

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Shenango Valley Depression Project

Personal Experiences

O. H. 738

PAULINE RATVASKY

Interviewed

by

Marilyn Lees

on

August 6, 1982

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Shenango Valley Depression Project

INTERVIEWEE: PAULINE RATVASKY

INTERVIEWER: Marilyn Lees

SUBJECT: Farrell Fire Department, immigrants, free concerts,
Eleanor Roosevelt, transportation

DATE: August 6, 1982

L: This is an interview with Pauline Ratvasky for Youngstown State University, on the Shenango Valley during the Depression, by Marilyn Lees, in Sharon, Pennsylvania, on August 6, 1982, at 11:30 a.m.

First of all, when were you born and where?

R: October 5, 1920 in Farrell, Pennsylvania.

L: What were your parents' names?

R: Anna and John Rayak.

L: What nationality were they?

R: Slovak.

L: Were they both Slovak?

R: Yes.

L: Were they born here, in America?

R: No, they were both born in Czechoslovakia.

L: Did they marry there?

R: No, they came here. They came here and they met. My mother, when she came here, got a job with a Jewish family, and then they met.

L: In the Shenango Valley?

R: Yes, in the Valley.

L: What did your father do for a living?

R: He was a mill worker.

L: Did he have any extra jobs on the side?

R: He worked for the railroad. The railroad and the mill both.

L: Did your mother work at all?

R: No.

L: How many children were in your family?

R: Six.

L: How were you in the order? Were you the oldest?

R: I'm the youngest.

L: What were some of your duties as a child?

R: Well, cleaning and taking care of my parents more or less. Clean the house and just do regular chores around, probably, that's all.

L: What kind of games did you play as a child?

R: Hopscotch, run sheep run, and black sheep black.

L: Did all the children in the neighborhood play together?

R: Yes.

L: Boys and girls always?

R: Always, yes.

L: Did you have any pets or animals?

R: Yes, we had roosters. Those fighting roosters, what do you call them? We also had dogs, cats, anything.

L: Did you have chickens that you raised for eggs and so on?

R: Yes, we had them.

L: What did your family do for recreation?

R: At that time, when I was younger, they had picnics, bingo, and many things like: Going places, visiting neighbors,

having parties in the neighborhood, stuff like that.

L: In your neighborhood, did the people do a lot together?

R: Always, everything was together.

L: Such as what?

R: I mean, like, in the event that somebody was sick. Well, my mother always made sure that someone in the neighborhood, or herself, would go over and clean the house, or cook for that person, or take care of the children. It was always one, big, happy family.

L: Where did you live in Farrell?

R: On 1916 Webster Street, Farrell.

L: So it would be the Webster Street area that you're speaking about?

R: Yes.

L: Was it a mixed neighborhood?

R: Yes.

L: In other words, were there other nationalities there?

R: Oh, yes. Croatian, Serbian, Russian, and there was one colored family.

L: Everyone cooperated and got along?

R: Yes, there was no trouble.

L: Where did you go to elementary school at?

R: Eckel School.

L: How did you get there?

R: Walked.

L: Around how far would that have been?

R: A couple of miles.

L: Where did you go to high school?

R: At the Farrell Senior High School. After I was through elementary I went to parochial school.

L: For how long?

R: From the fifth grade on. Fifth to the ninth, four years.

L: What subjects did you have in high school?

R: I took, not the academic, but the general.

L: General?

R: I took the general courses. In the elementary school, like I said, it was regular reading and arithmetic, but then in the Catholic, parochial school, I had religion and speech. I spoke Slovak fluently, learned to write fluently.

L: Did they teach you that in school?

R: Yes, more or less. Then when I went to senior high school I was way ahead of myself; I knew all of that.

L: What church ran that?

R: Saint Anne's.

L: Did you do anything in the church that, more or less, supported your ethnic background? Did you have language classes in church?

R: No, it was private. It was private; I was taking my language lessons privately. Under the school they had a special course for somebody in that language, like Slovak. Like on Thursdays you could go down under the school and they would teach you to write and everything.

L: Right in the school itself?

R: Yes, but it wasn't a course you had to take. It was because I was president of the Slovak Society in Farrell. I had to take the minutes of the meeting, and I had to write them in Slovak.

L: How old would you have been when you became president?

R: About fifteen.

L: What kind of activities did the Slovak organization do?

R: They had picnics; they took care of the old. Taking care of the elderly was something we started. If somebody couldn't get to church, we took them to church. If they wanted somebody to go get groceries for them, we took them to get groceries, or we helped them.

L: What was your favorite school activity?

- R: Basketball. I played basketball. Then we played a game similar to that bocce, pitching horseshoes.
- L: What did young people do for fun? As a teen-ager, what would you do for fun?
- R: At that time they used to have concerts up at Farrell City Park. They had concerts where you could go up there. They used to have picnics every Sunday.
- L: Who would sponsor it?
- R: Well, the churches or different organizations like us. Once a month in the summertime, starting in May, you could take a bunch of children down to see the mines or go to Brownsville and see the different stores there. They did it for nothing. At that time there was no such things as a young kid having a nickel. When I was president, the people paid \$1 above their insurance. I used to take that dollar. Every month when I would collect it, I would have \$25. I put that aside. I would have about, on the average, \$75 or \$100. I would take these kids. We used to have bowling down there for them too. There was always somebody there to take care of them so their parents didn't have to be bothered.
- L: You're talking about younger children then?
- R: I'm talking about kids from five years up. They used to have the little, tiny duckpins--the little bowling balls--and that's what they used.
- L: These concerts, what kind of music was it?
- R: Marks and his band.
- L: Carl Marks?
- R: Carl Marks, and then the school bands. A lot of times the Tambouritzas, the Croatians would be there. The Tambouritzas would play at the picnic. The concerts were sponsored by, maybe, kids who were learning.
- L: These were all free to the public?
- R: All free to the public.
- L: Where did you go shopping at this time, grocery shopping and such?
- R: We had an A&P store in Farrell. At that time, the Farrell, Idaho Street was all built up. There were three or four different grocery stores there. There was a five-and-ten down Broadway which was the main drag, the main street rather.

We had to go down shopping in that area of Farrell; there were no plazas.

L: Did a lot of people, during the Depression, buy things on credit?

R: No, you could never get it on credit.

L: At the grocery stores if you didn't have money, was it a common practice in Farrell that people could just put it on a bill?

R: No, I never knew my parents to have been able to get credit at all.

L: They always had to pay cash?

R: Always had to pay cash, but then the prices were as such that you were able. At that time, you see, they had WPA (Works Progress Administration). At that time, the only thing you bought in the store was, maybe, meat, and that was once a week.

L: Once a week?

R: That was on a Sunday. Like my mother, she raised her own chickens. She made soup, so she roasted a chicken. She had her own eggs, or baked her own bread, or she made her own rolls. There was no such thing as going to the store, like I do now, and spending \$70 or \$80; that was ridiculous. My mother used to get \$50 every other week from my dad during the Depression. He worked; he had to go to work. When he came home, he brought home \$50 clear.

L: For a week?

R: Two weeks.

L: He worked for, is this the Grindstone?

R: It was a coal mine there.

L: Where was this located?

R: Right out of Brownsville.

L: How would he get to work?

R: He had to stay there. He stayed in a rooming house with ten other men.

L: I don't know where Brownsville is.

R: That would be out of Pittsburgh.

L: He didn't live at home then?

R: No, he would come home only on the weekends. Sometimes that was because there was nothing to do.

L: There was nothing here?

R: Right.

L: So he had to work in the mines?

R: Right. My mother would do the best she could. I remember the times my mother didn't go to the store because she made her own noodles and had her eggs. She made her own bread. She made, like I said, chicken soup. She made chicken stew. She made a lot of things. At that time you could make noodles. There were no plastic bags, so you put it in a regular brown bag and it kept ten times better than it does in plastic.

L: Did she buy hamburger? Was hamburger cheap at this time?

R: No, she didn't buy hamburger. She used to get her own meat and grind it. We had our own meat grinder. She never would buy hamburger. It would save money. The only kind of meat that I remember my mother buying would be maybe, chuck, to grind, and at that time it was 39¢ a pound.

L: Did they give away soupbones at the grocery store?

R: Yes. Soupbones were free; liver was free; the gizzard was free. All the parts of the chicken other than the back and the legs were free.

L: Did your parents have a garden?

R: Oh, yes, a very large garden. We had two gardens. We had a twenty-five foot garden right by our house. Then we had a garden down at the mill that my dad worked on.

L: What kind of things would they grow in their gardens?

R: Everything. Everything was just beautiful. There were potatoes--we used to grow potatoes--corn, tomatoes, lettuce, everything. My mother had berries in the backyard, along our fence; she had red raspberries and blueberries, two apple trees, and plum trees.

L: Did she can?

R: Yes, she canned everything. That was another thing that saved a lot. They used to do it then. Right now, like I said, we buy it because we don't have to buy in abundance. People don't have as many children as they used to at that time.

L: What were holidays like? Let's say, Christmas.

R: They used to be beautiful. A Christmas never went without the fire department having a Santa Claus down there where they had gifts for every kid in Farrell.

L: Even during the Depression?

R: Even during the Depression with the donations from all the merchants. They used to have them in paper bags, and they had a little gift plus candy; at that time, you got that rock candy. You know what rock candy is?

L: Yes.

R: Well, it used to be that you would go down and get maybe a nickel's worth of rock candy, or black house suckers, or hardtack. My mother used to make candy.

L: For Christmas?

R: All the time. A lot of times, a lot of women used to take little walnuts and paint them for Christmas. We had traditional suppers and stuff like that. Christmas Eve we always went down to the fire department and in the front of the fire department, they had a big place--chimney-like--where you could go in, where Santa Claus was. When you went in there, he was waiting for you, and then you would come out the other door. Those years were the most memorable to me that I can remember.

L: Did your family go to church on Christmas Eve?

R: Oh, yes, at 12:00 all the time.

L: For midnight mass?

R: Yes.

L: What would happen when you got home?

R: There would be a lot of people there, the neighbors.

L: The neighbors came to your house?

R: Yes, either to our house or we would just go everywhere. My mother never put up the tree before Christmas Eve. The kids never found it or saw the tree before Christmas Eve. Gifts were never what you bought at the store. The neighbors all brought their gifts. Everybody in the neighborhood had something for somebody else's kids. There was no such thing as my mother going down and buying something. She either made it, or my father made it because he was a carpenter.

For every Christmas, for every little kid on our block he made a stool. They sat on it. He would make the little girls little dolls.

L: Wooden dolls?

R: Wood dolls. For the older women he would make plaques or spice racks for people or lacquered something like that. But you see, there was no such thing as Christmas shopping. When we went down to Farrell Five-and-Ten at Christmastime, we got Christmas wrapping. We could get ten rolls for a dollar. There was no such thing as Scotch tape, and there was no such thing as putting ribbon on it. My mother used to make her own glue out of flour and water. She kept that overnight, mixing it. She would take her gifts and put a dab of that on it.

L: It was probably better than Scotch tape today. What was your Christmas meal like?

R: Christmas is a fast. Christmas is fasting. Christmas Eve, throughout the day, we would have fish, baked fish and the frozen fish and eel in a crock. Then they had pickled herring, pickled pickles, and pickled peppers. Then we used to have mushroom soup. We would have seven different entrees.

After our meal on Christmas Eve was over, if there were any kids in our house, they would take the four corners of the tablecloth with the crumbs on it and take it out to the back porch and throw it out into the wind. That was to make sure Santa Claus comes, and to bring good luck for the years. After that was over usually then people would get ready to go to church. You could hear Christmas carols from about 10:00 until the next day.

L: The neighborhoods would carol?

R: It was mostly from the fire department and the police station-- they had a loudspeaker--or the churches. The whole town could hear it.

L: What church did you go to?

R: Saint Anne's.

L: What was Christmas Day like? Is that when you opened up the gifts?

R: Yes, in the morning. We would get up early. We would open up our gifts. Like I said, then, we all went to church again, the other service at 10:30. We went to church and came home. Usually my mother didn't go. When she came, she would always say, "I still have the tablecloth upstairs." She had a

Christmas tablecloth on the table. She would have the whole table set when you came home from church. We would eat. That's when we would start making rounds, going and looking at everybody else's Christmas trees.

L: In the neighborhood?

R: Yes. Or we would go down to the square where they had a beautiful Christmas tree. People would be caroling there all night. It was just beautiful. The churches were just all lit up. Inside and outside, all the houses were lit up. There wasn't one house, I think, in Farrell that didn't have a star on it.

L: What was your traditional Christmas dinner like?

R: First of the entrees was soup, then always chicken, squirrel, or rooster, or something like that, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, and a vegetable. At that time there was no such thing as salad. In those days all it was was . . . My mother used to pickle. We would have pickled peppers and regular peppers in a sauce; you would cut them and that's what you had.

L: Did you have any cookies?

R: Oh, all kinds. Everybody in the neighborhood brought a different kind of cookie.

L: What was the mood of the people like during the Depression?

R: You mean as far as anger?

L: Well, was there any anger, or were people more or less content?

R: They weren't content, but they made the best of it. They weren't angry. I never knew anybody to be angry; they made the best of it. During the Depression, you could go to a neighbor and if he had what you needed and he didn't need it, he would give it to you. There was no money exchange, because there wasn't any. I would say that there was a very good spirit in the air.

L: What was the reaction toward FDR's (Franklin Delano Roosevelt) New Deal? When FDR was elected the first time in 1932, do you think people's mood changed? If it did, how did it change?

R: I think that it did, for the better. I think that everybody knew that he was going to do good. You know what I'm talking about . . . He did. He changed everything right away. Like I said, he made this WPA; he made different things for people to get work with.

L: Did the working people in Farrell favor these changes, for the

most part?

R: Oh, yes, I think so. It was he who made sure the banks all went under the government. You see, during the Depression, my dad lost a lot of money.

L: When the banks closed?

R: When the banks closed, that was . . .

L: 1929. You would be nine years old. Do you remember what the mood of your peers was?

R: They were glad to get what they got. They got a penny on a dollar. The penny on a dollar is what they had; I think my parents had almost \$3,000 in banks. At that time it was in the Gulley's Bank in Farrell. You just made the best of it. I had never known anybody to be angry; there was no such thing as riots. At that time, there was no such thing as people fighting each other.

L: Did you have a radio?

R: That's all we had.

L: Do you remember listening to FDR's fireside chats?

R: Well, I did, but not as I would know what he was saying. But, my father would because he would really . . . When he spoke, there was nothing else on the radio. I grew up with Molly--Picker Magee and Molly--Amos and Andy, and all them. We didn't have television. We did other things. Like I said, we had something to do all the time. There was sled riding, having a lot of fun. We would go roller skating right on the street. There was no such thing as people getting hurt or losing limbs or something.

L: On a typical day, what time would children usually get up, say in the summer?

R: Usually 7:00 or 7:30.

L: You would have your breakfast and go out and play?

R: Yes.

L: What time would you go to sleep?

R: About 9:00.

L: Were there street lights?

R: Yes, we had street lights. On our block alone there were two.

There were about two a block.

L: Were the roads paved?

R: No, our road down there wasn't paved until I got older. It was a dirt road but then, like I said, the sidewalks were always pretty well protected. The city always kept them in order. There was no such thing, like now, that somebody else has to fix their own sidewalk if it's broke. You didn't have to do that; the city did it.

L: Did you know many people who used cars?

R: Oh, not too many. My parents had a car later on, but it was an older Chevy. It was the, what do you call it, the Packard, the old-fashioned Packard. It didn't have windows; it had the side plastic that you put on; you buttoned the plastic.

L: What other forms of transportation did they have besides walking?

R: Streetcars.

L: How much did it cost to ride a streetcar?

R: A nickel to ride that. The policemen had motorcycles. There was only one cop in Farrell.

L: That was all?

R: That's all.

L: Was there a train that went through Farrell that you could ride?

R: Down Broadway, yes. It was the Pennsylvania Railroad; that's the one my father worked for. Later on, after the mill went down then, yes, we always had a pass; you could go down right by where Sharon Steel is now. There used to be a station and that's where we used to get it, sit in it and go. At that time, for one dollar you could go all the way down to Pittsburgh and back.

L: At this time, did any children in your family try to help by doing little jobs around the community, to help bring some money in?

R: Yes, we used to have produce. My mother used to have us go up the boulevard because the men up there always had work, and that's where the bosses were. We used to sell vegetables to them. That's the only way we had to make it. I used to go and take care of a doctor's wife who was crippled. I made \$2.50 a week. I went seven days a week.

L: Where did you buy your clothes, or did your mother make them?

R: No, my mother didn't make the clothes because I have the Singer sewing machine of hers out there. She couldn't afford the material. They didn't have material like they do now. There used to be a place, Federated Dry Cleaning, and that's where she used to get the clothing. During the Depression, there were a lot of people who would take their shoes down and have them soled. Sometimes they couldn't afford to get a new pair.

L: Yes, my dad was talking about putting cardboard in the bottom of his shoes until he could have the money to get new ones.

R: Right. At that time, I don't think you can buy it now, but Goodyear used to have a sole that you pasted to the bottom of your shoes. I used to get so upset with my father; I wanted to get a new pair of shoes and my mother would say, "Yes, the next time your father gets an extra dollar," because you could buy a pair for a dollar. I would come in at home and there were my shoes sitting right there, all polished with a rubber sole on.

L: You had an older sister?

R: Yes, but she wasn't here. She was in Youngstown; she went to look for work.

L: What did she do in Youngstown?

R: She did housework. That's the only thing a woman had to do then.

L: She lived there?

R: Yes, she lived right there, and that's where she got married.

L: What about your older brothers?

R: My one older brother went to Pittsburgh and got a job and stayed there. The other brother died, but he went over to Warren and started working at a gas station and at the factory. The only ones were my younger brother and I who lived at home. My brother and I are the ones who did all the selling. Another thing my mother did was make flowers and we used to sell flowers. I used to walk as far as the Sky Club.

L: The Sky Club on the west hill in Masury?

R: That's how far I used to walk because I wasn't allowed to use the 10¢ to get on the bus or get on the streetcar. I had to bring that money home.

L: Did you go to any movie theaters?

- R: We had two theaters in Farrell, Capsule Theater and the Colonial. To get in it cost you a quarter. If you didn't have the quarter, you could bring a can of beans or a can of vegetables.
- L: Oh, really. You mean, you didn't always have to have the money?
- R: No, you could bring that. Sometimes that was a lot more than a quarter. Sometimes we used to sneak it out of the house.
- L: Are there any personalities that you remember? We talked about FDR; do you remember his wife at all?
- R: Yes.
- L: How did you come into contact with her?
- R: All her organizations. A lot of times she was for the blind, or she was for the paralysis, any paralysis organization because her husband was a paraplegic.
- L: How about on the radio, anything that you remember?
- R: You mean as far as having some prestige?
- L: No, just that stand out in your mind. You mentioned Mickey and Molly as being a show; do you remember anything else like that?
- R: Amos and Andy.
- L: How about any songs at this time?
- R: I wasn't too much into music. The only thing they had that I liked were the religious songs. Usually they had different little plays on radio, like they would have now, serials.
- L: Like the soap operas today?
- R: The soap operas that they have on television, that's what they used to have on radio.
- L: How was your neighborhood, the one on Webster Street? How has it changed since the Depression?
- R: Well, not much. Everybody has fixed up their homes. They always kept up their homes. During the Depression, they kept up their homes better than the ones that are kept up now.
- L: How big was your house?
- R: It had three bedrooms, a sun porch, seven rooms, a big cellar, and a big yard.

L: Did your father build it?

R: No, they had it built at that time.

L: Do you remember what year it was built?

R: No, I don't.

L: Before you were born?

R: Well, I'm 62 and I was born in 1920, so I would say about 1915.

L: Your parents owned your house?

R: Oh, yes.

L: Was that true of the neighborhood: People didn't rent homes; they owned homes?

R: They owned them. There was no such thing as rent.

L: Do you remember people losing their homes?

R: Oh, yes. I remember two families who lost, but those were the families who tried to live above their needs. You know what I'm talking about. The way they lost their homes is they went to the bank and got money on their property. Whenever they lost their jobs and everything, then the bank took over their property.

L: What would happen to these people?

R: They would have to get out and go someplace else. The two families who I know, the one family moved on top of a store, and another family moved someplace else. They were the only two families who I knew who moved like that, and then they had to find some other room. Because if you rented, then you had nothing. I'll never forget the time that a fellow came to date. My dad wanted to know where his parents lived. He said that they didn't have their own home, and, you know, I could go out with him. I couldn't go out with him because if you didn't have anything . . .

At that time, when I was a young girl, you had to go steady with somebody who was your own religion and your own nationality.

L: Your parents enforced this?

R: Absolutely. There was no such thing as me staying out, even when I was fourteen years old, past 9:00. I'll never forget the time I came home from my girlfriend's house at 9:30. I came in the house; I had to go down and my father locked me in the

- bathroom in the cellar.
- L: For all night?
- R: Yes.
- L: Where did young people go on dates?
- R: To the show, up to the park, or to a dance.
- L: Where would the dance be?
- R: We usually had places downtown like the Slovak Hall, the Italian Hall, even in your own home. Record players were a big thing then, not electric, but windup. At that time, our parents, as long as we kept to the times, and as long as we were right there or somebody was there with us . . . We were never allowed, you know what I mean, to go sit in a car, or go anywhere. We had to stay right in the house, or sit outside or someplace where you could see.
- L: When did you graduate from high school?
- R: 1935.
- L: What did you do after graduation?
- R: I had two years of business college. They had a place down there on . . . You know where the gas company is?
- L: Yes, in Sharon.
- R: There used to be a place right there where you went upstairs; that was where I learned typing, with a business degree, just like Youngstown State University.
- L: Do you remember how much the tuition was?
- R: Six hundred dollars I think it was.
- L: Did you pay for that?
- R: No, I got that through the Slovak Society.
- L: Was it like a scholarship?
- R: Yes. Like I said, I had to learn how to do different things for the presidency. When they opened that, I went and advanced my skills.
- L: What did you do after business school?
- R: Then I went to Westinghouse. No, that was during the war.

Then I went down to Sharon Steel and worked in the lab; then I worked at Westinghouse. I worked all over.

L: When did you get hired at Sharon Steel?

R: During the war.

L: During the war years when they were allowing women to work in the mill?

R: Yes. I worked in the lab, and then I worked downstairs in the mill as an inspector. That was when I learned the different alloys and stainless, you know. Then I learned how to use the micrometer down there. We had to learn all that stuff. Now people who work down there don't have any of that. It used to be, when we went to work, I had to walk from . . . You know where the library is in Farrell?

L: Yes.

R: To the place that burned down, you know, the Sharon Steel. That's where I walked every day, every day back and forth.

L: Did you work different turns?

R: Yes, three different turns.

L: Did you feel safe walking at night?

R: Yes, because nobody bothered us, nobody. They had lights. It was a dirt road all the way down from Staunton over. There was nobody; we weren't afraid of anything. I walked many times home from there and to work at midnight. I never heard of anything like this going on now.

L: During the Depression, do you remember what the unemployed men would do with their time?

R: There was nobody around who would be unemployed. If they didn't have a job, they would go down to the city building. There was a lady there by the name of Miss Fauby. She would find them jobs, usually, working for the WPA. They paved roads in Farrell mainly; they cleaned streets.

L: Do you remember any unemployed men on the streets or anything like that?

R: I hardly ever did. They always found things to do, either at their homes or . . . They used to go run the farms. They would go work on the farms. My father did it one time. He worked with a peddler, selling things.

L: Going house to house?

- R: House to house or he would work with a man in the wintertime. They used to take pigs and butcher them. Or they would bring you the whole pig and you could buy the whole pig and butcher it. The men, maybe they would say, "Well, if you give me this part of the pig, I'll help you do this." But they kept busy; they always kept busy. At that time it was different; there was not the greed like there is now. There was not the greed, and there was not the . . . Oh, I don't know how to even say it.
- L: I've heard people say that life was so much simpler.
- R: It was. I will never forget the time this one man came from Detroit. It was so bad in the bigger towns and he came to Farrell. He had a friend there called Mr. Johnson. They took him in, took care of him, gave him a little bit of money to where he got himself established, and had his family come over. That was what you did: You helped each other. You never heard of anybody walking the streets.
- L: What about down near the railroad, were there any bums that used to ride the train?
- R: My dad never told me any of that.
- L: When did you get married?
- R: 1948.
- L: So that would be after the war?
- R: Yes.
- L: Do you consider these days--during the Depression when you were growing up--the good, old days, and why?
- R: Yes, I consider them the good, old days. I'll tell you why; I never heard of any discrimination; I never heard of any fighting; I never heard anybody talk about each other. People were more helpful to each other. They were more religious. There were no such things as killing, rape, nothing like that. I could walk down the street and I never heard anybody say, "Well, I saw your . . . cheating on you." They never saw anything like that. I never heard anything like that. Men in those days had more respect for each other and themselves, as well as their neighbors.
- L: Is there anything that you would like to add that you can remember?
- R: No, that's about it.

L: Did you know any boys who went to the CCC camps (Civilian Conservation Corps)?

R: No.

L: But did you know people who worked on WPA? Did people think this was a good idea?

R: Yes, because that was a way they had a chance of getting a dollar. CCC, that was another type of organization. I think it was more or less like, you would send a boy to camp to learn different things to keep him off of the streets. I think that was another thing that was good for them, right there. Other than that, all I know, it's a heck of a lot different now than it ever was.

L: Do you remember any immigrants coming from Europe to Farrell at this time?

R: Yes, I remember quite a few. They would come and they were always told to come to my parent's house, because my mother spoke five different languages. My father spoke seven and I was learning to speak the languages. When these people came, they didn't have to know where to go to buy groceries. They could only speak their language fluently, so they would come over to my dad, and my dad would take them to the store and introduce them to the storekeeper. He would say, "You know, this man is Serbian." The storekeeper was also Serbian. If somebody was Slovak, he would take them to a storekeeper who was Slovak. At that time it wasn't just the Jewish faith that had stores; it was all denominations. You would be surprised. They had a furniture store down there; they had many grocery stores down there. They were Croatian, Serbian, everything. My father used to take them around and he would introduce them to these different people.

L: Usually, if you were Croatian, you shopped at Croatian stores?

R: That's right. You would be surprised. If you went to the bank, you would go to the girl who worked there. Somebody would say, "She's Slovak; you go ahead." At that time, the younger girls my age would speak for these people like I do now.

L: Was it a common practice then since you would be first generation American, that you would be taught by your parents your native tongue?

R: Right. If you were Croatian, your children spoke that language. My children never wanted to learn. I spoke many times to my husband in my language; I still do. I can still write it. I can speak Serbian; I can speak Croatian, or I can listen to a Russian talking on the television and know

what he's talking about.

L: Did you have masses in your church in Slovak?

R: In Slovak, yes. We still do at Holy Trinity Lutheran, early in the morning.

L: Was there any English spoken at all in church?

R: Oh, yes, for the younger kids. We used to start at 7:00 and at 8:00 it was the other way. There was no more than one minister. There was only one priest at that time.

L: One priest would serve the whole church?

R: Always.

L: Anything else you can remember in that respect?

R: No.

L: Thank you again, very much.

END OF INTERVIEW