icy time, it was a summer picture, one that I took myself. I try to paint only where I have been and maybe taken a picture of. I don't do any copy work. I also teach it, but I don't let my students copy it either.

JT: It has to be an original.

AG: Ah, huh. Behind that is a bouquet of flowers, the ones that's on the dining room table now. So, everything I do is original.

JT: So, how did you get started with water colors?

AG: Well, when David and I got married and I was going to be more of a housewife, I always wanted to paint, so I took some oil painting classes to start with.

JT: Where?

AG: Here in Grand Rapids. Then I branched off in water color and I'd taken from some very notorious teachers in water color around the country.

JT: So, that says a lot. Do you do this often or just some of the time?

AG: Just some of the time. My back has gotten so bad that I really --

JT: It's hard to sit?

AG: Well, it's hard to sit or stand very long. And I have a whole studio downstairs. I've got a beautiful, big studio. But, I do it when I want to.

JT: Good.

AG: Now, anyway. But, I used to give lessons right straight through.

JT: I remember you telling me that you are part of the Depression Era, right? And I know you don't remember much about it because you were born at that time, but what memories do you have of the Depression?

AG: Well, I remember my brother getting his first job and he earned twelve dollars a week in a cookie factory working six days a week, eight hours a day. And, I remember my uncles all living with us, my mother's brothers because they didn't have any money. And, my dad had 'em put in melons and take care of 'em and we had a melon stand so they could earn money.

JT: Well, everything was hard. There were no jobs.

AG: No, no.

JT: And you had the farm and you told me people were living with you at the time, remember? So, it was hard.

AG: My dad would say, "Well, just move in with us and we'll manage somehow and I can remember him counting the change out of his pocket wondering whether to buy gas to get back to the shop or, buy some bread or something. I know he walked it more than once and it was well over five miles.

JT: To work?

AG: To open his business.

JT: And people just made due at that time. They just tried.

AG: We made our own lard and we made -- we canned. You was asking me my favorite foods, I think of one thing I forgot. My mother used to take a can of pork and a can of beef that we canned in the glass jars and make chop suey. And that was *so* different from anybody else's chop suey and that's another taste that I miss made with that canned meat.

JT: Speaking of canned meat, did you ever eat Spam?

AG: Oh, ya. Sure.

JT: Really!

AG: Sure. I can remember when meat was rationed and if you stretched your coupons with Spam you got further and so we used to fry it. Because it tasted better when you just browned it in the pan in slices.

JT: Do you still eat it now?

AG: Once in a blue moon. I haven't had any in probably four or five years now, but I'll bet you you'll find a can in my cupboard that's out of our camper. Because I keep that kind of thing in our camper.

JT: It's a staple.

AG: Ya, and if we're not right somewhere and I need a little meat, so as to say, then I've got it.

JT: You got it. So, World War II, more shortages? Do you remember some things?

AG: Oh, I sure do.

JT: Tell me about those.

AG: Well, my brother Chuck and I shared this car and tires were so scarce and every night in the summer we wanted to do something. We wanted to go to a movie, we wanted to go and do something, so we would set and patch those inner tubes half the day on the porch so we would have enough spare tires to either get to Campau Lake and go swimming or get to a movie or get to some kid's house to do something. And, we'd have more flat tires, oh, my goodness sakes! Things were scarce and we made due.

JT: Yes, we had to do that. I remember my mother saying that she didn't have nylons back then. Did that happen to you?

AG: Yup, we had, what did we call that again? It was some brown-type liquid in a bottle that you could put on your legs and I don't remember what we called it. What did we call that?

JT: You made the seam?

AG: No, we didn't bother about the seam.

JT: But you colored the legs.

AG: We colored our legs with this brown liquid so that we *looked* like we had hose on -- hosiery, but I can't remember what we called it. I think you can still buy it. I have a friend who's been very ill and she can't wear pantyhose and she's been putting it on her legs, so maybe you can still buy it, I don't know. Maybe she's just putting liquid makeup on. I don't know what for sure. No, we used that quite a bit, I remember. And you worried about if some water splashed on you it could make it run down your leg.

JT: That was a mess.

AG: Ya, we would be very careful we wouldn't get near a sprinkler or something because it would run down your legs.

JT: Or, be out in the rain.

AG: Ya, but it was pretty good stuff for stayin' on, though.

JT: No kidding.

AG: Ya. Oh, I wish I could think. They had a name for it and I can't think of it. That's funny.

JT: She just did without. I don't think she told me about coloring the legs, but that's an interesting thought.

AG: Now your mother would be how old?

JT: If she was living, let's see, eighty-seven.

AG: Ten years older than I am.

JT: Yes. She's been deceased six years now.

AG: I think a lot of people -- I know I had one aunt that used to say I was sixteen going on thirty-six and my sister seemed immature to me, very immature. And, I don't think sixteen going on thirty-six when she got there either. But, you know how different people are.

JT: Yes, exactly. Well, we're getting to the end of this interview and have we covered a lot of your life? Is there anything else that you would like to add that you can think of? Because I've got two more questions to go.

AG: Well, I can remember when President Franklin Roosevelt come to town, my mother took us all down. Well, my father would send somebody out from the shop with the car to get us and then we'd take the bus from the shop downtown. And, I don't know what age I was, maybe six or seven, but I can see him yet sitting on his convertible and probably about two people back from where he come through. We must all see the President because he was coming to town.

JT: They wanted you to experience these things.

AG: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

JT: You said not often, but if it was something important, you had to do it. You had to experience it.

AG: And then if we told anybody we saw the President, other kids, they'd say, "You did not." But my parents were very -- we must have culture, so we were lucky, we really were. My older brother one day he said, "You know, we had an unusual life, didn't we?" And I said, "I think so, compared to other people." And we didn't think we were rich, we thought we were pretty poor even. But, when I look back and my father bought three accordions in the Depression and had our lessons and everything at a good music store. Sometimes I know he'd say, "Maybe they'll hold us this week" and I'll catch up again. And I often wondered how he ever caught up when I got older, but I know he did -- and paid three hundred dollars a piece for those accordions. You know, you could buy a new V-8 for six hundred dollars. So, when I think of that, he really sacrificed.

JT: To make sure you had a musical education.

AG: Oh, yes. That was important.

JT: So, did you carry that over to your own children?

AG: Yes. We had a piano. They both had piano lessons and our son wanted to be a drummer in a rock band so I said, "Well, you're going to have lessons, you're not just going to pound on that thing." So, I took him to Christian Music Store at that time and he had lessons and he was good. And, then our daughter had accordion lessons too. I didn't try to teach her myself and she wanted to play. Now, she says, "Oh, someday I'm going to go back to a piano and I'm really going to learn to play it." But, she's forty-three and very busy and I don't see her doing it.

JT: She has a family?

AG: Yes, she has two daughters.

JT: Right, so, there ya go. You have to make those priorities, those changes, those choices, rather.

AG: Well, maybe when she gets through with raising her family. She's got a daughter that's good at music. Well, both of them are. One made first chair flute in school with no private lessons and the other one plays baritone sax in a jazz band and she plays sax in the marching band at Okemos High School.

JT: There must be some musical genes in your family.

AG: They're both terrific musicians. Oh, I just can't believe it. I don't know.

JT: Other than President Roosevelt, is there anything more you want to add?

AG: That impressed me because I was little and he was the President.

JT: Came in on the train, you said?

AG: I don't know how he got here but he always rode around in a convertible and then they would put the top down and he had paralysis, you know, from polio and then he would sit up on that top where they put it down back there.

JT: I bet when you see a picture of him in a car, that triggers that memory.

AG: That looks just like what I saw.

JT: Exactly, so then, "Ah, I remember that, exactly."

AG: I'll probably think of a million things after you're gone that -- because I did have an unusual life, I'm sure.

JT: Okay, my battery is getting low. I'm going to have to get going here. It's beeping on me. What adjectives would you use to best describe yourself? I asked you about your parents, now I want to know about you. How would you describe yourself?

AG: I don't know. What's it sound like to you?

JT: Well, come on.

AG: I don't know. A mover and a shaker, I guess. I don't really know how to describe it. I've slowed way up, but some people think I haven't because they haven't known me when I was younger.

JT: All right, and what will be your legacy, Adelaide?

AG: My paintings. Some people like my paintings, well, maybe that's one of 'em. My skill for playing music. I've played in nursing homes and I've played with the Grand Rapids Accordion Ensemble and I played in a band in Florida. So, I don't know, I think maybe that.

JT: Okay, that will be it. This is it.

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