

Kentwood Historical Preservation Commission (KHPC) Oral History

Subject: Karel

Interviewer: Lisa Golder

Date of Interview: July 26, 1996

Place: City Hall

Transcribed by Lori Vander Stel, January 2003.

Edited Version: January 2004

[I removed crutch words and false starts from this transcript.]

Doug Karel (DK)

Mrs. Karel (MK)

Lisa Golder (LG)

[]: refers to words/passages that transcriptionist cannot understand

[] Do you need the stand, do you think? If that's [] .

LG: Yea, let me close the door.

[] Okay.

LG: Now I've got you [laugh].

DK: Yup, there we go.

LG: So, -

MK: Doug will probably have more information than me.

LG: No, you got the good recall.

DK: Nope, never know.

LG: What, what, what do you Doug?

DK: I'm an, an assistance consultant for Spartan Stores.

LG: Okay. Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: Out in Byron Center there, Spartan Computer Systems.

LG: Yea, well I hope that it won't all go down while you're –

DK: Yea, they're not, they're not.

MK: [laugh]

LG: And you grew up on 52nd right?

MK: Not grew up, I married.

LG: You married then right away.

MK: My husband, yea, was from that area. And I, -

LG: What's the address of that house?

DK: That was a 2-0-4, I believe, 52nd.

MK: No, no, no. Where we lived?

DK: No, where the Karel farm -

MK: Oh, the Karel farm, oh yea.

LG: The Karel farm.

DK: That's; I think that's 2-0-4, right in that area. Yea, 'cause that's still standing. That's an ugly house.

MK: Yea, yea.

DK: [laugh]

LG: And that's where –

MK: And then our, where we lived was 7, can't even remember the address.

DK: No, it was 800 something.

MK: 8, yea.

DK: Yea, where, where my folks lived was right where the driveway going into Kentwood D&W, -

LG: Okay.

DK: Is right there. The driveway that goes in there off of 52nd was our driveway.

LG: A little different now eh?

DK: Yup. There's still a tree there, Chinese Elm.

MK: Oh yea.

DK: That was the back corner of house lot.

LG: Wow.

MK: Yup [] as you could get.

LG: Well, what do you, so when did you first come to this area, to Paris Township as it's then?

MK: 49 years ago.

LG: 49 years ago.

MK: Yup.

LG: And then –

MK: Then I got married, yup.

LG: When you got married.

DK: '47.

MK: In '47.

LG: And then you moved out to the house on, where D&W is now? Or [] first two, that []?

MK: Oh no, we had, no, we lived down closer to Division Avenue.

LG: Okay.

MK: Above, in an apartment.

LG: Okay.

MK: Vandyke Electric. And it was just actually the first house from Division then.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: And then we built our house on 52nd by Eastern there.

DK: Yea, my father built his own house -

MK: Yea.

DK: Down there.

LG: What was it like back then when you first, when you were in the apartment?

MK: It was just a 2-lane, no, no streetlights, no nothing, -

DK: Dirt road.

MK: No it wasn't dirt.

DK: Oh it, it was paved, okay, it was paved back in '47.

MK: It was blacktop, yea, it was blacktop, but it was, you know, just 2-lane.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: No street lights.

LG: Nuh uh [non-affirmative]. A lot of houses there? Or no?

MK: No, no.

LG: You're about the only one?

MK: Well, -

LG: You're right on Division there? Or -

MK: No, right on 52nd.

LG: Right on 52nd.

MK: Yea, just off from Division.

DK: Yea, the VanDyke's that still live there, they're the ones, they have like huge columns in the front of their house, -

LG: Oh yea.

MK: Yea.

DK: He puts big Santa Claus, -

MK: They don't live there no more.

DK: They don't live there anymore?

MK: No, they sold that.

LG: That's the house huh?

DK: They did? Okay.

MK: And they, and we lived upstairs there when we first got married.

LG: That seems like a nice house.

MK: Yea. It was nice.

LG: That's a pretty old house too.

MK: Oh yea.

LG: I didn't realize that.

MK: Yea.

LG: It's kind of a -

DK: But a lot of the, the houses along there like, actually where Lyle's comes in off from Eastern -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: And 52nd there. Well Lyle's is named after my Grandmother's brother, -

LG: Oh.

DK: Lyle Hooligan.

MK: Hooligan.

DK: And he had developed all those, and he had built all those houses and developed all that. So Hooligan's also lived in that area. And he built those right after the war, correct?

MK: Yea, right, yea. 'Cause, those well actually it was probably, let's see, about '47, about '51 I think, -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: Then that was all built up around there. Heyboer and Lyle and, and then some on 52nd.

LG: It was all developed by a relative?

MK: Lyle, yea.

DK: Yup.

MK: Lyle and [].

LG: Hmm.

MK: And -

LG: [] [laugh]

DK: Which would have been, yea, which is my grandmother's brother. My, my dad's uncle.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative]. So all, all your dad's family lived out in this area?

DK: Yup.

DK: Sisters are still living, and his one brother is still living.

LG: Wow.

DK: They all live in various areas now.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative]. They all grew up there on 52nd Street.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: So one went on to build, he was a builder. And then, was, were there any farmers in the bunch?

DK: Well, Grandpa was a farmer.

LG: He farmed right there? []?

DK: Where did Grandpa have, Grandpa Karel have, he had different farms didn't he?

MK: No, I think he just, what he was brought up by is -

DK: Well, he was brought by his uncle.

MK: Yea, and then, yea, -

DK: They farmed it.

MK: And then actually he became a, he was a carpenter really, uh huh [affirmative].

DK: Yea, okay.

LG: So they farmed right there at, at the old family farm? Was it, so how, how long was that in the family, that farm there?

DK: I have no idea.

MK: I don't know either.

DK: I don't know when that was sold or when our family sold that.

LG: That would be easy enough to, to track that. In fact we can find -

DK: You're the City; you can find that [laugh].

LG: I think we can.

DK: Yup.

LG: []

DK: Yea, 'cause –

LG: Sometimes it makes a more interesting story then, [].

DK: Yup, at that time it was, 'cause the original property, our spelling is K-a-r-e-l, -

LG: Right.

DK: And the original property was in the spelling of C-a-r-l.

LG: Oh, okay.

DK: Because, you know, -

LG: [].

DK: Yea, whenever you get new immigrants, you know, they don't really know how to –

LG: [laugh]

DK: They Americanize the names real quick.

LG: Yea. They did that for discrimination purposes too sometimes.

DK: That's right.

LG: That looks different from when you were []?.

DK: Yup. But a lot of things have changed out there I know, since, since you lived out there–

MK: Oh yea.

DK: You know, a lot of, with the development that's occurred through there. Like, like you probably remember the old drive-in theater on Division.

LG: There was huh?

MK: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: On 52nd, right?

LG: Where was that at?

LG: It was on 52nd?

LG: Where Fables is? Or on the north side?

DK: Where about, wasn't that –

LG: Or -

DK: Between –

LG: About 54th and Nora?

DK: Just north of Nancy and Nora?

MK: Seems to me there was one out there, I can't even remember.

DK: Do you remember there was, it was a, 'cause it, it used to have, just I remember it, with just a post there and then the screen had burned down in a fire?

MK: Yea, that was I think beyond, in between 52nd and 60th.

DK: Yea, it was between –

LG: Yea, [] is about –

MK: Yea.

DK: Yup.

MK: Yea, yea.

LG: South of 56th Street, and so it's probably –

MK: In between 52nd and [].

DK: It was someplace in there, I don't know if there's a –

LG: Maybe where the driving range is now, in that area.

DK: No, it wasn't where the driving range is.

MK: Yea, it wasn't at all, it was farther, it was farther, -

DK: It was south.

LG: Oh, okay.

MK: Yea, 'cause that's just before 52nd.

LG: Yea.

DK: Yea, it, it was -

MK: Or, yea, fifty-, yea, 54th.

LG: Okay.

MK: See that changed, and that changed to –

DK: Well, actually where, where I think it is, is where, -

LG: It's down by 60th, down there.

DK: Where Big Lots is now.

MK: Yea.

LG: Oh, okay.

MK: In that area.

DK: Because, -

LG: Oh, that's 54th then.

DK: Yea, the extension there, 54th, was never there when we grew up. 'Cause 52nd, went straight through.

MK: Went straight through.

LG: Yea.

DK: Right.

MK: [].

DK: And then the drive-in was right there.

LG: So, so what do, when you were growing up then, not that that's long ago, what, what do you remember? What I'm trying to get at this, in this book, and what I think will help our writer to, to put the book together, is to give people, especially young people, the sense of how quickly things have changed.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: And we've got all these people living now that are not old, -

MK: Right.

LG: And remember when it was just, I mean even, I've been here 9 years and I, I can remember when a lot of things were big and fields, so -

MK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: But it's amazing how quickly you forget.

MK: Oh yea.

LG: 'Right, that used to be' thinking, so -

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: So, how do you remember growing up? What it was like when you, what was traffic like? Did you, how far did you need to go, or whatever [].

DK: Well traffic was, of course a lot less.

LG: And also how, you know, when you were raising your kids.

DK: Yea.

LG: What, what was things like then.

MK: Oh yea, when, -

DK: 52nd and Eastern.

MK: We lived, fifty-, yea; there was not hardly any traffic actually, on 52nd.

LG: It was farm life.

MK: Yea, it was farm; actually in back of us was all truck farm. We lived right, you know, on 52nd there, and then that, that whole corner, that was all truck farm, -

LG: Hmm. Hmm.

MK: All vegetable, you know.

DK: All vegetables, like -

MK: And -

DK: Like in back of the fire station.

MK: And that was where the fire station, you know that's -

DK: Is now.

MK: Yea, and -

LG: And how much did you own there? Was it a big farm?

MK: Just a lot.

LG: Just a lot.

MK: Just a lot, yup. And-

DK: See, that was a big asparagus field in back of the fire station. Even -

MK: It's been [].

DK: I remember that even up until, I mean you could still go out there until, GRATA built –

LG: Their bus stop?

DK: Their bus stop there.

MK: Oh yea.

DK: You could still go out there and snip asparagus.

LG: Well then –

DK: ‘Cause it came back every year.

LG: []

DK: You know, and that wasn’t that long ago.

LG: Yea, it wasn’t that long ago.

MK: Well then across the street from us, across 52nd, that was a farm. And they had cows and stuff there.

LG: Hmm. In Leisure Acres?

MK: In tha -

DK: Where Leisure Acres is.

MK: Yea, right, and then the gas station on the corner, and –

LG: Yea, the gas station’s been there for a while I bet.

MK: Not, but not the one on the –

LG: 52nd and Eastern.

MK: No.

LG: [].

DK: Not the Marathon but the -

MK: It was the one on the -

DK: Yea, the Marathon's hasn't been there that long, but the other one has.

MK: Yea, where, -

DK: Where [], -

MK: Yea, that was an old, older [] gas station.

LG: I have some [].

MK: But the one across from that, on the, what would be on the -

DK: Northeast.

MK: Northeast corner.

LG: Okay.

MK: No, that wasn't, that, that [] -

LG: Guess I'm thinking about [].

MK: When they started, before they started putting the condos in then they put that in.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: That gas station.

DK: 'Cause I remember a little bit of the, of the farm when I was growing up, 'cause there, it wasn't really being farmed. But I remember the old, -

MK: You were always, yea, 'cause were only 6 years old.

DK: Yea, I was only 6 when we moved.

MK: And we moved from that.

DK: But I remember the old lady patrolling her property with the dogs.

MK: Oh yea, she would have a dog, she'd, and she'd walk all along the fence line.

LG: [].

MK: Then, she was an old maid, Girlo, her name was, and, real hunchback little old lady, and just checking, making sure that –

DK: Yea, you never went into her field, -

MK: No.

DK: ‘Cause she’d sic the dogs on ya.

LG: And she lived across the street on 52nd Street, in a house.

MK: Yea, and I lived in a real old house, you know.

LG: Hmm.

DK: A little shack.

MK: Really, yea, it was, it was a shack. An old dairy barn and, and there was a, a big , a pond there, you know, that their cows watered in. And right there near that corner, you know, -

LG: A real [].

MK: On 52nd and, yup.

DK: Yup. And she would patrol that.

MK: And then even in back of us, in the truck farm, they had a big pond that they irrigated their farm, their fields with, from that -

LG: Oh. Huh.

DK: D & W’s built on a swamp.

MK: A big –

LG: Really?

DK: [laugh]

LG: I'm surprised [].

MK: Oh yea, we had water in the basement all the time there until they changed the water, I don't know what they did, they put in –

DK: Well, they put in storm drains in there.

MK: It was storm drains and stuff, yea.

DK: See it's all storm drains back there now.

MK: And, so that area, you know, it's a big change [laugh].

LG: Yea. Now that –

MK: And of course in back of the cemetery, that was all just hunting grounds really, for the guys and, and that big hill, and it went down in, and that's where I live now.

LG: Oh, okay.

MK: That –

DK: She lives on Greenboro.

LG: [].

MK: It's on Greenboro.

LG: Oh okay.

DK: Which is straight back from the cemetery.

MK: Yea.

LG: Yea, so you stayed close to 52nd Street then didn't you?

MK: Yea. So, there was a pond –

DK: That was a big sand pit back there.

LG: So it was just like being out in Gaines Township somewhere and –

MK: Right, right.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: [].

MK: It was, it was just like country then.

LG: Yea.

MK: You know.

LG: So your house on 52nd Street was torn down then when you sold it?

MK: No, it was moved.

LG: Oh they moved it?

DK: Yea, twice.

MK: Yea.

LG: Really? Where did it go? Is it still around now?

DK: Originally, yea, originally it was moved to 48th and Eastern, -

MK: Okay.

DK: Right on 48th Street, where the 7-11 Store is.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: It was moved there. There is a house that is there now that's a hair salon?

LG: Yea, right.

DK: That was, was that Kuiper's house?

MK: It would be -

DK: Or was that Veenstra's?

MK: Veenstra's.

DK: And D & W rents from Spartan.

LG: Oh, that's interesting.

DK: So it's –

LG: Was it always D & W?

MK: Yea, it was [].

DK: Yes, that was, they built there in '68 or '69, -

LG: It looks like a pretty old store.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: So, you lived there from the '50's until –

MK: From, no –

DK: '47, and then you got married.

MK: Forty-,

LG: Or '47.

MK: Well actually, -

LG: Well, you had your –

MK: Yea, '47, we rented from '47, let's see, -

LG: And that's the house your dad built.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: '48, '49, '50, '51, '52.

DK: Yea.

MK: Yea.

DK: Dad built the house in '54, -

LG: By himself.

DK: By, it was well –

MK: No, '52.

DK: Oh, '52 he built the house? Okay.

MK: Yea, yea, '52, -

DK: Okay, he built the house in '52 and, -

MK: And then –

DK: Yea, 'cause that's when Tom was born, '52.

MK: Yea, and yea 'cause he was only 5 months old, my one son, when we moved from the apartment, -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: And my daughter was –

DK: Five.

MK: Five.

LG: Hmm.

MK: 4 ½, about that. Anyway, then he, him and his dad built that house, the house, it was cape cod.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: And part of the, to like D & W coming in there, the only place to shop at was Fewlass Markets.

LG: And where was that?

DK: That's right there where the party store is on the corner of 52nd and Eastern.

LG: Aah.

DK: On, on the southeast.

MK: And that, and then that was Longstreets before that.

DK: That was Longstreets before Fewlass had that.

MK: Yea, and they built it, and then Fewlass.

LG: It was a little grocery store?

MK: Little grocery store, yea.

LG: It sounds like it must have been little, 'cause that party store's pretty little.

MK: Yea, that's the same size.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: It was just like that, yea.

LG: Really?

DK: Same size, that was a grocery store.

LG: [].

MK: And they, I think they lived upstairs. Still some people live, I think it's apartment upstairs. And, -

LG: Yea, that [].

MK: Yea.

DK: And then it was -

LG: [].

DK: Yea it was a, that was a little grocery store. I mean, I remember going there buying B-B's with my brothers.

LG: Oh did you?

MK: Yea [].

DK: Yea, where the Rite-Aid and Autoworks Store is?

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: That was originally a Meijers Grocery Store.

MK: Yea.

LG: Same Meijers as there is now.

DK: Yes.

MK: Yea, right.

LG: That's how they started.

DK: Before they went into the superstore business, to the Thrifty Stores?

MK: Yea. [].

DK: Yea, 'cause like the first Meijer Thrifty Acres was the one on 28th and Kalamazoo.

LG: Right.

MK: Right.

DK: And at that time it was called Thrifty Acres.

LG: Right.

DK: Now it's just called Meijers.

MK: Right.

DK: Where as if you talked to older residents they'll refer to it as Thrifty's.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative]. Yes.

DK: 'Cause that's what it was. But, -

MK: And then, and then -

LG: They went to Home Acres, and that, that wasn't a very big store either?

MK: No, no. That was fairly big, you know, for the time.

LG: That's true, that's true.

MK: You know.

LG: They don't have stores like we do now.

MK: And, yea, not now, oh now. They didn't have all this stuff in it. It was groceries, you know.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: You wanted to buy clothes or anything, we went either downtown, -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: They didn't have the malls yet.

LG: Right.

MK: Or to Robson's.

DK: Earl Robsons.

MK: Earl Robson's in Home Acres.

LG: Well, what else do you remember about Home Acres being there? What other stores do you recall? Some, see someone can remember there was a Ben Franklin, and -

MK: Oh, Shippy's Drug Store, yea that was, and, yea Ben Franklin. That was, that was there, the dime store.

LG: Now was there -

MK: And Weemhoff's worked there, or run it or whatever. And -

DK: And the feed store has always been there for -

MK: Oh yea, the feed store has been there for years.

DK: It's been there forever.

MK: Yea.

LG: It's still there.

DK: Yup.

MK: And of course, Earl Robinson, you know, that was, -

DK: Big store.

MK: Nothing compared to what it, what it is today, you know.

DK: Yea, when it came to what Earl Robson developed into. That's where Keyboard World is now.

LG: Now it's Keyboard, okay.

MK: Now, yea.

LG: I didn't get to see pictures, so you can look at, -

DK: Sure.

LG: And you can help me identify some things. [].

DK: But yea, 'cause you see Home Acres is, you know, they tried to become their own city in the '30's.

LG: Oh did they?

MK: Yea.

LG: See I gave, did you see the article in the Advance –

DK: Last week, yea.

LG: And they had a picture of Home Acres, yea, that's the picture I gave the reporter, and so that's, I gave her my copy, so I don't have anymore, but that shows what it was like in '50's.

DK: That picture, that was right there at my, the corner of my street. I live on Murray.

LG: Okay.

DK: Which is at the corner, and they had a picture of Shippys –

MK: Oh yea, yup.

DK: Pharmacy, which is now that Oriental Video Store.

LG: Remember any of these? This is a, they told me that's a bus line?

MK: Oh, Bravada's? Yea.

LG: It might be before your time here. These are '49. There's a flood they're talking about in '49, if you recall anything about that? But this at 44th between Jefferson and Madison. Thought that was kind of interesting.

MK: Oh yea, I remember this, flood. We had water from that creek, all of –

LG: Now, '49, you would have been out at the house on 52nd Street?

MK: Yea, we were –

DK: You were renting from VanDyke's then.

LG: Oh, you were renting, okay.

MK: Yea, we lived upstairs there, yea.

LG: So you were pretty darn close to all that.

MK: Oh yea, because we had water all the way up, and that creek was quite a ways back.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: And let's see, –

MK: So we had water that come almost all the way up to the house.

LG: Oh boy.

MK: Yea, so [] –

DK: Yea, yea, it's a no-name creek.

LG: I think [] flood, it's a drain I think.

DK: Yea, it's a drain now.

MK: No, that's not –

LG: No, that's a, it was probably a [] back then.

MK: It wasn't then –

DK: But back then, there was a creek –

MK: It wasn't [] -

DK: No, it's not Buck or Plaster.

MK: Plaster? Neither one of them?

DK: But like my father, my father when his folks had a house right near there, -

MK: This would be in your area.

DK: Yea, that's where Meijer is right on Division where King Archery is?

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: The house isn't there no more.

MK: Octagon, I don't remember that.

DK: But they remember my father always talked about swimming in the creek, 'cause there was like 8 foot holes and they would jump and dive into the creek and swim in there.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: Uh huh [affirmative]. And now –

DK: And that was the post office.

LG: Hmm, oh yea.

DK: And then there's Jacqueline's Party Cakes, -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: And then Fryling, Ron Fryling had his barber shop there.

MK: Had a barber shop there.

LG: Okay.

DK: Of course, that's when I was growing up. Ron Fryling was a, one of only 2 Wyoming fireman that has ever been killed in action.

LG: Hmm.

DK: He was he died in a fire in a Chinese restaurant on 28th and Burlingame, -

LG: Hmm.

DK: No, Buchanan, Buchanan. But he had a barbershop. That's where I used to go as a kid to have my haircut.

LG: Hmm. And that, that was in –

DK: Dad and Chuck's place there, next to –

MK: [laugh]

DK: The Fewlass Grocery Store, then the guy could cut hair straight. Fewlass -

LG: Hmm. So, next to the grocery store they also had a barbershop.

DK: A little barber shop, and there's still a beauty shop in there now I think.

MK: No, no, now that's a –

DK: Is she out of there?

MK: Yea, there's no beauty shop. It's some other kind of little repair shop. The barbershop still there.

DK: Okay, barbershop is still there.

MK: Yea, and that's been there, oh, actual, actually it was on this –

DK: Yup, as long as the grocery store, as, as the grocery store was there.

MK: [] Yea, yea, right, so that's been there for a while.

LG: So you, this is a, this was pretty much a, a pretty thriving commercial area as you recall then.

DK: Oh, Home Acres and –

LG: You know, it seems like you got a lot, -

MK: Yea.

LG: Now wasn't the library out there as well?

MK: The library was on 44th Street.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative]. Where [] park is?

MK: Right there.

DK: Right.

MK: Right by Jefferson.

DK: Right, right at the end of Jefferson the library was there and the, and when the city first became a city, the police department was downstairs.

MK: Yea.

LG: Hmm.

DK: It was in the basement.

LG: I didn't know that. That's, that's a new fact, factoid.

DK: Yup, yea they had, and some other city offices in there too didn't they? Or –

MK: Yea, I can't remember what it was, -

DK: Wasn't that –

MK: But I know there was, yea, -

DK: Didn't they have some of the original City offices in here?

MK: I remember going to the library there all the time.

DK: Yea. And then the library moved over to where St. Mary Magdalene is.

LG: Right, yea.

DK: And -

LG: Wasn't it like a little old trailer []?

DK: Well they, it was the old school building.

MK: Yea, that brown building.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative]. Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: They had the old school building as the library.

MK: Yup.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: And [] some of the old schools, you know, like, then well of course, didn't Tom go to the old public school?

MK: Yea.

DK: The old 2-story –

MK: No, no, no.

DK: Or the old school house in front of Bowen?

MK: Yea, he did, he did.

DK: For one year?

MK: Just for one year, right, that's right.

DK: He, 'cause that used to be an old 2-story schoolhouse.

MK: Yea, it was.

LG: The Bowen School was?

MK: Yea, it was.

DK: The Bowen.

LG: I thought was the one on Kalamazoo, right.

MK: On Kalamazoo.

DK: Kalamazoo.

MK: Before they built –

LG: So there was a couple of, I mean, I've got pictures of, of the progression of what it started out as, -

DK: Yea.

LG: And there was a 2-room, and I can't ever recall seeing it as a 2-story.

DK: Was it 2-story? Or was it –

MK: No, I think it was only 1-story.

DK: A 1-story, yea.

MK: Yea, 'cause you had to walk up steps to get into.

DK: Okay.

LG: No, okay. The ones that, kind of brown structure with a bell on top?

MK: Yea, Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: Yea, and I got a picture of that.

MK: Yea.

DK: Yea, 'cause –

MK: And then –

LG: And he went there and then he went –

MK: Then they built a, you know, the new school. And then the administration building was in the front.

LG: Okay.

MK: In that brick building in the front.

LG: Oh?

DK: Which is now a day-care center.

LG: Right.

DK: That was the old administration building.

MK: Yea, the administration building for the Kentwood schools.

LG: So the day-care center was, is, was the old administration building?

MK: Right.

LG: I didn't know that.

MK: Yea, and –

DK: And –

LG: And the old administration building is the old Bowen School?

MK: No, there's a new one.

LG: They tore down the old one.

DK: Yea, they told down the old one.

MK: Yea, they did, oh yea, yea, yea.

LG: Okay. In then where did the rest of the kids go? The same place at the Bowen?

MK: Oh, no, -

DK: We went all over.

MK: Nancy went to Christian, Kent-, Kelloggsville Christian.

LG: Oh okay.

MK: And so did Tom until 2nd grade.

LG: Okay.

MK: Nancy went up through the 6th grade. And then from there she went to Kentwood High School. And then Tom –

DK: Which is now Crestwood.

MK: And, and Steve, -

LG: Oh, okay, that's right, that's right, uh huh [affirmative].

MK: And then they went back, and then we took them out of the Christian School and when they went to a public school, so they were in –

DK: Townline?

MK: Let's see, yea, they were in Townline, Steve was in Townline. Tom was in Alexander Hamilton, and –

LG: That's pretty far.

MK: Yea, but see it was just before they did the consolidation and we were living right on the edge, so wherever –

LG: You went all over the place.

MK: Yea, where there was room, then that's where they went.

LG: Well that's [].

MK: And -

DK: 'Cause they were just starting to consolidate the Kentwood School District.

MK: Yea, and just starting to consolidate.

LG: What was it like befo-, what did they do before these different districts within the area? 'Cause right from the old maps you see school district number whatever.

MK: Yea, well -

DK: Yea, 'cause there was no Kentwood Schools, -

MK: There was no school district, you just had -

DK: It was just county school, rural schools.

MK: Well see, then they had, actually Alexander Hamilton and Townline and Bowen, those were the 3 main schools then.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative]. Hmm.

MK: And then they built Meadowlawn, and -

DK: Brookwood.

MK: Brookwood and Glenwood.

DK: Yea, Glenwood opened just before I started.

MK: Yea, uh huh [affirmative], and Doug went -

DK: 'Cause I went to Glenwood and, and then Valleywood in the high school.

MK: And then they went to, and Tom went right, he didn't even go to Valley wood.

LG: Hmm.

MK: 'Cause he went right from, let's see, it was Alexander Hamilton right to the high school.

LG: Oh.

MK: 'Cause there were no middle schools then.

LG: Wow.

MK: See, Valley wood was the first middle school.

LG: So they went all the way through 8th then, [].

MK: They went through the, they went through the 6th grade, and the 7th grade they started high school.

LG: Huh.

MK: And then he went to high school, it was on 44th Street, -

LG: Yea, Crestwood.

MK: You know, which is Crestwood now.

DK: It's Crestwood now.

MK: And, and then Steve, he was 2 years younger, Tom was my old, and then I have daughter, the oldest one, she graduated in, in, from Kentwood. And she's 48.

DK: 48.

MK: And, so she went right from Christian School, -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: And then we took all the kids out of the Christian, 2 of them out of Christian School, and she went right to the high school, and so she went right through there. And then Tom went from Alexander Hamilton, or from, yea, Alexander Hamilton to the high school, and then he went all the way through. Then Steve, my next son, he went to Townline, and then he went to Valley wood, 'cause that was brand new.

LG: Oh, okay.

MK: And that was the first middle school. And he went there a couple years, and then to the high school in the 9th grade. And so, -

LG: Sounds confusing.

MK: Yea.

LG: [laugh]

DK: [laugh]

MK: So we had them in a lot of different schools.

DK: Yup.

LG: Yea.

MK: And so, -

DK: Now didn't they get, didn't Tom or Steve get to meet like Helen Keller once? Didn't she come to like Bowen?

MK: I don't think so.

DK: Steve thought that last night.

MK: Oh really?

DK: He, they went, like in the early 1960's or something, -

MK: Hmm.

DK: When Tom first went to Bowen School, -

MK: I can't remember that.

DK: Like Helen Keller came in on a visit?

LG: Really? Well that's kind of neat.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: It's an old school.

DK: Yea.

LG: Of all places to go.

DK: Of all places to come.

LG: [laugh]

DK: But yea, of course I went to, like I did, I just normal; I went to regular schools [laugh].

LG: [laugh].

MK: He went all the way through.

LG: []

DK: Yup, I –

MK: And then to Valley wood and then to the high school.

DK: It's just like clear back to Valleywood too, before Valleywood was built, my brother Steve and a friend of his found some, a prehistoric Mastodon.

LG: Oh really.

DK: Or a tooth of a Mastodon I should say.

LG: Wow.

DK: And that's still on exhibit down at the museum.

LG: Oh really?

DK: At the public museum.

LG: That must have been pretty exciting for him.

DK: And it's, I don't remember who he found that with.

LG: How'd they find it? Just playing around?

MK: [].

DK: Toying around, there was a, digging around; there was a strawberry patch. He was telling me last night; well then they saw wild strawberries.

MK: Ras-, and raspberries.

DK: Raspberries in the fields there and, and came across this and it was a –

LG: They knew what it was?

DK: I don't think so.

MK: No.

DK: But they found out. That was a –

LG: I can't remember seeing that at the museum, I'm going to check this out.

DK: It's, right now it, if you go to the museum now, it's in the Victorian display from the 1910 display, -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: And it's in one of the display cases.

LG: Wow.

DK: It's a, just a tooth of a Mastodon.

LG: Huh, that's neat. [].

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: So what did they do with it when they found out? They just brought it to the museum? Or –

DK: Yea, they brought, well the Curator lived over in that area of the museum. Right over on Fuller, he still does, the former Curator, he still lives there.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: Probably brought it to him and, and found out. He didn't even; I didn't even ask what they did when they found it.

MK: No, I didn't either.

LG: Wow, neat.

DK: They brought that in.

LG: That's neat.

DK: Well, you know, that, those were all playing fields, you know, for a lot of them. You know, for my brothers and, 'course we all remember sliding in Pine Hill Cemetery during the winters.

LG: Oh yea?

DK: Slide down the hills, 'cause you could slide from the cemetery down to almost to Burgess.

LG: Wow. [].

DK: Down the hills, you couldn't do that now because of head stones there.

LG: Yea.

DK: Well, and the new development -

MK: Right, and then [] made that cemetery a lot bigger, you know-

LG: Right.

MK: From what it was back then.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: Cranes, so used to be a lot of wild raspberry bushes and all that back there. We used to go up there, pull a wagon up there and pick wild raspberries.

LG: Huh.

MK: And in the cemetery there, or was, was not cemetery then, -

MK: Times changed, don't they?

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: All of our –

LG: Well, the city has certainly changed.

MK: Oh yea.

LG: You've seen quite a, quite a bit of that change.

MK: 'Cause this was Paris Town-, yea, you know, this was Paris Township when we came here.

LG: Do you remember all of that []?

MK: Which they had, which they had wrong in the advance, they had Parish, but it's –

LG: Did they really?

MK: [laugh] It's Paris isn't it?

DK: Yea, yea.

MK: Yea.

DK: Paris, yea.

LG: Yea, I didn't see like that.

MK: Paris, Paris [].

DK: If you, you remember when it all became a city, 'cause –

MK: Oh yea.

LG: Oh yea, I'm she would.

DK: And of course she knew, you know Lamberts.

MK: Oh, Pete Lamberts, oh sure.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: Yea.

MK: His wife was Tom's teacher at the Kelloggsville School.

LG: I know Sue.

MK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: []

MK: [] Oh yea, we went to Kelloggsville Church and so did they.
And so at that time –

LG: So what do you remember about the annexation? About the whole '60's, when they tried to get it past, -

DK: When –

LG: They tried to get it past and –

DK: When Grand Rapids would try, would be annexing different parts of Paris Township, and then –

MK: Oh, I don't remember that.

DK: Try to become a city? Or don't you?

MK: I, I don't remember, but I did, I, I know when it all, you know, happened. But –

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: Why, I was so busy with my kids I don't think I paid too much attention to that.

DK: [laugh]

LG: Sure, you had 5 of them [laugh].

MK: Only had 4 then [laugh].

LG: That's enough, [laugh] let me tell you.

DK: Then they had their own little projects that you did, you know, like –

MK: Oh yea, -

DK: Gave the street light at the corner –

MK: Oh yea, the traffic light, you know, put out the petitions to get, ‘cause there was an awful lot of accidents on that corner, you know.

LG: Oh yea.

DK: On 52nd and Eastern.

MK: On Eastern and –

LG: And when did that happen?

MK: Oh, I can’t even remember. It was –

DK: Was it early ‘60’s?

MK: Yea, we were still, you know, living right there. Yea, it had to be in the ‘60’s.

DK: Yea, mid ‘60’s. ‘Cause, -

MK: Yea.

DK: It, well was it, like, was it just a 2-way stop there, and then –

MK: Yea, it was –, yea –

DK: And then you petitioned to get a –

MK: Right, yea, a blinking light, -

DK: A blinking light there, because –

MK: And then had a traffic light.

LG: There must have been a lot of accidents there.

MK: There was. It was very bad corner. And of course as, you know, more and more things come out that way, [] –

DK: Two lane roads and, -

MK: Yea.

DK: You know, that was always pretty, like where, you know, ‘cause always remember, who was that? The old Judges house? That stone house on Eastern, that was tore down. I always liked it, near 44th. That was the day-care center and then Shippys.

LG: Oh, that was set back in there?

DK: Yea.

LG: That was a Blodgett wasn’t it?

DK: Was that Blodgett?

LG: Hmm.

MK: Yea, I think it was, right by 44th, and that Steelcase owns all that now don’t they? []

DK: Yea, well, they sold it. It’s now housing.

MK: Oh.

DK: It’s; it’s all in those woods just south of 44th Street. Used to be, -

MK: I think it was Blodgett.

DK: Big old stone house in there.

MK: Yea.

LG: Oh yea.

DK: You know, you’ll still see the, the entrance way in there, you’ll still see the stone pillars for the gate.

LG: Really?

DK: They go into it.

LG: Well which, which side of? Just south of 44th Street and Eastern?

DK: It's south of 44th, right here where Summercreek is, right here?

MK: Southeast.

LG: I thought that was -

DK: It was all woods.

LG: Woods? Yea, I, I, I reviewed that project when it came through the planning commission, -

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: And walked it, but we never saw anything like that, but that's quite wooded so it's easily missed.

DK: Yea, it's a very wooded, right along Eastern, right along the sidewalk, -

LG: And it's still there?

DK: You'll see, see fieldstone, like pillars. One's not toppled over.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: And the other one's there. And that was the entrance to the gate.

MK: And there still is an old house in there. Isn't there?

DK: That's a further south, towards 48th.

MK: Yea, 48th, yea.

DK: But in just in front of the apartments.

MK: Yea. I think it -

DK: But there used to be a, a stone house back in there, -

LG: Hmm.

DK: A big stone house, and I always liked that house.

MK: Yea, I, can't remember if that was a Blodgett owned that, or –

LG: It's really nice.

MK: But it was, -

LG: Well, then it was a camp for a while isn't it? For -

DK: No, it was a day-care center for –

LG: Out here?

DK: The Y had –

MK: The Y had it, yea; the Y had it, yea.

DK: The Y team had it.

LG: So that's where they, -

MK: Yea.

LG: That's what I was thinking.

MK: The Y, yea, they had that.

DK: Yea.

LG: There was a house back there huh?

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: Don't find a lot of pictures of that.

DK: No.

LG: That's the things we, we just don't have a lot of –

MK: And I don't have any pictures either 'cause I, you know, I, that's when Doug says, you know, you got any pictures? And I said 'no, I don't'.

LG: And Russ's -

LG: And Russ's family, when they, they lived on Daniels, and they had a fire, and so, you know, all their stuff burned. And, -

DK: All their old photographs and different things.

MK: Oh, and we weren't, you know, in to taking a lot of pictures.

DK: That's a luxury item.

LG: Yea.

MK: And I think, I think there still was a picture, I don't know, it was in a window at Home Acres, but when my husband and his three bro-, and his two brothers, they were all in World War II.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: So Russ's folks had 3 sons in the war, and then they had these pictures all in, in the window of store in Home Acres. 'Can't remember which store it was even.

DK: Of all the servicemen, and, and we still have that picture.

MK: Of all the servicemen.

DK: I think you still have that picture.

LG: Hmm?

MK: And so, -

DK: Plus you have, there's a book that Kelloggsville Christian Reformed Church put together a book that have all the servicemen.

LG: Oh.

DK: And all, where they were all stationed at, they put together a book that had all that.

LG: I see.

MK: Yea, that is right, I got that [].

DK: And you have that.

LG: I see.

DK: Which, during World War II for all the members of the church.

LG: Well that's all right, maybe I can make a copy of that or something.

MK: Yea, I should, I'll check that and you can bring it in.

LG: Yea, that's [].

DK: Okay, yup.

MK: And check that out, I didn't think of that. He said he would trigger some things in my mind [laugh]

DK: Huh, yup.

LG: That what 2, having 2 people does, because someone says 'tell me everything you remember about your childhood', -

MK: Yea, yea, right.

LG: And that's very hard to, to recall. I can't remember what I did yesterday, and that's not what I did a few years ago.

MK: [laugh]

DK: [laugh]

LG: So that's, this is all very good stuff.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative], yea, different things.

LG: What we're doing is to, is that we're having hopefully a section on, on Kentwood families that have been here a long time, and so if you're interested in doing that, if you can come up a picture or something of your family, or where you lived, and anything else you can remember about those relatives that came over from the Netherlands. -

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: Well my brother's, I've got a brother that lives down in Washington D.C., he just took a job at the Navy as a Safety Inspector. Another brother is an aircraft mechanic out at the airport here, out at Kent County Airport.

LG: [] Oh is he?

DK: And my sister is the, a recruiter for Spring Arbor College.

LG: Huh.

DK: Down in Spring Arbor. My dad's family, first his brother, his only surviving brother lives up in Howard City. He's retired and his sister lives right there too, right next door, and, and Marjorie lives where Comstock Park?

MK: No, she lives off the East Beltline by 5 Mile Road.

LG: Hmm.

DK: Okay, that's, that's his other sister.

LG: Okay. What's this?

MK: And then of course there is nobody left of Grandpa Karel, of –

DK: No, 'cause of all of those, -

MK: Of my husband's father, -

DK: Yea, of all of, of his brother's, 'cause he was the youngest child. Grandpa was the youngest.

LG: That's your family history that you've been working on?

DK: Yea, this is all of, all the names.

LG: Can I make copies of these?

DK: Yea, you can have those, and actually I printed these off for you.

LG: Great. That would be helpful.

DK: These are –

LG: Got quite a history here.

DK: And those are all of, oop, last page.

LG: And John Karel was your dad.

DK: No, he was my father's uncle.

LG: Okay.

MK: Yea, he was his brother.

DK: He was a brother of my Grandpa.

LG: Now this is good stuff. We can look at this.

MK: Yea, that was, that was a brother of my father-in-law, -

LG: Oh okay.

MK: Of my husband's, -

DK: Then there is -

MK: No, that would be his uncle, my husband's uncle.

DK: Let's see there, oh yea, and this is a, too, now I'm not sure when this happened, but this is an article that my father was in where they discovered a hunter -

LG: Hmm.

DK: Down in 5400 block of Division.

LG: Hmm.

DK: Back when he was 16, so that would have been in -

LG: This area.

DK: 1940?

MK: And I didn't know, we didn't even know that, and then my sister-in-law, my husband's sister, she had some clippings that she had kept of her folks, you know.

LG: Hmm.

MK: And she sent that, -

LG: []

MK: Yea, sent that to, to us. And I thought it was interesting.

LG: Yes.

DK: So not exactly sure when that happened, -

MK: Well -

DK: But right around 1940.

LG: Okay. They saying as the address is 300 52nd Street.

DK: Okay.

MK: That was where my, -

LG: []

MK: Husband lived, I know his folks at that time.

DK: Yea, they all lived right -

LG: Right around there.

MK: Yea, they all, yea, they stayed in that area.

DK: Right, lived there, right, they were all houses right next to each other out there.

LG: That's nice, that's nice though. That's real neat. Well this is great information. Is there anything else you want to talk about as far as what things you remember? Or is it hard to think about them with the tape running [laugh]?

DK: I couldn't think of us too many other things, like even for John and yourself, community events. Oh, what about the union, yourself? Weren't you the first president?

MK: Of what?

DK: Of your union?

MK: No, I wasn't the first president.

DK: Okay.

MK: I was never the president, I was a –

DK: Oh, you were on the first negotiating committee or something.

LG: So, okay.

MK: Yea, yea I worked for the school.

LG: Oh, okay.

MK: For 17 years I worked for Kentwood Schools.

DK: For Kentwood Schools.

LG: Oh, okay. That's great.

DK: In their food service.

LG: So, you were in the know then?

MK: Oh yea, yea, matter of fact, when I, was working for the schools, that's when we, when I was in office for food service organization I was one of them that got the union in.

LG: Oh, okay.

MK: And so, we got it, you know, started.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: And so, -

DK: Not bad for a Republican to bring in a union.

LG: [laugh]

MK: [laugh]

DK: [laugh]

LG: And how'd that work out?

MK: But, yea, I figured it was a very good benefit then.

LG: Yea, [].

DK: I think you, you were paid minimum wage basically at the time.

MK: Right, for the employees you know, yea.

LG: That's a good idea.

MK: Yea.

LG: So you could [].

MK: So now I've been retired for a number of years.

LG: The, the union? Or [].

MK: I've been retired from the school.

DK: Yea.

LG: Oh okay.

MK: And so for, let's see, -

DK: 4? 5? 8 years?

MK: 8, yea, going on 9 years.

LG: Oh, [].

MK: 8 years, yea.

LG: Oh.

DK: That used to be the old Brooks farm right?

MK: Yea, there was, they had it.

LG: Other where the Eastbrook lots are is used to be a horse farm.

MK: That was -

DK: Yea, back by the houses are there, that was a horse farm.

MK: Yea, and it was a guy stringing wire on that corner. And, yea, there's been drastic changes. Too much traffic to suit me.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: [laugh]

LG: Uh huh [affirmative]. Well, -

DK: A lot of traffic.

LG: That goes a long with it.

DK: Yea.

LG: Because we want our big development.

MK: Yea.

LG: Yea, you don't see, you don't see too many horse farms now.

MK: No.

LG: There's still some.

MK: And -

LG: Somebody has a couple, but not too many.

MK: Not really that, you know, around. It's all houses now. There's, the farm is done except, you know, like Spyers on Eastern Avenue, and -

LG: Right.

DK: Down in Gaines Township, they still have their –

LG: Yea.

MK: And that's -

DK: But there was a lot of like Spyers, that's what all that whole area was like.

LG: Hmm, so you were able to get produce pretty easily I take it.

MK: Yup.

LG: [laugh] We used to go for that.

MK: Well, yea, well those, like that truck farm, Kuipers owned that at that time. And, they didn't sell it like they have these markets now.

LG: Right.

MK: They took it and sold it to stores, and they took it to down to them, []-

DK: To the City Market down on Hall Street, you could just [].

MK: Well [] –

LG: Okay, you just go for the buy sell.

MK: Oh, the wholesale thing down, -

DK: Yup.

MK: They'd sell it, their stuff.

LG: You couldn't just go and buy it then from them?

MK: No, no, that was like more or less for stores.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: Yea. And so, -

LG: Did you ever live out that way, seems like your center of activity was really Eastern and over as opposed to out towards the airport, what is now the airport.

MK: Which is now the airport, yea.

DK: And –

LG: Do you remember when the airport was over by Division?

MK: Oh yea, oh yea, because we lived right there on 52nd, and we were right in the runway here, actually they just practically skimmed the top of our house –

LG: Going up.

MK: When they would go landing, you know. You'd see –

DK: You so, you said they'd always curve or bank in coming in right there and –

MK: Oh yea, they went, yea, they went right over –

LG: It's a north-south runway, -

MK: Right, right.

LG: So they probably, and so [] mile away.

DK: [].

MK: Right, right, right over our house. And so –

DK: And of course you probably remember the crossing gates on 44th, when you closed the gates to go on the playing field.

LG: Extended the, extend the runways so they could [].

MK: Oh yea, yea.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative]. See, the Railroad Crossing gates, [].

LG: Yea, all right, well that's, I heard, heard that.

MK: Right, yup.

LG: One of the people I've interviewed had the house that was right on the airport.

MK: Oh.

LG: Their property.

MK: See now my aunt, I had an aunt that lived right on Madison, and they were right by the, now let's see, was it Madison? No, -

DK: Jefferson? Or Madison? Right by the terminal building?

LG: Okay.

MK: Where, no, no that isn't, is -

DK: Who's that?

LG: []?

MK: It was that Aunt Sadie Windermere. Was that; is that Madison that goes this way?

LG: []?

MK: No, Madison goes this way [].

LG: Madison goes north south [].

MK: Division 32nd, and they lived on 32nd []-

DK: They lived on 32nd, which is now Wyoming.

MK: Before you went, you know, is right here.

LG: You lived on the other one.

MK: And yea, and I know they were, they always had plaster falling off their walls because, you know, -

LG: Vibrations.

MK: Oh yea, vibration of the airplanes.

LG: Hmm, so you were glad when they moved the airport out?

MK: Oh yea. Great.

LG: [laugh].

MK: And now we're still on the, the airplanes still go over our house.

LG: [laugh] Now they're higher.

DK: [laugh]

MK: Higher.

LG: Yea.

DK: 'Cause where, where Greenboro is, is actually on the glide path going into the airport, where my mom lives.

LG: I understand, it's going to, as time goes on, it'll get, the noise contours will get closer and closer to the airport so that they'll be totally contained on the airport property. We'll wait and see.

MK: You know that 5 o'clock this morning I heard the airplane, and there's an airplane that comes in at, at either going there or coming out, I'm not sure [laugh] –

DK: Coming in at 5.

MK: Come in at 5 o'clock.

LG: [] [laugh].

DK: Yup. Well you know, and there's been changes just from the airport being out there though. You know, I remember the dump –

LG: Way back here?

DK: The landfill this is, but I remember it as the dump.

MK: Oh yea, we used to take, go there with the car.

DK: All the fires. It was always neat having all the fires and, 'cause they would burn all the trash, -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: And you'd have old rubber tires burning, -

LG: [laugh]

DK: And then all the smoke and -

MK: Yup, oh yea.

DK: You know, they had to basically discontinue that, not only environmental wise, but smoke would go right into the planes.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative]. Wow.

DK: And they couldn't see.

LG: That was pretty recent too.

MK: What?

LG: The city operated it for a couple years.

DK: Yup, the city operated it and then -

LG: Since the '70's.

DK: The County built the landfill, and now you guys have all the problems.

MK: [laugh]

LG: We, we split it, 80, 80 20.

MK: Is that what it is?

DK: 80 20.

LG: We have to pay for 20 percent, the radiation which is; it's still pretty expensive for the city to do.

DK: Yup.

LG: But it's not a good problem now.

DK: And they'll just like, you know the train tracks that ran through, of course they just recently tore those all out, but the old train track that ran from, through –

LG: By the Bowen's?

MK: Right.

LG: You remember the Bowen farm? The Bowen Station?

MK: Yea, Bowen Station.

LG: Do you remember that?

MK: Yea, vaguely, vaguely.

LG: Yea. []

MK: Because [] that then, you know.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: Now did they have passenger trains go through there when you were out here on the train tracks?

MK: Uh huh [affirmative]. Yea.

DK: Did they?

MK: Uh huh [affirmative]. Yup.

DK: But did, -

MK: No, I had –

DK: They didn't have a terminal out here for you to catch a train.

MK: No, no, no.

LG: They had -

MK: That was down on –

LG: It was read that, do you remember Normand's Store? Was that a grocery store at on north, northwest side of 44th and Kalamazoo? That's where they said they had a passenger, a terminal if you will, inside the store where you could go in -

DK: Before the Town and Country, yea -

LG: Yea.

MK: Yea, yea.

DK: Before Town and Country.

LG: Yes, is this Town and Country?

MK: Before my time out here.

LG: Yea, I'm sure it is, that's true.

MK: Yea, yea.

LG: I thought that was more like a general store than anything.

MK: Yea, [] I don't know, don't remember that.

LG: You came here at, -

MK: See I came out, -

LG: After the war, so -

MK: Yea, it was like '47.

LG: Yea.

MK: That's when I come out in this area.

LG: I bet your husband could have told some stories [laugh].

MK: Awe, he probably could have, yup, he probably could of. 'Cause he was, you know, born and raised right there in that area.

DK: They were all within -

LG: Probably all heard all the family stories.

MK: And then Division, yup, -

DK: All within a mile area.

MK: Right.

DK: Yea, 'cause originally like our Grandfather died, looking through the old historical commission back in the early '70's, he was originally scheduled to do interviews.

LG: Oh really?

DK: But he had died in February of '74, -

LG: Isn't that too bad [].

DK: And then before they, then I came across that a few weeks ago.

LG: That's too bad.

DK: Uh -

LG: So they had their, [] there's quite a few people on tape.

MK: And he was in his '80's.

DK: Yea, yea there's people on tapes.

LG: And they have, and they, they had him scheduled to be interviewed and he died.

DK: Yup, right.

LG: That's too bad. And all that knowledge just, and, and so many times -

MK: Yea. And -

LG: I'm sure you wouldn't be offended, so many times the kids just aren't interested in what parent's lives were like.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: Right, now see, and I'm not, wasn't as interested, and now Doug is interested in Genealogy.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: I do a lot of that and –

MK: You know, so I've been, been, that would something I wouldn't even be interested in really, I mean, -

LG: [laugh] Yea, that's –

MK: I mean everybody isn't interested.

DK: And I enjoy history, -

MK: Yea.

DK: 'Cause I, I do volunteer work at the museum, and –

LG: You do? Oh, that's great.

DK: So it's pretty good, I enjoy my history.

MK: I'm learning more from Doug than I do a lot myself I think [laugh].

LG: Yea, it's, it's a really [laugh]. No, I think you, you know, you know more about it than you think you do.

MK: Than you –

LG: Because you can remember even, even for my kids who are quite young, what, what happened 5 years ago is history to them.

MK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: And, you know, and they can grasp you know, that, that last year this is, this was a farm and now it's a shopping center.

MK: Right.

LG: Or what it, what did it used to be like, or what was like, you know what was it like then? And so they can grasp it then, you know. There are so many people out there who've expressed in this book.

MK: Is there?

LG: That's why we're writing it, so –

DK: Great.

LG: It's really going to be neat, and we think it's, we're planning to have it be a hard cover coffee table –

DK: You know that's what, I was talking to Harold Manse this morning and he was saying that, and –

LG: Oh, where do you know Harold from? Just –

DK: I was at a breakfast with him this morning for Dick VanderMolen.

LG: Oh, okay.

DK: So, -

LG: Good.

DK: Got to meet all them, I said 'I'm going to see Lisa later on today'.

LG: [laugh]

MK: [laugh]

LG: My husband writes for the Press, so he's always talking to them, -

DK: Okay.

LG: The candidates –

DK: Yup.

LG: Harold's not going to have much of a problem [laugh].

DK: No.

MK: I already voted.

DK: Huh, absentee is it?

MK: Oh yea, I vote absentee [laugh].

DK: []

LG: That's the way to do it why, that's the way to do it; you don't have to wait in line or anything.

MK: Right.

DK: Well yea, weather –

MK: Well, I didn't start at doing that, well I did that, I was gone to Florida, and I didn't know, you know, for sure if I was going to be on another trip or something, so I thought 'oh, I think I'll do absentee' see. –

LG: That's the way to do it.

MK: You know, 'cause [] over six-

LG: Everybody should have it, see that's []-

MK: Over 65, and I figured well, -

DK: Yup.

LG: Yea.

MK: You know, you don't have to have a reason then [laugh].

LG: There you go, you might as well.

DK: Yea, like [] we never really, I guess, heading towards the airport we never really went out there.

LG: Went out there.

DK: 'Course Aunt Winnie and Uncle Ray had their farm out there.

MK: On East Paris.

DK: On East Paris and 52nd where Steelcase now owns.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: And that actually their barn is still standing, it still has to come down.

LG: Oh really.

DK: The house came down.

LG: Is it really?

DK: Just south of 52nd.

LG: On Steelcase property.

DK: On East Paris, on Steelcase property.

MK: On East Paris, Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: Huh.

DK: There was a little red, there's a red barn there.

MK: [] Yea, now we –

DK: 'Cause I remember swinging from haylofts in their barns, swinging on the big rope from the ceiling-

MK: Oh yea, yup, yes.

DK: From one side of the hayloft to the other side.

LG: That's neat, okay what, what did you, what else did you do for fun as a kid then when you were little?

DK: Get into trouble [laugh].

LG: You couldn't get in too much trouble; you have to get too far to get into trouble.

MK: Played G.I. Joe, [laugh] -

DK: Played G.I. Joe, yea –

MK: Up in the 7th grade [laugh].

DK: Yea, but yea we played army up in the cemetery.

LG: Oh yea, so many places like a kid to go, you know back –

MK: Yea, back then.

DK: Our, our biggest playground actually was the woods in back of Pine Hill Cemetery, and playing in the Cemetery in the woods in back of the cemetery.

LG: I can see those boys out there playing in the cemetery scaring each other to death probably [] [laugh].

DK: Yup, because we, we'd have forts up there, we had pits that were dug in the forts out there, with [] and, and I think there's probably still some up there.

MK: [laugh].

LG: Now did you guys swim in some of the ponds around? Or –

DK: No, we never went swimming in any of the creeks.

LG: No? You never jumped over the lady's fence across the street?

MR: Oh no, no.

DK: No, no I wouldn't, -

LG: Dogs would have gotten you.

DK: No, 'cause that, that time I was 6, and, and I got a feeling she would probably shoot you if you jumped the fence.

MK: And even the older –

LG: Sounds like a [].

MK: Yea, and then the old, older boys Tom or, yea, Tom and Steve, -

DK: They wouldn't go.

MK: They never went in any of those either, you know, they were all spring fed. You didn't know, you know, -

LG: [].

DK: What was there and -

MK: Right.

DK: And some of those things, you know, they [] -

MK: And I was too protective of them.

DK: [laugh].

MK: You know, actually, they played right, we didn't have neighbor kids then, -

LG: Right []

MK: On 52nd there you know, and so they've played together and they played with kids from truck farms all, -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: So they were more or less -

LG: So right there.

MK: There, right there on that farm or else by our house, you know.

LG: Sounds like a place where they could play.

MK: But now they didn't have bikes, they didn't go like kids do today, you know, they were right there at home all the time, you know.

DK: They didn't have a bicycle.

LG: Today you have to drive them everywhere.

MK: Right, right.

LG: [laugh].

MK: Yea, 'cause we, yea, 'cause we moved there in June. My daughter got married the 14th of June, '68, and we moved that next week into that house.

DK: June 23rd.

LG: [laugh] Now when you, when you, when D & W bought the land, or when Spartan foods bought the land, -

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: They bought your house then?

MK: Right, right.

LG: And then they moved it somewhere else and probably sold it?

MK: But now for a couple years it stayed there.

LG: Oh okay.

MK: Until they, you know, built.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: 'Cause they didn't build right away.

LG: Oh okay.

MK: They didn't build that first year or anything. It was, I think it was about 2 years –

LG: '69 or '70 when they first opened the D & W there.

MK: Yup, yea.

LG: Hmm.

MK: And then they moved some along and some they torn them down, and then some of the other, 'cause some of them were like garage houses, you know.

DK: And then they really have to tear –

LG: Yea, [].

MK: And that pizza place, that –

DK: [] That was a house.

MK: That was a house.

LG: Oh really?

MK: Yea, and it was like, you know, like a garage house.

LG: Oh, still not very nice [laugh].

DK: No it's not.

MK: And then that doctor's office, at it's right there on 52nd Street, that was somebody's house too. That was not built, like 4 doctors are there.

DK: It was a doctor's.

LG: Further on down?

MK: Yes.

DK: And then right across from the Railroad.

LG: On []?

MK: At down near the railroad.

LG: Okay.

MK: Yea, and that was –

DK: And there's still the foundation for Veenstra's house there. You can still see the foundation of their house, -

LG: Hmm.

DK: So it shows up to the grass, if you walk along the sidewalk.

MK: Yea, it was not Veenstra's, they had a basement.

DK: And they, a who?

MK: That was the house next to them I think.

DK: In the house next door?

MK: Yea, Sharpe's.

DK: Sharpe's?

MK: Yea. See and then they, then this, -

LG: You're starting to get some families up there now.

MK: I think there was 3, I think, let's see, our house and Johnson's house and Veenstra's house, 3 houses that were moved and the rest of them were torn down or else -

DK: Yea, 'cause Veen-, Veenstra's house is the one that's still there on '48th.

MK: Yea.

DK: That, they're the ones that still -

MK: And they're -

DK: It's a beauty salon right next to 7-11.

MK: 7-11.

LG: Hmm.

DK: That house used to be this Veenstra's family that we're talking about on 52nd.

LG: And your house was moved twice, and it still exists?

MK: Right.

DK: Yea, that's over on that Harper, Harp Street?

LG: Oh, out in the, that new section?

MK: In Home Acres.

LG: Oh okay, I see, in that area.

MK: Home Acres area.

DK: Yea, just, just off of Montebello.

LG: Okay.

DK: Right there there's a little street, dead end street, and it's, and our house is right there.

MK: School on there too right here see?

DK: Yea, school's right there.

LG: Does it look about the same?

MK: I don't know, I [].

DK: I go back there by the [], pretty much, you know, the exterior's the same but they've added on of course, to the house.

MK: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: 'Cause it wasn't a large house I don't think.

MK: No, it's, no [] –

LG: People's neighbors were different then.

MK: It was like Cape Cod, oh we had 2 bedrooms down, and then upstairs it was like a big long hallway and then a bedroom. The hallway was big enough to put a twin bed in.

LG: Oh okay.

MK: And then an attic on each side. It was like, you know.

LG: Yea, Cape Cod. It was a pretty nice house.

MK: It was nice.

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: In it's day.

DK: It was well built.

LG: Yea, must have if they moved twice.

MK: Yea.

LG: How did you feel about having all the D & W go in and seeing all this growth?

MK: Well, we weren't, at first we weren't too enthused about it, but the more they kept pressuring us to sell to them, you know, -

LG: Everybody sells, then there you are in the middle of a parking lot I guess -

MK: The right, and yea, yea, well, you know, you think of all that asphalt all around you, you know, and you didn't want that, so actually we and another family were the last two to sign off.

DK: So you get the best price.

MK: Yea we did, we did actually.

LG: Yea [laugh].

DK: Before you ask.

LG: I wasn't gonna ask, good idea.

MK: You know, and so -

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: And that's like 20 -

LG: And the driveway is where your driveway was.

MK: Right, and then right, that's right where our house was right there.

DK: Yup.

LG: A lot of people are going through your driveway now.

MK: Yup.

DK: Lots of people.

MK: [] Isn't that something?

LG: Yea, it's, it's hard to believe, you know,

MK: And that was the –

LG: If you just have pictures of stuff like that 'cause people just wouldn't believe where there used to be something other than D & W.

MK: Yea, Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: Uh huh [affirmative]. Yea, 'cause like when that D & W was first built, it was half the size it is now.

LG: Oh really? They've expanded a couple times?

DK: Uh huh [affirmative]. They've expanded twice.

LG: It's not a very big store either.

DK: They've expanded twice I believe on that store.

LG: That's not all that big, in, in today's –

DK: Market. When you'll see like the new Family Fare in Cutlerville go up, which is huge.

LG: I live, I live by where the Meijers is going to be, right East Beltline and Knapp.

DK: Oh yea.

MK: Didn't I see that on T.V. last night? All day yea, and then -

LG: Oh, did they have it on T.V. last night?

MK: Yea, -

LG: Oh, huh.

MK: Had, I think it was on the 6:00 news that they had like a, you know, -

LG: It's going to be pretty.

MK: Picture of the Meijers, quite a lot of different stores there too aren't they -

LG: Yea, there's a little shopping mall, -

MK: Besides like a mall, a mall?

LG: It's, it's a, -

DK: It's up near 5 Mile then? Or 4 -

LG: It's Knapp and Beltline.

DK: Knapp, okay.

LG: So yea.

DK: Well great.

MK: I always tell people that aren't really for it-

LG: Yea, -

MK: I was thinking about a drive-in restaurant, -

LG: Yea, they don't want a drive-in restaurant.

MK: I said why they don't want a drive-in restaurant now.

LG: They, they've got one planned right there at McDonalds, and there's people that live come behind it, where, 'cause people will want to get on the Beltline and -

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: Go the other way and turn around and do all that. They're going to come right down their street and it's going to double the traffic there, and it's purely residential so they're quite upset about it. And not only that, the street is very poor shape.

MK: Oh.

LG: So, they're a little upset about that.

MK: This is right by Knapp and East Beltline where they want to do this huh?

LG: Yup, yup.

MK: Because –

LG: It's all we need is another Meijers 'cause they're certainly [] for this town [laugh].

DK: That's right.

MK: My friend, my friend, they owned, her, her husband's family owned all the area by 68th and Broadmoor.

LG: Oh, okay.

MK: And Meijers owns that one whole corner.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: 68th.

LG: It's their corporate offices I thought.

MK: They haven't done nothing. They've got all the tile work in, -

LG: I think they've got some problems getting utilities out there.

DK: Probably.

MK: And her son, yea, her son lives right on Kraft, and that butts up right next to where his, 'cause he has a piece of his Grandfather's property, you know, -

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

MK: That he built his house on.

LG: Yea.

DK: And those are, and actually that's, it's her brother-in-law that owns the property there on Patterson and 28th?

LG: And the landfill's a good place for them too.

DK: Yea, 3 years ago I lived over near at the Hidden Lakes –

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: Apartments, -

LG: Yea.

DK: And I'd watch all the deer out of the apartments, -

MK: []

DK: You know, towards looking towards Schaffer there, and wake up, every morning you'd see a half a dozen deer out there.

LG: Uh huh [affirmative].

DK: You know, which is, --

LG: That's so neat, yea.

DK: You don't expect to see that in the city.

MK: Like in the city [laugh].

LG: No, you don't, you don't.

DK: Yup.

LG: Well that's, things have changed, -

DK: Yea, oh –

LG: In fact there'll still be, I think the city's really into preservation now, of open spaces when they can do, so –

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: Just, you can't always get away with doing that, -

DK That's right.

LG: The library can't do it because we [] space so, -

MK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: It's a challenge to us. But, we'll get the, get the history down first, then worry about the [], -

DK: There we go.

MK: Yea.

LG: We're working on it for a long time, but, I think in a year, in a year I think is what we told her, she needs to be done with the book, and then we have to get them in to publish it, so -

DK: Uh huh [affirmative].

LG: It might be a while, so we'll have time to work on this. And we're not real sure how we're going to do this, the family part of the,

[Tape Ends]

