

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Smokey Hollow

Personal Experience

O.H. 1389

DONETTA C. VECHIARELLI

Interviewed

by

Joseph E. Mancini

on

October 23, 1990

DONETTA VECHIARELLI

Donetta Vechiarelli was born on January 31, 1911 in Niles, Ohio. Mrs. Vechiarelli attended Jefferson and Lincoln, Washington and Niles McKinley School respectively. She worked for General Electric for thirteen years before moving into the Hollow. Her father, Aniello, was employed as a fireman in a brick factory in Niles. Her mother, Antonetta, was busy raising eight children. She moved into Smokey Hollow at 415 North Watt Street in 1934 when she married Anthony Vechiarelli.

Donetta did not work while living in Smokey Hollow. She kept herself busy raising her two children Dominic (49), and Anthony (46). During World War II she was the "nurse " for many of the Hollow residents. She was the designated "throat painter" for many of the children when they had sore throats. Her husband was employed at General Fireproofing while living in Smokey Hollow.

Mrs. Vechiarelli moved from Smokey Hollow in 1958 to 100 Upland Avenue on the North Side of Youngstown. She is a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and St. Monica's Guild. SHE enjoys sewing and is employed as a seamstress at Vechiarelli Designs in Youngstown.

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INTERVIEWEE: DONETTA C. VECHIARELLI

INTERVIEWER: Joseph E. Mancini

SUBJECT: Smokey Hollow, depression, World War II,
Catholic Church, family

DATE: October 23, 1990

M: This is an interview with Donetta C. Vechiarelli for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Smokey Hollow, by Joseph Mancini, at 100 Upland Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio, on October 23, 1990, at 8:15 p.m.

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, like where you were born and the schools that you attended?

V: I was born in Niles, Ohio on January 31, 1911. I was born at 103 Walnut Street.

M: What schools did you attend?

V: I went to Jefferson, Lincoln, and then McKinley High School. I also went to Washington Junior High School.

M: Do you remember what your father and mother did for work?

V: My father was a fireman in a brick yard and my mother just took care of us kids.

M: How many kids were in your family?

V: We were eight.

M: There were eight?

V: Yes.

M: Wow, that was a lot of kids. When did you move down into Smokey Hollow?

V: When I got married. That was in 1939. That is when I moved down to the Smokey Hollow.

M: What was your address in Smokey Hollow?

V: My address in Smokey Hollow was 415 North Watt Street.

M: Can you tell me what your house looked like physically inside and outside?

V: My house was small. It had a kitchen downstairs and a living room. Then upstairs I had two bedrooms. My bathroom was down in the basement. So, that was a very small house.

M: Was it typical of all of the other houses around?

V: Well, I made it look so it would be...I fixed it up nice because I wanted it to look nice. It was too small.

M: Oh, was it?

V: Yes, and as the boys grew older--I have two sons--and as they grew older then we moved. But while we were down there it was comfortable for us.

M: Did you have a coal furnace?

V: I had a coal furnace.

M: What was that like?

V: When I first moved in there it was a coal furnace, but it was hard heating it up all of the time. When we would go out and come back the coal furnace was out. So, we had to keep lighting it all of the time and my husband didn't know too much about that, nor did I. So, we had it converted into a gas furnace.

M: Oh, really?

V: So, then that was okay.

M: Do you remember when you did that?

V: It wasn't too long. Right after Dominic was born we converted it. Then that made it real nice.

M: You said that you had two sons. What was it like raising children down in Smokey Hollow?

V: Well, I had no problems raising the two sons. It was nice down there because all of the children played together. We had a store that was close in case they wanted anything. They always had permission to go to the store and get what they wanted, but I never allowed them to handle money down there.

M: Oh, really?

V: No.

M: Why was that?

V: Because we always had a bill there. We had a bill there and I told my husband...Whenever they wanted to go there and they wanted candy or ice cream they could go there and they wouldn't have to take it from the other boys.

M: Oh, I see.

V: They didn't have anymore money than we had. So, anytime that they wanted anything they would go over to Nazerine's Store and he would give them what they wanted. But Nicki did tell me when they first started, he said, "Now how do I know what to give them? Maybe they will buy more than what they should." I said, "No, they won't. They will buy what they want when they see what the other children have, because that will be what they want." So, they did. They came home with the bill. Nicki would give them the bill and they would put it in their pockets. If they would forget to give it to me, when I would go to wash their clothes there was the bill. I would go to the store and Nicki would say, "Yes, they were here." I said, "Okay, just give them what they want." I never had any problems.

M: As far as your house located in Smokey Hollow, was it considered to be in the middle or north or what?

V: No, it was like the second house from the corner. In fact the store wasn't too far from us. The store was right after the fourth house.

M: As far as stores go were there a lot of them in Smokey Hollow?

V: There was but not around us. We always dealt with Nazerine's Store.

M: Did you ever leave to go and shop other than Nazer-ine's?

V: No, they carried everything. In groceries they carried everything.

M: What were the dates that you moved down into Smokey Hollow after you got married?

V: I got married on June 3rd of 1939 and we moved there.

M: When did you move out of there?

V: I moved out of there in 1958.

M: Smokey Hollow in the Youngstown area is such a unique place. What do you think made Smokey Hollow so unique then? If you hear people today who came from the Hollow...

V: Well, the Hollow people were friendly. They were all friendly. If you were sick or needed help they always helped one another. Like during World War II, I can remember when my two kids got sick...

M: Do you remember the things that you did?

V: Oh, yes. We had a lot of sore throats at that time. It was when the kids were small. I used to paint their throats.

M: What do you mean by paint their throats?

V: Like today we have the antibiotics and in those days we didn't have antibiotics. Today, you go to the doctor and he gives you an antibiotic and you are alright. In them days the doctor would tell me, "Paint your kids throat." He would give me the medicine and I would paint their throats.

M: Did you used to do that for all of the kids?

V: Well, yes. A lot of them used to come. Like I had all of my nieces and nephews down there. Now, like Spike when he got sore throats when I first moved up here. He had to come up here so I could paint his throat.

M: Oh, really?

V: Sure.

M: Didn't a lot of them didn't go to doctors?

V: Oh, sure but the doctors were busy then because a lot of them were in the Army then.

M: Oh, during the war.

V: We were short of doctors.

M: As far as living in the Hollow and you moved from Niles to the Hollow, could you tell me a little bit about the differences in the quality of life from Niles to the Hollow?

V: Well, I couldn't tell you the difference, not to me. I was born in Niles and I liked Niles. I would say that I liked Niles better than the Hollow. I can't say that I don't like the Hollow, but I like Niles better. I grew up there and all of my friends were there. In other words, I would say that my roots were there. I was right at home when I would go back to Niles.

M: Did you go back a lot when you were living in the Hollow?

V: Oh, sure. I would go back and forth all of the time. A week would never go by. When I first got married for a couple of months I was back and forth every night. I couldn't get used to Youngstown.

M: Oh, really?

V: Yes, I wanted to move.

M: Why was that?

V: I just couldn't get used to it. I couldn't get used to the house. I couldn't get used to anything.

M: Was your husband from the Hollow? Was he born there?

V: Oh, yes. He was born and raised in the Hollow. He had a lot of patience with me. He took me back and forth.

M: Did he?

V: Oh, yes.

M: What were his feelings about living in Smokey Hollow?

V: Oh, he loved living in Smokey Hollow.

M: Did he?

V: Oh, sure.

M: Did he have a lot of his friends there?

V: Oh, he had a lot of friends down there.

M: How did you meet your husband?

V: I met him out at Idora Park.

M: Oh, did you really?

V: I went out there dancing one night when I was supposed to be at a church dance.

M: Wow.

V: I went there and I met him and we danced all night and that is how we got together.

M: When he said that he was from Smokey Hollow did you have anything...

V: Well, that didn't make any difference.

M: No?

V: No, it didn't make any difference to me.

M: Did your husband have a job when you were working down in the Smokey Hollow?

V: Well, when we lived down in the Smokey Hollow, yes.

M: Where did he work?

V: He worked at GF.

M: Did he?

V: Yes.

M: I heard that GF was the place to work. Did he get that job through a relative? Do you know? I heard that a lot of people from Smokey Hollow got jobs through a relative.

V: No. He went there on his own.

M: Oh, did he?

V: Yes.

M: Did he work somewhere else before that?

V: No. He worked there and then for awhile they were slow and he went over to Truscon. After awhile he always told me that he went back to GF. But I always knew that worked at GF.

M: Did you work at all when you lived down in the Hollow?

V: No. The only time when I worked was when I first got married. I worked about one year to one year and a half, till I taught another girl to do my job at General Electric, but after that I never worked.

M: Did you drive back and forth from Smokey Hollow?

V: No. I would ride the bus down back and forth.

M: Did most of the people that lived in Smokey Hollow work at GF? Do you remember a lot of the people working there?

V: Oh, a lot of the fellows worked at GF, yes.

M: Do you remember some other places where people worked in close proximity?

V: Well, like my brother-in-law, he worked down at Republic Steel Mill. A lot of them worked down there.

M: Do you remember any threatening of a strike or anything with the unions?

V: No, not at that time. There were no problems even when I was working.

M: Can you explain, maybe, what a typical day was like for you down in the Hollow? The things that you did?

V: Well, the days down there was if we would go out, and we would always be together, or go to one another's house and have cake, coffee, or lunch.

M: Did you cook dinner a lot? Was that one of your main...

V: Well, I would cook my own dinner.

M: That is what I meant.

V: Yes, I always cooked my own dinner. We didn't go out unless it was something special, then we would go out.

M: Smokey Hollow was known for its bond of ethnic backgrounds with the different types of people that lived down there, like the Italians and Slovaks. Can you give me some information about the kinds of neighbors that you had down in the Hollow? Were they all Italian?

V: Well, they were pretty well mixed.

M: Really?

V: Yes. There were Slovaks and Italians. That is as far as I know.

M: Did you get along with them real well?

V: Oh, yes. We always got along real well. That is one thing. All of the people were really friendly.

M: Do you remember any conflicts between any ethnic backgrounds?

V: No.

M: That is usually the typical answer I get. Everybody got along.

V: They all got along down there.

M: That is nice.

V: If anybody needed any help you're right there to help. Now, like I had my husband's sister...If anybody was sick or anything right away they would call her and she was ready to help anybody.

M: Oh, really?

V: Yes. I had a girl across the street from me. She wasn't a girl, she had two sons, and she was sick. She had a pretty bad operation and she had a lebectomy. I don't know whether you know if what a surgery is or not?

M: No.

V: Well, she had to go out of town. Now, I don't remember for sure if it was Baltimore or Philadelphia where she went, and when she came home she had to be treated. Somebody had to change her bandage all of the time. The doctor told her that she could go home if there was somebody to take care of you. Otherwise she couldn't have come home.

M: Oh, really?

V: Yes. So, she told them that I would take care of her. She didn't even have to ask me.

M: Did you help?

V: Sure. I was there every morning.

M: No, kidding?

V: With my gloves. I had rubber gloves to change her bandage.

M: Wow.

V: Because that had to heal from the inside out.

M: Oh, I see.

V: Well, she had no one there to help her.

M: That is really strange because you don't see that too much now.

V: Her name was Antoinette Perno. She was related to Joanne. In other words, she was Joanne's aunt.

M: Joanne Mascardine?

V: Yes. She was Joanne Mascardine's father's sister.

M: Did a lot of relatives live down in the Smokey Hollow?

V: Oh, yes.

M: Why do you think that that was?

V: There were a lot of them that were related. Like I was there and my sister-in-law. That was a double house on the other side and her other brother was living in there.

M: Did you take any borders?

V: No.

M: Do you know a lot of other families that did take borders? And if not borders other family members that were taken it? Did you take your family members in?

V: No. I was always by myself. My sister-in-law was by herself and so was the other one. Although there was...Like say my brother-in-law's wife's sister, she used to live in Shady Side and then she had a daughter that always came to Youngstown but she would always stay with them, but not that she lived there all of the time.

M: That is unique. Everybody I have talked to have all said the same thing. Everybody helped each other out and their values were the same.

V: Yes.

M: As far as living in Smokey Hollow can you relate how Smokey Hollow may have prepared to move up to the North side at all? Did it help you in any way?

V: Well, the thing is why I moved was because the house was small. I wanted a larger home and I had the bathroom downstairs where I wanted a bathroom upstairs. If you had to get up in the middle of the night you had to go downstairs. So, it wasn't too comfortable. So, that is why I moved.

M: Now, you raised two sons down there. Do you think that some of the values, like about helping each other out, do you think that they took that out of the Smokey Hollow with them?

V: Oh, I think so. They are still real close with all of the people that lived down the Hollow.

M: And you think that the Hollow taught them good lessons, being a tight community?

V: Yes, because I think all of them who were down the Hollow, I think that they all had a good education. Like my sons are both teachers. Alright, at the same time they coached and they did what they wanted to do. Like my oldest son he is in Real Estate. Now my nephew that lived next door, that is Jimmy Vecharelli, he is a coach with the Cleveland Browns and they are having a hard time. I heard them arguing right now just a little while ago. They were trying to blame the quarterback...

M: Bernie Kosar?

V: Yes. I don't think that it is all Kosar's fault.

M: No.

V: He doesn't have the time to throw the ball.

M: No.

V: You take all of those other quarterbacks and they have all of the time in the world to throw. I think that he is a good quarterback.

M: Yes. I went to school with him.

V: Talking a little bit about education, in your family did you stress education a lot? Did you want your sons destined to go and work at GF?

V: No, I wanted them to go to school and I wanted them to have a good education. I gave them their own choice of what they wanted to do. Because I felt that this is something that they wanted to do and they had to like it.

M: Was your husband's view the same way?

V: Yes. He just wanted to make sure that they had a good education and do what they wanted to do and like what they wanted to do. He didn't want them to go and work like he did.

M: Living in Smokey Hollow, can you compare any other areas that were like Smokey Hollow at the same time? That had the same kind of ethnic backgrounds and where people were real close? Do you know of any other areas?

V: No. I don't.

M: I once heard that Briar Hill had the same.

V: Well, Briar Hill did but I never lived down there. But, I have cousins down there. I know that they always had a lot of cousins and friends. Like I had Tony Flask, that was one of our ex-Mayor's, he was my first cousin. Well, he had a lot of friends down there.

M: In Briar Hill?

V: Yes.

M: Did they have the same views about...

V: And around my aunt's place they were all real close there too. Farther away from that I wouldn't know. They all kept together too.

M: Did they?

V: All around there those people there were pretty close. I used to stay with them a lot.

M: When you moved from Niles to Smokey Hollow and then you moved from Smokey Hollow to the North Side, do you think that people who didn't live in Smokey Hollow viewed those people differently? Economically? Was it considered a lower economic section?

V: Well, a lot of people thought that it was lower, but I didn't think so.

M: Did you ever hear or encounter anybody talking about Smokey Hollow?

V: No. A lot of them would like to say that they were from Smokey Hollow. Some of them say that they are from Smokey Hollow, but they aren't.

M: Oh, really?

V: Yes.

M: Why do you think that they do that?

V: I don't know but they are not in that area of Smokey Hollow.

M: I think that it is like a big thing now to say that you are from the Smokey Hollow, because it is such a unique place. But you don't think that people viewed residents of Smokey Hollow differently do you?

V: No, I don't think so.

M: When you were living in Niles did you ever hear of the Smokey Hollow?

V: No, I didn't. I never heard of Smokey Hollow until I got married and went with my husband to Smokey Hollow, but before then I didn't. I did know Briar Hill because I used to stay with my aunt.

M: Do you remember first going down to Smokey Hollow and what your impressions were seeing it?

V: Well, when I first went down to Smokey Hollow, no, I didn't think that I was going to like it, because it was altogether different from Niles where I came from. Niles was a small town and the people were different.

M: What did you think about the houses and how they were set up? Real Tight.

V: Well, Smokey Hollow's houses were pretty close together, but in Niles they weren't that close.

M: What kind of role did the church play down in the Smokey Hollow?

V: Oh, our church was good. We all belonged to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. My two boys were baptized, had communion, and were confirmed there. My son Dom got married at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. Anthony, my other son, got married at St. Edward's Church because Sherri belonged to St. Edward's Church. But our church was always real good and I liked it. Father Franco down at Our Lady of Mount Carmel was real close with our priest in Niles.

M: Oh, okay.

V: He was real close friends with Father Santorio. They were real close and that made it a lot homey for me.

M: Did Mount Carmel have a strong impact on Smokey Hollow? On the Catholic people? Was it a church that most of them went to?

V: All of the Italians down in Smokey Hollow went to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

M: Really?

V: Yes. A lot of them moved away but today a lot of them are right back into our church again. They come from all over, but they are right back into our church again.

M: Did your sons go to Catholic Schools?

V: First they went to Madison, then they went to Hayes, and then Rayen High School.

M: Did a lot of their friends go to different high schools do you remember?

V: No, because they had a boundary line down there. Where we were at they had to go to the North side. But I tried to put Dom over at Wood Street one time and we couldn't go there.

M: That is strange.

V: They happened to go to public schools because of their ages. They were too young one time and they had to go to kindergarten and they couldn't go...They didn't have one at that time at a Catholic school. They wanted him to go the following year and wait, but all of his friends were going to kindergarten. So, he wanted to go to school just like the rest of them so I had to put him in Madison School.

M: Could you afford to send your kids to a parochial school at that time?

V: Well, at that time, yes. It isn't like it is today. Today it is expensive, but back then it wasn't, even though we didn't have much money we were starting out.

M: Would you have liked to send them to parochial school?

V: Yes. Sure. Because he could have gone to St. Columba because Bishop Malone used to come to the house.

M: Oh, right to your house?

V: Oh, yes. He wanted Dominic to go to Catholic school.

M: To play football?

V: He wanted Dom to go to parochial school, St. Columba, but Dominic was already in school and he had friends there and he didn't want to change schools. If they would have taken him in when he was going to kindergarten then fine, he would have been in Catholic school and he would have stayed there, but this way he made his friends in the public school and at that time he didn't want to leave his friends.

M: Speaking about your sons, did they have nicknames?

V: Oh, yes. Dom didn't but Anthony did.

M: What was Anthony's?

V: He was called "Muckandon". There were a set of twin boys and they couldn't say Master Anthony so that is how they got the name "Muckandon". Then my husband's brother Jim, used to call him Master Anthony. In Italian that would be Mastro Antonio. And these twins couldn't say that. So, they called him "Muckandon".

M: I heard that Dom was called Smilie. Did you ever hear of that?

V: No.

M: That is what somebody said they used to call Dom.

V: Dom never had a nickname, but "Muckandon" remained with Anthony. One of the Packard twins couldn't pronounce it.

M: As far as the church, did they have any social functions for the people in the Hollow? Do you remember any dances or festivals at Mount Carmel?

V: Oh, yes they had a lot of festivals and dinner dances.

M: For people in the Hollow back then?

V: Oh, sure. Like my husband belonged to the Golden Eagle Club.

M: Oh, did he?

V: And say now, if they would have dances we would go there. I belong to St. Monica's Club, and we would have a dinner dance down there. They just had one this past Saturday.

M: Your husband was a member of the Golden Eagles, can you tell me a little bit about what that was?

V: Now that Golden Eagle Club...All of his friends were mostly from the Hollow. They used to play ball and everything down there together and when they would have their doing they would always go to...

M: It was all men?

V: Yes. They always went for a nice and big hall or wherever. They were going to say that they were going to have a nice dinner. Well that is where they would go.

M: Do you remember a place called the Dukka Della Brutes?

V: Yes, but I don't remember too much about that. It was right across the street from Our Lady of Mount Carmel. We went up there for different doings. Like they had parties and that. We went up there for a wedding, I think it was for, one time. They would use that hall like they do our hall now with the church.

M: As far as Hollow functions, do you remember any parties or things that people just from the Hollow got together and did? Like picnics or block parties?

V: Every year they have one. All of the women from the Hollow all get together and they have a dinner.

M: They still do that today?

V: Yes, they still have a dinner today.

M: How about when you were living there? Can you remember any functions that they had at say maybe the Golden Eagles?

V: No, we didn't have that when I was living there. That started afterwards.

M: Oh, okay.

V: But the Golden Eagle always had a dinner dance.

M: Did they?

V: Yes, they always had one. Even before I got married they had different doings and I went to them with my husband.

M: What were they like?

V: Real good. Real friendly.

M: Was it all the Hollow people that got together?

V: Oh, yes.

M: As far as recreation and just enjoyment, can you tell me the things that you did on the weekends or with your husband? Did you go to Idora Park?

V: Oh, yes. When we were living down in the Hollow we used to go down to Idora Park. I went there all of the time dancing. In the summertime we went there dancing, and in the wintertime we went to the Elm's Ballroom.

M: What was the Elm's?

V: The Elm's was on Elm Street and it was a dance hall because that was closed in. Then, after we had the boys we still used to go out to Idora on Sundays but we would always go together. Or we would take the boys out to Mill Creek Park to feed the goldfishes. My husband would take them out there without me if I was going to do something. My husband would take them out there.

M: Did you ever take any family vacations or was that the extent of it mostly.

V: We never went far. If we went any place we would take small trips and then come back home. We never went over night.

M: A lot of people that I have talked to have said that their vacations might have been like going to Lake Erie or to see a ball game or something like that.

V: Yes, that is right. My husband would take the boys on the train when they had ball games.

M: To Cleveland?

V: Yes. That would be the Golden Eagle Club. A lot of the fellows would all come and get together and they would go and see different games. As far as going and staying over night we didn't do that.

M: There were sports played down in the Smokey Hollow, did your sons get involved with a lot of games at Harrison Field? Do you remember them playing a lot of ball games?

V: Well, they would go out and play ball amongst themselves.

M: Yes, that is what I mean.

V: Both belonged to different ball clubs. I don't know which one it was now, but Anthony would play on the Little League and Dom would play on the Pony League of baseball. We would go and watch Anthony the first half

and then go over and watch Dom the second half. We used to go to different places. They weren't down the Hollow.

M: No?

V: Yes. I think that this was up at Borts Field. They played all kinds of sports.

M: Did they play football for Rayen? Did you go up and watch them?

V: Oh, yes.

M: What was that like?

V: I didn't miss any of it.

M: Really?

V: No. I didn't miss anything.

M: Did you used to go up there with your husband?

V: They played for Rayen. Yes, my husband came. I would sit there in the rain or snow and it didn't make a bit of difference. I didn't even care. I would have a whole lap full of snow and I would stand up, shake it off, sit down and get some more.

M: That is great that you watched those games.

V: Oh, yes. We watched both because they both played for Rayen and then they both played for Youngstown State University.

M: When they played for Youngstown did you go up and watch them too?

V: Oh, sure. When they would go out of town, yes, but when they had to fly, no.

M: No?

V: But as long as we could drive up to Baldwin Wallace, where we could drive, Akron. One year we went to Akron and it was freezing and you would be surprised at how cold it was. It was terrible.

M: Did they come down and recruit Dom and Anthony for football? Did the football coaches come down and recruit or did the boys just walk on the team? Do you remember any YSU football coaches coming down and talking with them?

V: I don't remember about that but I used to get all kinds of calls for them because they were wanted at different schools.

M: Oh, really? What did you think of that?

V: Well, I didn't want them to leave. I didn't want to lose them. Wichita, Kansas a lot of times late at night...

M: No, kidding?

V: I don't know for how long but they just kept calling all of the time. They wanted Dom at Wichita, Kansas real bad.

M: Did you let Dom know that they wanted him?

V: Oh, sure Dom knew. He went out there. They wanted him to go out there and see it. He went out there.

M: Did he?

V: I couldn't wait until he got back.

M: No, kidding?

V: At that time one of the planes that he was supposed to come in on, but it was a freight plane, it crashed somehow. I got that on the news and I was telling Anthony and I was telling my husband and he said, "No, it can't be." I said, "Dom is on that same plane coming in." Because that was the same time that he was supposed to be coming in.

M: Holy Cow.

V: So, when we went up there to pick him up when he did come in, we went up in the airport, and when I saw him come up I did cry because I couldn't believe my eyes that he was alright.

M: You thought that his plane crashed?

V: Sure it wasn't his plane but this freight plane.

M: Wow. And he went out there to see a college?

V: Yes. Anthony told him, "Dom, I don't know mommy was scared."

M: No, kidding?

V: I never cared for them to go out because I wanted them here all of the time.

M: Did you?

V: Yes. I didn't want to lose them.

M: Do you remember if there were any unaccepted people down in Smokey Hollow as far as religious or maybe ethnic backgrounds?

V: No, not that I know of.

M: Did you ever hear of any?

V: No, because on the other side I had mother, and she was a diabetic. I was real good with her because I had to give her an insulin shot for her sugar three times a day before she had her meals.

M: No, kidding?

V: Yes, I used to go there all of the time. A lot of times we couldn't go to Niles until I got through with her and we would leave and go to Niles. She had sugar real bad. I would give her her shot and then she could eat. Then when she could take her last shot that was morning, noon, and night and then we would go to Niles.

M: Wow.

V: We did that for a long time. Then she would have to go once a month to the doctor in Girard. He used to give her another shot. It would supposed to be something bigger, but I don't know what. But she did have sugar real bad. That is why I say that there were a lot of people around me, but they were all good people that we helped and liked. I can't see any of them that I...

M: You don't ever remember hearing about...

V: No.

M: How about any other religious backgrounds?

V: No, the majority of us were all Catholics right around our area. Even up the street Jimmy Vicharel's grandmother...

M: Did you ever go...Did you basically stay in your area?

V: Oh, yes.

M: Did you ever venture...

V: No, I didn't go around too much because I wasn't too familiar with the whole Hollow but I always stayed down

around and I didn't go too far around. I would go say a few blocks away but I never...

M: Do you remember the Snow of 1950? Do you remember what that was like? It was a big snow.

V: The big snow when we would come out... Let's say if the kids were walking you couldn't even see them.

M: No, kidding?

V: Like Anthony was playing in the snow and he lost one of his boots and when the snow was over and melted we found it about a couple blocks away from the house.

M: Did everything pretty much stop? Was anything going on? Like traffic?

V: Everything stopped. We were alright because we had the store but a lot of people needed food.

M: Talking about the store, was there a lot of credit given?

V: Oh, yes.

M: Did you buy a lot...

V: We always had everything on credit and then paid our bill.

M: Did the majority of the people who got sick, was there a lot of credit given? Or people who didn't work?

V: Oh, yes. Nicki did. He was real good about that because a lot of the people that didn't work got credit and then afterwards they would pay.

M: Did he live in the Hollow, Nicki?

V: Oh, yes. He lived right around the corner from us.

M: Speaking of businesses down there what about Casses's?

V: No, I didn't go up that way.

M: Did your husband?

V: Well, he would go up that way but we didn't deal around up there. We always dealt with Nazerine's because that was about four or five houses away from us.

M: Do you remember Casses's and your husband ever going in there?

V: I don't know too much about Casses's now. My husband would yes, but I didn't.

M: Did people tend to marry within the Hollow? Do you think? Do you remember a lot of marriages happening within the Hollow?

V: There were some but I think mostly more were out. Within Youngstown but from different parts.

M: Why do you think that people began to move out of the Hollow? We know why you moved out, because you wanted a bigger house but why do you think others moved out?

V: I wanted a bigger house. I think that the others probably wanted a better home. That is the only thing that I can think of. Some of them got married and moved.

M: Do you remember any specific reasons or friends that you made that may have moved out for certain reasons?

V: Not that I know if.

M: Do any of your friends still live down there?

V: No, they have all pretty well moved away. A lot of them lived in with their parents too and their parents passed away and then they took care of the houses and the houses got kind of old and they had to move. Either fix your home up or move to a better home.

M: Do you think that people moved to better themselves? Economically speaking?

V: Well, I don't think that way. I felt just as good down there as I do up here. But the only thing is I like my home better here because I have everything I want right here. That house down in the Hollow was too small for me.

M: Do you still keep in touch with anybody who lived down in the Hollow?

V: Oh, yes there are some people that I know but not very many. They are all out of there.

M: Do you see them?

V: Yes. Some of them have passed away.

M: Do you ever talk about the Hollow with them?

V: Oh, yes.

M: Do you remember some of the things that you talk about?

V: Well, we usually talk about different people, how they are, and if they are still living there; where they are and if they are alright.

M: Do you remember what it was like to live down in the Smokey Hollow during World War II? Some of the things that you did?

V: Well, World War II, like I said, we were short of doctors. That is when we had to help one another because the doctors were tired. We used to have Dr. Levy come. He always told me, "Try to help some of them out by painting their throats when they get sore throats." Because in those days we didn't have the antibiotic. He said, "if you do that you will help me out."

M: Was your husband working extra hours during the war? Longer?

V: Well, sometimes they did. And in those days too a lot of the women were working, but I didn't work.

M: You didn't work?

V: No. I had more free time to take care of the children. I liked it.

M: That is something that you did to help the war effort. Do you remember doing anything else special to help the war effort?

V: No, not that I could remember.

M: Did they start rationing? Was it especially tough down in Smokey Hollow during the war? I know that there was a rationing of sugar...Was it harder to get that stuff down in the Hollow?

V: No, that was a little before my time. Like when I was down at home I remember that they had a little bit of a harder time but we were a big family. They went according to your family and how big you were, and that is how much you would get. I know that one time when I was down in the Hollow I had a lot of company from Niles. Joanne, that is my niece, that would be Jimmy Vichelli's sister, it must have been on a Friday because she had eaten fish and she had a bone stuck in her throat. They were telling her, "eat bread." And they were trying to make her swallow and do everything that she could to pass that bone in her throat. She knew that she had a bone stuck in her throat.

M: Oh, man.

V: So, I said, "Okay, come on." She came over to my house. I said, "Honey, open your mouth real wide..." The sun was coming in through the window and I could just see in her mouth and I could see the fish bone so I reached in with my hand, took it out and gave it to her and said, "Here you are, Jo." So, it was my house. If something went wrong they would come up there. It was a lot of fun down there and we had it nice. Like in the evenings...We would always wait for my husband to come home from work and we went for our custard.

M: Oh, really? Where did you used to go?

V: Yes. Handles. We would get the car load filled and away we would go.

M: Do you remember keeping your doors unlocked and opened all of the time?

V: No, down there you didn't have to worry you could just leave your door open, go to the store, come back, and nobody would bother you.

M: Wow.

V: It isn't like that today. Today you have to lock everything up. You have to have security.

M: Like you do?

V: I have security now and I have to watch.

M: Do you remember any crime down in the Hollow?

V: Like over here now my house was broken into twice, but I don't remember any crime down in the Hollow. My door was open. I would go to the store, come back, go to my sister-in-law's and now I wouldn't go next door without locking my doors.

M: Really?

V: No.

M: That is such a shame that it is like that now.

V: It is not safe here. Like down the Hollow you would open your door and you wouldn't have any trouble. I don't know if today is the same but that is the way it was in those days. Even at home our doors were always opened.

M: Do you remember hearing about any stories down there in the Hollow? Robberies?

V: No.

M: None at all?

V: Not that I know of.

M: That is just so amazing that there wouldn't be any.

V: They have broken into different places but they never broke in at my place.

M: Do you attend the reunion? The Smokey Hollow reunion that they have every year? Do you go to that?

V: I went to some of them but not all of them. These last couple reunions I didn't go to but the others I did.

M: What goes on at those reunions?

V: Well, you have dinner and you visit everybody there and you reminisce and talk about the old days.

M: Do you know why they called it Smokey Hollow?

V: No, I don't.

M: Do you have any idea?

V: No, I have no idea. I never asked them.

M: Did you have to clean your house a lot?

V: Yes, I had to clean my house because every morning you would have to get up and from the mill you would have all those little sparkles on your porch. The first thing that you do when you came out was sweep your porch and your sidewalk.

M: Somebody told me that that was good because they knew that the mills were working?

V: Yes, but now it is clean and it is a clean pocket with no money coming in. But then like say you had the dirt but you had money. But of course my husband didn't work down there but a lot of them used to say that. They would say, "It was better when we were dirty." Because that is when they would have the money. That is when the Republic Steel and everybody was working down there, Sheet & Tube.

M: What would you consider the boundaries of Smokey Hollow?

V: What I always heard was Crab Creek, whatever that was down there by Andrews Avenue. They figured that that

was the boundary line. Now I don't know if I am correct or not.

M: I think that Crab Creek was towards the East boundary and the North boundary was towards Madison...

V: Yes, because all of those past that they weren't considered Smokey Hollow.

M: Do you remember an area called Oak Park?

V: Yes, well Oak Park was down there but I don't know if they are supposed to be counted as Smokey Hollow or not?

M: I heard that that was the elite Smokey Hollow.

V: Yes, because that is going down right passed Andrews Avenue.

M: Do you remember an area down there called the Monkey's Nest?

V: Monkey's Nest? That wasn't in the Hollow that was over there by Briar Hill on the other side.

M: I heard that that was around Smokey Hollow?

V: No, not that I know of unless there is another place down there that they call the Monkey's Nest.

M: Where you living down there when I-680 came through? When they were building that by-pass by Mount Carmel? The free-way?

V: You mean the free-way going over to Oak Street?

M: Yes.

V: Well, Oak Street was there, the bridge was there when I got married.

M: Oh, it was?

V: Yes.

M: Then I-680 where it goes passed YSU, the by-pass? Did they start building that when you were living down there or was there...

V: I think that a lot of that building there was done after I moved out of there.

M: Was the University trying to buy land down there do you remember?

V: Oh, the University was buying after we moved out of there.

M: Oh, really?

V: Yes, right after we moved.

M: They started building down there?

V: Yes, because when I got married down there it was the University and it wasn't a State school like it is now.

M: Right.

V: There weren't this many buildings either. They just had a few building down there.

M: Do you remember buildings down there for the University?

V: No, I don't. I know that the college was very small down there.

M: Looking back, living down in Smokey Hollow, what do you think probably your most memorable experiences are? If you can give some. Things that you could remember the most? Maybe some of the feelings that it gives you?

V: Well, what I liked down there was mostly all of the people. The people that I knew that were real close around me. I liked all of them and even when I see them today I feel real good and I'm glad to see them. I do miss them compared to up here. Because they always feel as if they come from a different class and I like them better ... Whether they are older or I knew them longer but they seem better.

M: When you moved into the Hollow coming from Niles, were you accepted right away by the people in the Hollow?

V: Oh, yes. Well, of course I knew some of them because my husband belonged to the Golden Eagles and I knew a lot of the fellows and their wives so I just fell right in.

M: So, you got along with those people?

V: Yes.

M: Did you ever have any prejudices or anything against you?

V: No. I was always treated real good, I think because of my husband. He liked the club and he was one of the old members and he was always liked.

M: So, they just accepted you?

V: Yes, they just accepted me through him.

M: Looking back again, if you could change anything about living down there (while you were living down there) to make it better, could you think of some things that you would like to change about living down there?

V: No, I don't think so. I don't think that there could be anything to change.

M: Do you wish that you could have had a bigger house down there?

V: Yes. If I had this house down there.

M: I think that I have gotten that answer a lot. Nobody would have wanted to changed anything about living down there.

V: You can't take that away from the Hollow. They were real nice people down there. Of course they were all born and raised down there and I came in from the outside and still they treated me real good.

M: That gives it a different look.

V: Yes, it does.

M: Is there anything real important that you think I might have left out about living down there? Any stories?

V: Not, that I know of.

M: Well, then thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW