

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Smoky Hollow

Personal Experience

O H 1382

RUDY DONOFRIO

Interviewed

by

Joseph Mancini

on

November 8, 1990

RUDY DONOFRIO

Rudy Donofrio was born on December 7, 1926 in Youngstown and lived on Court Street in the Smokey Hollow. He was the son of Antonio and Josephine Donofrio. His family moved to Emerald Street six months after he was born and he lived there for twenty-seven years. He attended Madison Elementary School, Hayes Junior High and Rayen High School, respectively. He worked several jobs while in the Hollow. His main job was selling newspapers at different locations along Market Street. He was one of five children who lived at the Emerald Street residence.

His father worked most of his life at Truscon Steel, a division of Republic Steel. His mother worked raising the children. Rudy joined the Army in 1945, towards the end of the war, and was sent to Korea. He remembers being very nervous about going overseas because the war in Europe had already ended and they were being sent to the Pacific. He served for one year and was discharged in December of 1946. After the war, he worked building houses and on construction with his brother. He married Wilhemine on November 6, 1954. They moved out of Smokey Hollow in January of 1955.

They had three children, Nancy Testa (31), Marianne (28), and Jeffrey (25). He now resides in a house that he built in Boardman, Ohio. He is employed by Metropolitan Insurance and has worked there from 1964 to the present. He is a Senior Account Executive with the company. Mr. Donofrio has attributed much of his successes with the values and work ethic that he attained from his parents and his life in the Smokey Hollow. Rudy is a member of St. Charles Church in Boardman and enjoys golf and watching all sports.

M This is an interview with Rudy Donofrio for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Smokey Hollow, by Joseph Mancini, at 462 InGram Drive, Boardman, Ohio, on November 8, 1990, at 8 00 p m

Can you tell me where you were born and some of the schools that you attended?

D I was born on Court Street and when I was about six months old, my parents moved to Emerald Street in the Smokey Hollow, which is about four or five blocks north of Court Street I lived there on Emerald Street until I was twenty-seven years old Then I got married and moved out to the St Christine's area

Where I attended grade school was at Madison Elementary School, then from the eighth grade I went to Hayes Junior High, which is on the North side, about three miles from where I lived, and then from the ninth grade through the twelfth I went to Rayen High School

M Can you tell me why your parents moved?

D When they lived on Court Street, I think that they were renting, and then he bought the house on Emerald Street

M Okay Did you walk to all of these schools?

D We walked to every school We never did drive We really did not even know what it was like to drive to school This is when we were in junior high or in high school, that occasionally a parent would ride us to school But one thing that I want to point out to you is that, no matter how bad the weather was, we always walked There was no such thing as the school being closed or staying home because of the weather It is amazing I never experienced staying home from school because of the weather being so bad

M Did they ever shut down the schools?

D No We all went to school I do not ever recall the school being shut down, but in those days if they did shut down the school, we would not have found out until we arrived at school because there was no communication like today In fact, when I was going to grade school we did not even have a radio

M Oh, really?

D We did not even have an ice box, well I would say a refrigerator or electric ice box We had an ice box that would be a wooden one and you buy ice and put the ice in it to keep it cool Now how long it would last, I do not think that it would last that long

- M Did the iceman come down to the Hollow?
- D Oh, yes The iceman would go by and he would be in a horse and buggy and he carried these chunks of ice to everybody The homes would have carts that would be about eight to tenth inches in width and size and they would have like twenty-five or fifty pounds and the way it was set up was if it read twenty-five pounds of the top part that is what they bring in He did not have to come and knock on the door If someone wanted fifty pounds, all you did was just turn the cart around to where it said fifty pounds and he would bring in the fifty pounds. That is the way that it was.
- M So, they never had to come to the house to ask you what size?
- D They did not have to knock on the door, no. You would just be going down the street and then if you do not see the card on the window, he knows that you did not want any ice at all.
- M I never knew that That is interesting
- D In those days that is the way that it was Just like all of your produce was all sold that way, but they used to knock on your door The farmers used to go ahead and knock on your door and see if you would want to buy what produce they had, the fresh produce
- M Did they used to come out in carts?
- D They did They would go with a big truck and then one would be on each side of the street and they would knock on your door and see if you would want any produce
- M I wish that they would do that now What was the time period that you lived down in the Hollow? What years?
- D From 1926 until January of 1955, when I moved out. That was my time period there
- M Did your father work when you lived down there?
- D Yes, my dad worked His last vocation was working at the Truscon Steel, which was a subsidiary of Republic Steel and he walked to work everyday
- M Oh, really?
- D Yes It was on the East side there In fact, today, that is Ross Industrial Park where the Avanti cars are That is where my dad worked

- M Okay He used to walk all the way over there?
- D He used to walk there
- M What type of job did he do when he was there?
- D When he was there he made these steel windows, steel sash
- M Okay
- D During the war, at that time, everything was converted into defense, all manufacturers and he used to make tracks for Army tanks.
- M Did he work anywhere else besides Truscon?
- D No, not that I know of All of my time, that is where he worked Of what little memory and reflection that I have of the Depression, which was on the tail end of the Depression, my dad used to go and leave the house, my mother would make him a lunch, and at that time when she made a lunch she did not even have wax paper and we didn't even have a newspaper. We used to get the newspaper from our next door neighbor My mother would wrap the lunch just in the plain newspaper I always thought that my dad had a regular job but what he did was he would grab the lunch and try to get a job for a day Here I thought that he had a regular job at that time I never remember my dad staying home He did not have a job I realized this later, that he did not have a job but he was not home He was out trying to find work that way
- M Wow
- D I guess he would go up in a better neighborhood and knock on the door and work for them, something like that
- M Did you work while you lived down there?
- D Well, as far as work when we were growing up we all worked, all of the children. We were in a type of work that We all delivered newspapers and had paper routes My two brothers and I had paper routes In the evenings we used to sell It used to be the papers like the Cleveland Plain Dealer was a night paper, Pittsburgh Post, and they used to come in to a news agency here and we used to go and we used to get the paper at 8 00 or 9 00 p m in the evening here My two brothers and I used to go and sell the papers in the evening
- M Oh, really?
- D Yes In fact, I can recall we used to go on Market Street there was a fellow there

that was the manager, and he would take us across the Market Street Bridge My brother would go on one side and I would go on other side and we would hit every tavern going up just to sell the newspaper, until we came to Indianola Road

M Wow

D Not the Indianola Avenue

M Okay

D The outskirts of Youngstown, which at that time was not very developed beyond that

M Midlothian or Boardman

D They were there, but it was very sparse There were no taverns or anything out that way All of the kids used to work on Saturdays around the neighborhood because everybody had coal furnaces and we used to go ahead and empty the ashes out of a coal furnace We used to dump it and take it and wheel it down to the dump On Sundays we sold papers I sold papers in front of St Serial Mathodius Church every Sunday

M Oh, really?

D Yes

M You mentioned before about a club that was the paperboy's club, or there was a club that you belonged to?

D No, it was a Newsboys Club When we were kids, one of our activities that we looked forward to is that I guess that this was through an agency like Goodwill you would call it today It was a Newsboys Club and, in fact, it was in a building on Lincoln Avenue right behind Youngstown State University Youngstown State University had just the one main building and that was Youngstown University at that time.

M This building there had a small gym there and it had it a large shower room where they had about four showers in there so that the boys could shower We played basketball, and we had rooms there where we could do other activities like ping-pong It only costed \$.5 a month and we used to look forward to it In fact, I think that if I would have to say what the main ingredient that gave us the closeness from the Hollow where we built up a rapport of the kids that we met from the other streets, that was it Because you were confined to your own street At this here Newsboys club, all of the other kids from the Hollow there, we

went there and that is how we became good friends and go to know each other real, real well I think that that is where that closeness came from

M Did you have to deliver newspapers to belong down there or was it just anybody?

D No, no, no you just joined It was an agency and, in fact, you did not even have to be from the Hollow It was just that it was so convenient from the Hollow.

M. I see.

D Youngstown State University was right next door to the Hollow and it was just so convenient But the director of it was Mike Lariccia, and he was from the Hollow. He grew up down the Hollow That probably had some influence on it too But you know how you could have things where kids belong to it and they are four or five years older in age and it just filters down to the other children But we met kids from all of the other streets in the Hollow there and it was good for us It was on Saturday evenings and there was always movies there and you could bring your parents there at that time, if they wanted to come and see it. There were silent movies

M. Oh really?

D It was a big thing for us Also, during the different seasons, they had there baseball tournaments and then they had tag football, because we did not have the equipment to play tackle football Then they had the basketball in the gym because of the court

Another thing that we really enjoyed because it was something that we very seldom did because people could not afford it was, they allowed the kids at the YMCA, allowed the boys from this Newsboys Club to go swimming twice a week from 5 00 to 6 00 or from 6 00 to 7 00 I cannot remember the times but I do remember the days it was always like a Tuesday or a Thursday That stuck to me, you know We used to line up over there and we used to have all of our clothes off and then we would all be behind the gate and then you opened the gate

M I can see this in my head Just a bunch of kids

D Like wild Indians into that water That was part of it It was all because of the Goodwill and that was good for the kids and we got to know children from the other streets I myself, think that that is one of the main reasons that there was closeness in the Hollow

M Because of the kids?

D We were kids and we got to know kids from other streets

M You mentioned that you had a brother. What was the make up of your family? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

D There was five children in our family. We had six children, but the oldest one died when it was a child so we never knew. But I have two sisters and two brothers. The oldest of the family is a girl and the youngest is a girl. The three boys were in between. I was the second from the youngest.

M Do all of your brothers and sisters graduate from Rayen or did some go to East High?

D No. I am the only one that has a high school degree.

M Oh, really?

D Yes. See, in those days, they went to work right away.

M Really?

D My oldest brother went to Detroit. He went to work at the Ford Motor Company at age seventeen.

M. He never graduated from high school?

D Never graduated. My oldest sister is the same thing. She went to work when she was probably sixteen. She went to work at the grocery store to help the family.

M Which store was that?

D It was Ciarnello's Food Market. It was on the corner of Court Street and Walnut Street.

M She went to work even before she got out of high school?

D Yes.

M Do you have any younger brothers or sisters?

D I have one younger sister.

M Did she graduate?

D She did not graduate either. She went to work too, but I was the only one that graduated from high school and got a degree.

M Why do you think that that was?

D Well, I got my degree I went to the Army I was drafted out of high school I got my degree when I came back

M Oh, I see

D That is another thing See, the war started and everybody went into the Army I can remember when my two brothers went to the Army They were in the Army. I cannot remember if they were in the service before the war broke but if they were not in before the war, they were there right after the war because I was fifteen when the war broke out Pearl Harbor day was on my fifteenth birthday

M You talk about the kids, can you tell me some of the games that you guys played when you were younger?

D Well, size of the games that we played in the Newsboys Club, but the games that we made up in the street we used to play buck-buck I do not know if you ever played that game?

M No

D We played mud-gutter We played release We played hockey with the can and we used to use milk cans and that was a big thing then A lot of stuff used to come in cans because of them not being perishable and the milk cans we would call them because it was the milk that was in cans that it was just like regular cream It was real, real thick and you could not drink it. It was just good for mixing with your coffee and mixed with other stuff Those were the cans that we played hockey with We just got broomsticks of something like that and we had like five guys on the side and we would play between two telephone poles right on the street. There was not that much traffic because there were no cars We never had a car My dad never had a car. I never remember having a car The game was that one team was going North and the other team is going South between the poles and the team that gets the can over the one pole, they are going towards, that is how you get the point. The thing is, when you think of it now that can after it being hit so many times, you know how crunchy it gets with those sharp edges Those cans in those days, the only way that put a dent in that can is you have to pound it with your foot Well, that is how strong they were

M Oh, really?

D That is how strong that they were made I can remember the cans and even up to after I was married, cans that would come from beer, I could not do that There were a few fellows that I knew could do that because they were strong

M Did you play a lot at Harrison Field?

D Yes, we played at Harrison Field That was the playground That was strictly the summer. There was everything that you could do there. There was baseball tournaments there They used to have horseshoe tournaments We even had "washer" tournaments All different types of games that we played there. There were other things there, too We used to play baseball right out in the street

M Oh, really?

D If you hit the ball in the yards it was an automatic out Do you get my point?

M Yes

D You had to try to keep the ball within the street We used to have another game that we used to play and we used to get newspaper and wrap it up real tight and either wrap it around the string or a rubber band Rubber bands were not easy to get in those days, so we used string and they used to be like little "sockies" and we used to play baseball, hitting it with your hand

M Oh, really?

D A fellow pitched and you hit it with your hand and you run down the bases

M Simple things

D Another thing that we used to do is boxing at the Newsboys Club

M Oh, really?

D Yes They had little sessions where they had gloves and a few fellows could box They tried to get the same height and weight for boxing

M Your house in the Smokey Hollow was it considered to be in the middle, or the North side?

D The street that I lived on, Emerald Street, was from the west part of the street and it ran into Walnut Street where the wall is at, if you are familiar with that wall Then it ran East down to Andrew's Avenue When I was very young Andrew's Avenue was not what it is right now It was a dirt road it was not even a street

M Oh, really?

D All of it was dirt All that went through there was railroad tracks

- M Wow
- D Street car tracks There was a street car that went from downtown all the way to Hubbard People from Hubbard used to come to Youngstown and that is why, because it was dirt Because of the way that the tracks were and being there, cars could not go through there It was just walking.
- M What would you consider the boundaries of Smokey Hollow? North, East, South, or West?
- D The boundaries would be, from the North it would be Scott Street, South would be Wood Street, the last street before the hill where you go downtown
- M I think that that is where Via Mount Carmel is now? Is that Summit Street?
- D Right
- M Would that be included?
- D No Summit Street is before Wood Street
- M Oh, okay
- D But you would almost say Summit Street because Summit Street was residential Wood Street and the next street had hardly any homes at all It was more commercial There were few business places there
- M Okay
- D But we say that that is the Hollow because of the hill there There was the top of the hill there on the south and as you go north, the top of the hill would be Scott Street. That would be a boundary Incidentally, that was only six blocks
- M That is it?
- D That is it In fact I will give you the streets You have Scott Street, Oak Park, Kirkland, Emerald Street, Carleton Street After Carleton Street you have Adams Street, Court Street, Rayen Avenue, Summit Street, and then you have Wood Street
- M What about east and west?
- D East and west it was almost like one large block that would go from Walnut Street, where the wall is at, down to Andrew's Avenue because anything east of Andrew's Avenue it was Crab Creek You had the railroad tracks and then you

went up the hill, which is the east side, which is Albert Street

M Was there anything around Andrew's Avenue besides the tracks? Like Crab Creek? Any business?

D. No, there were a few houses on that street facing west and just a few homes there In fact, one of the Pignhese's lived there Do you know the Pignhese's?

M Dr Pignhese, yes

D The Doctor, he was the superintendent of the schools The reason I say Doctor is because I thought that he had a doctorate degree in education

M He does have a Ph D.

D. He grew up down there But I did not know if I knew him as well. There were a lot of Pignhese's

M A big family You talked a little bit about the stores Did your family or your mother did she shop mainly in the Hollow at the stores in the Hollow?

D Yes, that is where they did most of their shopping

M Oh, really, what stores?

D. Well, she used to go to Tom Ciarnello's store because he was what you would call a "Piason " That is where she went to store

M Were there a lot of stores?

D Oh, yes It seemed like there was a store on every corner In fact in that short area I can give you right now there was Ciarnello's store, there was Tocchi's grocery store, Nazarene's There was a store down on Fellows Street, not there but right across from St Serial's Church, Lebate

M I think that there was one called Lebate's

D I cannot remember but it was a Jewish family that owned it. That is about five right now Conti had a store

M Dom Conti?

D Dom Conti's dad

M Okay

- D: His parents had a grocery store down there. But then that changed and somebody else took over. That is about it. As small as it was, people used to walk to the store. Every once in awhile my mother would go into town.
- M: Oh, did she?
- D: Yes, because you could walk to town and it was not that far.
- M: Did the grocery store usually carry all of the things needed? Basic necessities?
- D: Well, they are only going to carry the stock that moves. So, it was the stuff that you needed everyday. As far as bread is concerned, they had bread there, but most of the families made bread.
- M: Oh, really?
- D: Oh, yes. My mother made bread every week.
- M: No kidding.
- D: There were a lot of families there that had outside ovens.
- M: Outside?
- D: Yes, they had ovens outside.
- M: For baking?
- D: They had a lot of ovens and they baked outside. Another big store that was there is that Frankie DiGiacomos' dad's place. It was an Italian store that specialized in Italian foods, but he had it in his garage.
- M: Oh, really?
- D: It was on Summit Avenue but it was real big. When you walked into that store it was like walking into an Italian store when you smell all of the Greek olives, cheese, and priscuto. I am pretty sure that his dad's name was Sam DiGiacomo. It was a big speciality Italian store.
- M: Can you describe what your house looked like, physically?
- D: Well, the houses, they were all small, like thirty foot lots. The houses were just one room after the other. The only bathroom that we had was that it was in the cellar. We had a commode and we had a shower there, but we did not have a tub. That was what the majority of homes of. Some people had bathrooms and

added on. When I came out of the service I got into construction and my older brother became carpenters and we added a bathroom on the first floor for my mom and dad.

M Oh, really?

D Yes.

M Was your house typical of all the other houses?

D Right. They were basically the same, with a few exceptions. The exceptions, when I seem to think about it, was the houses that were on the corner because being a corner, they had two sides that they could work with and the house would be just a little bit different. It seemed to be a little bit bigger and the design would be a little bit different. But these narrow houses, the only way that you could put them was room after room.

M Yes.

D I do not think that our room was fourteen feet wide. That is what the house was, and you had a driveway. That was it.

M What was it like having seven people in that house?

D Well, with children there was seven of us then my mom and dad. Every once in awhile we had a border that came in from Italy.

M Oh really?

D We would help them out. Now, of course, you got used to it. You just did not give it any thought.

M Were most of the people that were living down there living like that? A lot of people in one house like that? Most people had the typical four room. Was there seven, five, or ten people living in one place?

D Oh, yes. Some families were even larger. See we did not have a living room. Where the front room was that usually was supposed to be the living room. That was my mom and dad's bedroom. Then the next room was a fairly good size, which would be like a dining room, but we used that as our combined dining room and living room. When we had big meals we used that room for our big meals. Then there was a kitchen behind that, those two rooms, and that was added on later to the house, just before my dad bought the house.

M Oh, I see.

D Then it was two bedrooms upstairs

M Somebody told me that if you had a typical Smokey Hollow house and you wanted to add on you could do so, and then if you went to sell the house they still sold it as a four rooms house because there weren't any zoning laws, or building codes Is that true?

D Well, that I do not know.

M Somebody told me that somebody had come down to buy their house and it said a four rooms house but there was eight rooms that they had built on themselves They just listed it as a four room house because there were not any laws that said you could not build, or proximities

D Well, sure At that time they did not have the codes like they do now See, today anytime that you have to do something you have to get a building permit The reason for building permits is for many reasons But the main reason it because of the restrictions and to make sure that you follow the rules and make sure that it is not hazardous and it is in with the codes and not infringing on someone else's property and safety factors Another reason is that tax value When you add on, they increase the value of your home so that has to increase your tax structure

M That was interesting Somebody told me that they went to buy this house and it said four rooms but there was really eight rooms

D The homes were all taken care of Our house, you could eat off of the kitchen floor, it was so clean Our kitchen had ceramic tile on it It was white little block tiles It was so clean I do not know how often my mother would wash it. And like I said it seemed like we were always washing walls because everybody had coal furnaces and because of bills and the trains -- the tracks were not too far from us -- it got really dirty

M Dusty?

D Yes, dirty Every holiday we were washing We washed for Christmas We washed for Easter

M What was it like having a coal furnace? Was it warm?

D Well, it is really warm when you have a coal furnace The thing is like when you put the coal in the evening and you go to sleep It did not burn real fast but till by morning it was down

M Cold?

- D In the wintertime every morning when we got up it was really cold. It was hard to get up in the morning, I tell you, because it was cold. You did not want to get out of that bed. We did not have carpeting like we have today. You were walking on wooden floors or you had linoleum on the floors.
- M That is cold.
- D Right. But every morning those windows would have ice on them, frost. We could write our names on it. If we wanted to see outside we would have to scrape it with our nails and scrape the ice off.
- M Wow.
- D. That is the way that it was.
- M That does not sound inviting at all.
- D See, the thing is, when you grow up with it you have nothing to compare it with. It is just like when you have it better then you go back to that it would hard to accept. Do you follow me?
- M Yes, I see.
- D But you could easily accept this that is all you had and you do not know any other difference. But when you can know and feel the difference, then it is hard to accept later on.
- M Did you have a garden when you lived down there?
- D A garden?
- M Yes.
- D My mom and dad always had a garden. Always. They worked that garden and my parents seemed like they always worked. It seemed to the point that there was always work.
- M Did everyone who lived down there have gardens mostly?
- D It seemed like everybody had gardens. They also not only had gardens in their own home but in any empty lot there was a garden.
- M Oh really?
- D If there happened to be an empty lot and you know sometimes there was no

house built on it that empty lot would have a garden I remember my dad, he had a garden towards Madison, where Andrew's Avenue was dirt, and it was not developed at all We had a garden down there by the creek and just when I think of it now, I feel so bad for my mom and dad because they used to break their necks over there just to have a garden People would go by there and they would help themselves because there was nobody there It was out in the open there

M Was this later on or was this early? I mean, did people do that when they first had that garden over there? Did people come over there and take that stuff?

D Well, you know people would go by and they figured that they needed some tomatoes or some corn and my parents grew everything

M Oh, really?

D They grew everything that you could think of

M Did they always eat what they grew or did they sell it?

D Oh definitely We never sold it It was just for home use Every beginning of fall my dad used to make wine

M Oh, really?

D It seemed like all of the Italian families down in the Smokey Hollow made wine

M Did anybody ever sell it?

D There were some people that were selling it

M Oh, really?

D Yes, there were some people that would sell the wine but my dad used his for his own consumption and for the guests

M Do you make wine now?

D No You do not make it now because it is so convenient to buy it and it does not spoil

M Yes

D Because when you make wine there is a lot of work involved and then it can turn bad on you, into vinegar

M Yes

D It is a lot of work but we used to look forward to helping my dad I cannot remember the year but not too long after I got married we built a new home in Austintown and we had a little wine cellar there also.

M Oh, really?

D We used to go there, my two brothers and I, and help to make wine every fall

M Oh, really?

D Yes, it was like a get together, like a reunion. We would all be there, my sisters and all with our families and little kids running around and my mom would have a meal for us. She would make pizza's and things like that It was a good time and it was nice It kept the family close We made that wine until my dad died

M I know several people that lived down the Hollow that I have interviewed and they still make wine because they had made it down there and it is just something that they have gotten used to every fall They are just used to pressing the grapes for wine and they may not make as much as they used to, but they still make some just to make it because they have always done it

D Just like to this day my oldest brother's son makes wine

M Oh really?

D Yes He did not make it this year I just asked him, we were at a wake and he was there and I said, "Jimmy, did you make wine this year?" He said, "No " He was on a project with one of DeBartolo's I forgot what he told me but they were involved in something that DeBartolo was going to go in and take it over or something like that It had to do with a shopping mall in some established place, but I forgot where he told me where it was He said, " I was so involved with that for six weeks, that I did not have time " He makes the wine every year around fall He used to come as a little kid He would be playing while we were making wine

M Oh, really?

D He learned and he still makes it now

M Wow

D He could buy it cheaper than make it

- M The grapes
- D Right, the grapes, the barrels, and the equipment that you need to make the wine
- M It is expensive
- D It is a better wine than the bought wine, unless you buy the most expensive wine, but I am talking about drinking the wine that I buy and my brothers buy, it is a lot better, the home-made wine
- M I hear that homemade wine is the closest kind of wine to your own blood sugar level. Like when you buy wine they add sugar to it and it does not mix right, but homemade wine is the wine that you should drink because it is the closest to your own blood level. That is why it tastes so good.
- D My dad used to watch it and my older brother at that time see because he was the oldest my father used to give him the instructions and this and that and he was that way with my brother until he died. Another words he looked up to my brother because he was the oldest he was supposed to be like the leader or something. He was always there.
- M Did you ever take on borders at that house?
- D Yes
- M You did?
- D That was when I was very, very little
- M. Did you ever have any relatives come and live with you?
- D That is what it was. My relative came over and when he first came to this country, they lived with us until they got a job and then when they would get a job then they would leave. One that I can think of, he got his job in Detroit.
- M So, he lived with you, got a job, and then moved out?
- D Yes. They needed the help because, financially, they did not have it number one, and number two is because they would be lost. This way they were around somebody that could advise them and answer all of their questions.
- M Did all of your relatives live in proximity of you?
- D A lot of them. On just the short street that I lived on my mother had three sisters.

living on the same street

M Three sisters living on the same street?

D That would be four sisters living on the same street My mother had three sisters and three sisters lived on the same street and my mother would be the fourth There would be four sisters that would live on the same street

M Wow So, you grew up with all of your cousins?

D Right If we used to go visit a cousin it was nothing for us to walk right in We used to say -- I do not know if you understand what aunt means in Italian but we would say, "Zia " We used to open to door and we would say, "Zia " They sort of recognized your voice

M Did you get fed all of the time?

D We used to play out in the street and sometimes we would have to go to the bathrooms and would not run home We would go to their house and walk in and say, "Zia, I am going to use the bathroom " She would say, "Okay, go ahead "

M No kidding You just do not see that anymore That is just so amazing

D. No In fact, to tell you the truth, the homes were not even locked We used to go in and out Of course, we went to the Army and the war started

M You were in World War II?

D Yes, I went to the Army during the war Well, I was in the Army in April of 1945 The war with Germany was over in June Then the war with Japan in that same year was over in August So, I was just in basic training when both wars, which I was really happy, but just during the war, things were picking up I remember when I was a young kid, I was fifteen years old on Pearl Harbor Day Boy, that was terrible

M Oh, really?

D I was going to Hayes Junior High and that was on a Sunday and the next morning I tell you the truth, my two brothers were in the service at that time and the Monday morning was dreary Do you know how a winter day is?

M Yes

D I would not say that it was cloudy, but I could not even see It was just a winter

day and no snow It was a dark and gloomy day I mean for some reason, maybe because of the news and at that time for some reason I was walking to school and I did not see any of my buddies as I was walking I walked to school all by myself I was going to Hayes Junior High and I looked up and I heard planes coming down because of the war I just had that fear. So, we were in school and they called a special commencement to hear President Roosevelt's speech

M No kidding?

D Yes, we all went to the auditorium, the whole school, and we heard the speech.

M. What were the feelings down in the Smokey Hollow? Do you remember people talking about it?

D. Everyone was scared and confused I know that my parents were concerned because they had two of their sons in the service and there were so many kids in the Hollow that in almost every family there was somebody in that family who was in the service

M Yes

D There was a lot of fear and doubts and just did not know what to think. Then not too long after that I had a cousin, who was one of my aunt's sons, who was killed in the service.

M Oh, really?

D Yes

M: World War II?

D Yes, World War II

M Is his name on the memorial?

D Oh, yes His name was Ralph Lazazzara. His name would be there

M. Before the war started, you were fifteen on Pearl Harbor, did you do a lot of things to help the war effort being fifteen or sixteen?

D No Well, what I did was I delivered papers and sold stamps We used to sell stamps through the Newsboys Club, if people wanted to buy stamps while delivering papers We would sell stamps that way. You are probably not familiar with that You would pay \$ 25 or \$ 50 or something like that and you would get so many stamps and when the book would fill up it was enough for like a \$25 00

bond

M Okay.

D And at that time \$18 75 accumulated, it bought a bond I bought stamps

M Did you go overseas at all when you were in the Army?

D Yes, I went overseas I went to Korea

M Oh, did you?

D Yes

M This was in 1945?

D IN 1945 I was in Korea I think that we went there in like October or November of 1945 I was there until I got discharged

M Which was?

D December of 1946

M Did you miss the Smokey Hollow?

D Did I miss it?

M: Yes

D Well, no. At that time, you see, because the Smokey Hollow, when I was maturing the war was on and we were not doing the things because of the war that was done with the older kids before me when I was down there. I was fifteen or sixteen years old We were so busy in the Army, you know, that you did not think about it and then it is such a transition of life that it was even a little bit better, even though you were in the Army, because you know we were getting paid Of course, I sent the majority of my money home, but still the little that they were paying you, it was more than what I had when I was living down the Hollow So, I would not say that I really missed the Hollow I think that it was more fear than anything to tell you the truth

M Yes

D When I was in basic training and the war with Germany was over while I was in the service, in that same year President Roosevelt died

M Yes

D I do not think that I was in the Army two weeks when he died I was in April 5, 1945 and then I was doing basic training down there I was in South Carolina and the war with Germany was over and I was happy So, now our basic training was specializing in Japanese warfare Do you follow me?

M Yes

D It was kind of scary because what you were learning was that you had to find the pill box and things that were hard to detect

M Just the kind of warfare that you saw in the movies

D Right It was a little more complicated and it was kind of scary and on the way home Joe, let me say this, that on the way home -- I had to report to, I think, Fort Riley, Kansas -- but on the way, when we were through with our basics and then we were getting orders where we were going to be put, some of the fellows that I was in camp with, some were going to Fort Dix New Jersey and they were going towards the East Coast. We thought that they were going to go to Europe

M Yes

D But the war with Europe was over with That is where we wanted to go That is where I wanted to go It is terrible to say and do not get me wrong but I think everybody would probably feel that way The war with Japan was still going on, see, so while I was on the train coming home that is when Japan surrendered

M On the way home?

D I was coming home from my leave and boy was I happy. I did not care where they were shipping me then, you know

M Yes

D But ironically now, on the way to Korea, we never heard of Korea before

M Oh, really?

D Right They did not tell us that we were going to Korea I had to report to Fort Riley Kansas and from Fort Riley Kansas we went to San Francisco I think that I stayed in San Francisco about a week before we shipped out Then from there the transporter was on and we had some problems so they stopped in Honolulu, Hawaii for repairs, and I was there for two weeks Now when we were in Hawaii, that is when they told us that we were going to Korea They had not told us

where we were going Maybe themselves they did not know where we were going But nobody knew where Korea was at We heard all kinds of rumors. So, we went to the map and Korea was not on the map.

M No kidding?

D No The reason why was because it was Japan See the way I understand it is that thirty-five years before the war Korea was occupied by Japan.

M That is right

D So, when they showed Japan they showed Japan as part of Korea also

M Okay

D We did not know that was what it was Korea, I will tell you the truth, when I first heard it, I did not even think of Oriental people I did not The rumors that were flying around and it was flying around because the fellows were talking about how they had tiger and how you had to carry your guns with you all of the time and that the war is over and they have this and that I thought that we were going to South Africa or something like that from the way that they were talking But then to my surprise when we got there the Oriental people, the Japanese and the Chinese

M. When you were in Honolulu, Hawaii, did you talk to a lot of veterans that were in the war that were coming back?

D No At the part that we were stationed at, you see, they were not coming back then see the war was just over.

M Oh, okay

D The war was over the day that I was coming home on leave I think that I was home fourteen days then I was shipping out I would say that this would have been five weeks after the war So, they did not start shipping them out When we were in Hawaii, in fact, we stayed at Schofield Barracks.

M Oh, really?

D Yes, that is the camp And the part that we were in was where all of the younger fellows were shipping out But when we got there we were replacing soldiers

M Okay

D They were coming back home We were the same company at that time In fact,

they put me in a company where it is a transportation and they would load and unload boats and equipment. As far as manually, we would do anything because we used the local people to do that to give them a job and help them out.

M: There were never too many family vacations?

D: No.

M: That is usually what I would have gotten for an answer from most people. The extent of your recreation was maybe going to Idora Park or Mill Creek Park or some dances?

D: Yes.

M: Why do you think that people began to move out of the Smokey Hollow?

D: Well, I think that like I told you before I just think that the nicer things. The newer things.

M: Do you think that I-680 had anything to do with it? The bypass?

D: Well, many progress forced them to move out because they had to get another home and location so they just moved, but I think that a lot of people they bettered themselves when I say that they had a better home. See, when you buy a newer home it is because of the appearance of the home. It is going to get dusty just like a newer car. And the convenience of the home. Also, you figure, "Well, if I live here I have to do this and I have to do this to it." It does not pay. What is the home going to be worth? You have to take all of those things into consideration. And you will find that true in every neighborhood. And you will find that true a few years from now in this neighborhood. You might as well buy somewhere else and it is worth more or something like that. There are a lot of reasons why. I do not think that there is any one reason that you could pin down and say, "Well, that is why they moved." Some people maybe feel like it is deteriorating at some point. That was not for me. I cannot say that. I was a builder and I have built homes and I know that I felt that it would be nicer and that was it.

M: Do you think that the University had anything to do with it?

D: No, I do not think so. The only way that the University had anything to do with it is because they needed property and they bought it and the people moved out. But I think that the people that did sell their homes were all compensated. They got at that time what they could.

M: Do you still own property down there at all?

D No

M Do you know anybody that does? Any friends?

D Oh, yes I have a friend that lives there

M You still have friends that live down there?

D Yes, the last name is DeBlasio

M Oh, really Do you ever talk to her about it?

D No, we never talk In fact her daughter is a Professor at Youngstown State University

M Oh, really?

D Yes Her name is Donna DeBlasio

M She is the one I think that is working on the Steel Museum

D Right

M Okay I have heard of her

D She came from the Hollow and her mother still lives down there

M Wow

D There are still more but I cannot think of

M When you went into the Army, did all of your friends from the Hollow go into the Army with you?

D Well, at my age they did

M Were they all from the Hollow?

D Yes

M Did you guys all stay together?

D No

M Now today living in Boardman do you keep in touch with those people that you

grew up with in the Hollow?

D No, it is a shame that I do not keep in touch. In fact I just saw in the Times Newspaper that a fellow from the Hollow had died. The paper said that he was the principal of Hubbard.

M Capone?

D Yes.

M He was from the Hollow?

D Yes. In fact, the last time that I saw him was at a wake, and I see here that he died, too.

M Wow. When you see your friends, do you guys talk about the Hollow?

D Oh, yes. We only talk about, "Well, have you seen so and so?" Do you follow me?

M Yes.

D Or we say, "Have you been down the Hollow lately? Have you seen the changes?" You know, like because of the parking deck comes right down into the Hollow. We talk about that.

M We talked a little bit about the women's reunion. Do you ever go down to the War Memorial on Veteran's Day when they have the ceremony?

D No.

M Have you attended the golf outing?

D Oh, yes.

M What is that like?

D You get to see your old acquaintances there. I saw Dom Rosselli was there at this last one that we had. It is in August. We usually have it in August. He was there and he got the Man of the Year Award this year. In fact, Boom Boom Mancini was there, too.

M Oh, really?

D He and his dad were there.

- M Were they from the Hollow?
- D No But they are real close with the Hollow because they are from the East side The father was from the East side But you see the father, Boom Boom had a cousin living down there, Red D'mato who lived in the Hollow He was my age and is now deceased But I think that Boom Boom was there because Tony Geniro Have you ever heard of Tony Geniro?
- M Yes, the boxer Is he from there?
- D Yes He is now deceased also
- M But he is from the Hollow right?
- D Yes, he is from the Hollow Tony Geniro and I went to school together
- M Oh, really?
- D Yes, high school He went to St Columba's but when he went to grade school he went to Rayen and he did not finish He quit and went into boxing But to explain why Boom Boom was at the golf outing, Tony Geniro's brother Frankie, they call him Rickie, his son is from out of state and he was there. So, Boom Boom came and was with him
- M So you do attend some functions?
- D Oh, yes we do and we get together Then when the Golden Eagles have a special kind of drawing to make money to have their banquets like that and have dances and things like that
- M When you look back what is probably your most memorable experience? It is a tough question
- D Well, there are so many Do you follow me?
- M Yes, there are a lot of people
- D During the different stages of your life there are things that happen that you enjoy I can remember when we used to come home from school we used to play marbles Have you ever played stickies?
- M No
- D That is another game that we played We used to play marbles you know and we used to get this kind and our hands used to sweat and they used to be chapped

here We were all good sharp shooters, everybody was good We used to get in contests through the Newsboy Club

Well, the game stickies, sticks is what we used to call it. When we were younger we used to say stickies What it is is that we all had sticks and we used to throw them in the mud Now if you have a stick and you throw it in and it sticks up Now if it did not stick it went like this The next guy that throws it if he throws it down and his stick scraps yours then he gets your stick and he hits it and you have to run and get it and then he has to put it in three times.

M No kidding?

D Yes, he has to put it in three times before he gets back If he comes back and he gets his in before you do the third one then he hits you see? Do you follow me?

M Yes

D We had games like that

M Did you guys make up a lot of these games?

D These games must have been all made up I do not know

M Yes You just carried them over from older guys?

D Yes, from the older ones It was not just one or two that played that you had a bunch of kids playing Because you could have like eight sticks in there When you throw your stick there and sometimes even if one was up and you throw and you hit his stick and his goes down and you get your stick and throw it I can remember going to school and you could not wait till you came home and played those games You go out in the street and you play You change your clothes and go right out and play That is one phase Then after awhile the next phase was that you could not wait to go and roller skating In the evenings we would be going roller skating and we started dressing up

M Girls

D Then you start making a little money and then you start buying some clothes and you strut up the street and you want everybody to see that you have a new suit on or something like that there It is just all of those things that you are thinking about I just feel that if anything what I liked about it was the closeness and the rapport we have had with everybody there I think that your personality is effective for when you become older I think that it makes you humble and you appreciate things a little bit more Like I have said we didn't have things but when you do not know what you are missing you do not know the rich from the poor

M That is right What was your favorite era down there? When you were young, middle ages or when you got older what do you think was your most memorable?

D I think that it when it was when I came out of the Army

M Oh, really?

D Yes, I came out of the Army and I was making a little bit of money in Youngstown and I got a car and I had clothes and I was able to do things I was more independent because you could do things and you were not confined If you wanted to go out you could go out

M Did you work when you got out of the Army?

D Oh, yes

M Where at?

D Well, when I first came out of the Army I was a carpenter

M Okay, that is right

D When I first came out of the Army my brother at that time then, my sister lived in Detroit and then my oldest brother got a job in Detroit and he was working before the war. Then he came down and during the war he got married and then he got discharged when he was working there When you got discharged out of the service during World War II you got what was like an unemployment check \$20 a week for the entire year. Now what was happening to the majority of the fellows is that they were getting that \$20 down the Hollow and they were not working for many reasons They could not get a job or maybe somebody did not want it So, when I got discharged my oldest brother wanted to make sure that I didn't get into a rut like that so I went to Detroit and I got a job up there

M. So, you went up to Detroit and went to work?

D Yes, I went to work there and I worked at the Ford Motor Company When I got the job there they gave me all of the time that I had in the service as seniority

M Okay

D Which was a good thing

M Yes

D But I do not think that I worked there a year see because my brother and his wife

moved back to Youngstown and I stayed there and I started boarding with some relatives and I did not like that and I said, "what am I doing here? I got parents home " So, I came back home and at that time my brother had a job with a contractor that was originally from the Hollow and it was Sunny Brothers You know Luciano's Restaurant?

M Yes

D And Cornersburg Pizza?

M Yes

D Well, the fellow that owns that he is originally from the Hollow But before all of that his father was a carpenter and they were building homes and they hired us

M That starting with a little money that helped?

D Yes, I started being a carpenter and I was learning how to do things like that I got a job and things like that When I look back at everything I seem to have enjoyed it all When I think about the Newsboys Club When I think about going to see those movies, they were silent movies We used to go to them just to enjoy them We used to go there for those other functions that they had During Halloween there used to be apple cider and a candy apple It was a big, big thing Then when we used to go swimming two days a week at the YMCA at 6 00, because we could not infringe on the members

It is hard for me to say what was my enjoyment It is hard But when I think about it and what my parents had to go through then you appreciate your parents The older you get the more you realize it Because we just take things for granted And the thing is that because my parents came from the old country and you are born here and they you get an education here and you learn the lifestyle that you have here, the American way and things like that there and your parents are so busy working that it is just the same Pretty soon you start thinking that you are smart and you are not You are never I do not care how much education you have you are never smarter than your parents Believe me

M I will believe that.

D And to tell you the truth in fact when I was like in the fourth or fifth grade, I take that back I was going to junior high, a young nice teacher Of course when you are growing up, you know how it is

M Yes

D She was very nice and she came out because she knew that there were a lot of us that came from [the Hollow]

M Smokey Hollow?

D Poor families She said, " Do not ever think that you are smarter than your parents "

M And you still remember that?

D I will never forget that.

M I once heard that the smells down there were just incredible Just the food cooking and the bread baking One guy said that when he smells bread baking that he just snaps right back into thinking about what it was like in the Hollow and the wine making, yards and the cooking

D That is because of the ovens that I told you about. You could be going up the street and you could smell the bread because the ovens were outside A lot of them but not everyone Another thing that they had a lot down there was boccie courts My dad had a boccie court

M Oh, really?

D Yes, in the backyard, There must have been right on that one street where I grew up on Emerald Street there must have been at least five homes that had boccie courts

M No kidding?

D Yes That is where my dad had his entertainment They used to play boccie I can remember that

M Wow Did you used to play a lot at Harrison Field?

D Oh, yes

M Sports? Football and baseball?

D Yes, we played a lot of baseball We used to have baseball through that Newsboys Club

M Is that where you used to play at?

D Yes Then when we got older and we got out of the Army then we started having Emerald Street playing Oak Park

M Okay

- D We were playing games like that The kids on Emerald Street would play the kids from Adams Street or Harrison Street We had games like that
- M Did you ever hear of a field called Farmer's Field? It was up towards the Wick Deck more There was a crazy guy that lived up there named "Shotgun " I heard that he left you alone John Mascare told me about him It was not close to Harrison Field it was a different area?
- D I do not know
- M But Harrison Field was your hang out?
- D Harrison Field was not our hang out it was a playground and that is where we played a lot sports every summer
- M. Looking back if you could change anything about living down there what would it be? Would you change anything at all? Would you make it better in any way?
- D Gee, I do not know what you could do to make it better unless you try to improve the environment as far as the homes and things like that, but to me I do not see it There were not really bad kids that came from the Hollow There were only a few occasions were you heard that someone got in trouble Just a very, very few kids I think that in that respect I would not want to change it because everybody seemed to turn out
- M You are the fifth person that said that they would not want to change one thing about it.
- D No, I do not think that I would
- M Do you remember any crime at all?
- D Not down there There were some small things that I heard Somebody would be doing work in somebody's house The only crime that we had there that I can think of is when we were young. We used to go out and there were a lot of fruit trees and we used to go and raid the trees We also, used to go for "white dogs."
- M Do you remember any major crimes at all?
- D. No There is one fellow that was involved in some kind of robbery and he served time or something like that
- M Everybody knew everyone and knew what was going on down there? If something did happen down there did everybody know?

- D Oh, everybody knew It was so small but so large in people that somebody would say something But it was not to the point where we were anymore cattier or gossiped than any other place It was normal
- M Do you ever go down there in the day? What are your feelings?
- D I have been down there I go down there every once in awhile to the MVR Club and have lunch there
- M What are your feeling about when you see it now?
- D Well, you feel kind of bad because it is deteriorating because it is old. What are you going to do? I will tell you the truth I am happy that Youngstown State University is going into that I was hoping that they would build We always talked for years when I was a little kid that Youngstown State University would build the University where Harrison Field was
- M The stadium?
- D Did anybody ever tell you that?
- M They built the stadium down there
- D I mean the stadium, that is what I meant We talked about that for years Even when I was a young kid there were rumors that as Youngstown State University grows it would come towards the Hollow Well, we could not see that because we just saw that one little building and we did not think that it would grow But there was talk like that They did buy quite a few homes down there
- M A lot of parking down there now
- D Yes I am happy for them Now we will still have the Hollow and it will be right into the University I think that it is really good
- M I would like to see it happen
- D I think that the University is just beautiful the way that it is. It is really, really nice
- M Do you know why that they called it Smokey Hollow?
- D Because we were in the Hollow Just like I told you about the two streets from Scott Street to Wood Street they are the high point You just go right down and it is a Hollow And it is smokey, for a lot of reasons It is smokey because of the trains We had all of the trains there There were so many homes there and they all had coal furnaces Have you ever seen soot? Did you ever see soot?

M Yes

D You always saw that on the window sills We used to wash windows on the outside and you would see it on the window sills, just soot I do not know if it was on the chimneys from the homes or if it was from the trains

M How about the mills?

D Yes, the mills

M I heard that that was good though I heard that people were pleased to see that because they knew that people were working and the mills were burning

D Oh, yes

M They used to call it the "Red Rain" or something like that How often did you clean your house?

D The inside? I would not be a bit surprised We washed the walls three times a year I am telling you the truth We were always washing walls See our house was like I said you have the living room, dining room, and the kitchen. One room after another The kitchen was added on There were only two rooms down and two rooms up Just before my father bought the house the owner before that had put a kitchen in back And the kitchen had a tile floor It was white It was easy to wash you did not even have to use soap because We always helped with the walls It seemed like we washed walls at Christmas time and how far is Easter from Christmas? March or April?

M Yes

D We washed the walls again We washed the walls again during the summer You could actually eat off of the floor because my mother was so clean When my mother used to wash the floors she used to put newspapers down She did not have carpeting, rugs and stuff like that. She might have had a throw rug by the sink but that is it Then in the dining room floor we would have a linoleum floor That was our living room So, you washed that floor The newspaper then was not like now because the newspaper like today the print comes off

M Can you think of anything else that I might have left out about living down there?

D There was something that came to mind and I wanted to tell you but then it got away from us and I just cannot seem to recall what it was

M I forget what we were talking about Do you want to add anything else?

D No

End of Interview