

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Anthony Murphy -- Autobiography

Personal Experience

O H 1883

ANTHONY MURPHY

Interviewed

by

Sally Murphy Pallante

on

October 22, 1997

P. This is an interview with Anthony Joseph Murphy for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Oral History of Tony Murphy, by Sally Murphy Pallante, on October 22, 1997, at 170 Topaz Circle in Canfield, Ohio, at 1 00 pm

Anthony Murphy is my father, and he is reluctant to be interviewed because he says he does not have a lot of information. So, I will begin the interview by providing some of the factual information which he has given me over the years that is statistical and hard to remember real quick when one is being interviewed. My great-grandfather, or Anthony J. Murphy's grandfather, was Michael Thomas Murphy. His parents were Thomas Murphy and Mary Joyce. We only know that they were all born in Ireland. My father thinks it was Cork. That, we hope, will be confirmed through research as the years go on, but it has not been determined thus far.

Michael Thomas Murphy was born in Ireland on and about November 6, 1842. He married a Bridget McFarland whose place of birth could have been in Ireland near him, about the same year, according to some information we have. Her place of death, of course, was in Youngstown. They were both living in Youngstown. Michael Thomas Murphy died December 21, 1922. Bridget McFarland died August 21, 1895. Bridget's parents' names were Owen and Sarah McFarland, all for Ireland research some time later. Michael Thomas Murphy had three sons and a daughter. His sons' names were Michael Joseph, Patrick John, Thomas, and Bridget. There is also in the records a mention of a Johnny Murphy which we also need to verify at some other time.

This interview is made for Youngstown State University's Oral History program and the Irish-American Archival Society's program to promote Irish histories of people in the Mahoning Valley.

Do you know anything about where your father was born?

M. My father was born in Birmingham, England. All his brothers and sisters were born over in Ireland. But, apparently, his father needed work or something, went over to England, and that is where my father was born, in Birmingham. But, all his brothers and sisters were born over in Ireland -- from what I recollect -- I believe in a County Cork. That is about all I remember about that.

P. When your family came over here, your dad got married. Do you happen to know where he met your mother or anything about their getting together?

M. Well, my mother was a Cavanaugh, Margaret Cavanaugh. [She was] Known as Maggie. She was born in Hubbard so, where my dad met her, I am not sure. But it was somewhere between Youngstown and Hubbard.

P. Okay, I have their marriage date as February 26, 1896. Do you think they moved directly onto Poland Avenue, maybe to that first house, around then?

- M See, that is before my time I do not remember. Where I was born was at 902 Poland Avenue But before that, all my older brothers were born up the street at the 800 block of Poland Avenue My dad had a saloon there Before he built the big house, which was 902 and 904 Poland Avenue, they had a saloon there. That is where I was born. I was born in 1916 there My brother Regis was, I believe, the first one born in the new house
- P Since so many of your brothers and sisters-- six of them, in fact -- did not live, do you want to list their names and maybe as far as when they were born? That is for the record
- M Well, if I remember right, there was ten of us brothers and sisters that were born Only four of us were raised But, I remember the names There was Michael He was born in 1896, but he died in around 1898 Edward was born in 1899 My brother Eugene, Gene, was born in 1901 and died in 1968 Margaret I do not remember Mary I do not remember Aloysius I do not remember, but I heard a lot about him The family always talked about Aloysius He died in the flu epidemic of 1918 Everybody I can remember talking about him and how nice a boy he was, and he should have been a priest There was Regis, myself Anthony, Bernard, and Rita Rita would have been the youngest, and she did not live too long, I remember She was a baby She was born in 1920, and just lived a few months So, that is all I remember about my brothers and sisters.
- P When you gave me a history a long time ago, you mentioned playing as a little kid, feeding chickens Did you have chickens at the back of the house on Poland Avenue?
- M Sure, we had a chicken house, and we had a smoke house We had an outhouse Everything in the back there Sure. Yeah.
- P When you were little, what kind of games would you play with your brothers?
- M Whatever little kids play We played hide-and-peek, and we played one-two-three-four -- whatever it was -- at the telephone poles We played a lot of little games when we were kids, same as any other little kid would be playing, I guess, today
- P You told about a grandfather walking down Franklin Avenue
- M. Oh, yeah That was my grandfather, Michael Thomas Murphy I just remember him. He lived up on Franklin Avenue with my father's brother, Tom He lived with Uncle Tom. He would walk down from Franklin Avenue, down Alpine Street, down the hill, down to our house, and I would be about four years old or so. I remember that. Before he would leave, he would always come over and press a quarter in my hand and Bernard's hand I guess we were the two youngest, and

that is all I remember about my grandfather.

P Do you remember anything about the other neighbors in that neighborhood?  
You have given me names over the years

M Our big house was a house, was a saloon, and there was a hotel above the saloon That was 902 and 904 Poland Avenue In the combined houses, there was, they said, some twenty-four rooms It was real big. Then, right next door was a double house that belonged to my dad, and one of the tenants was a family named Winat, W-I-N-A-T I used to play with the Winat's, Johnny Winat and Bruno Winat There was a sister I kind of forget her name There was a golfer by the name of Teddy Luther. He lived next door in that house, I recall He turned out to be a fine young golfer in our area, at that time Below that double house was a big lot with a big billboard, three or four billboard signs That property was also my dad's Then, of course, up on Franklin Avenue, he owned all that property where my Uncle Tom lived and a few other houses up on that area. That all belonged to my dad

My dad died in about 1927, and the crash came in 1929, when we were real little. Everything that my dad had at the time was lost to a sheriff's sale That is all I remember about that The saloon, after prohibition in 1918, he turned it over to a little grocery store, and they were hoping that prohibition would not last too long and they would be able to open up the saloon again But, of course, that never happened until 1932 under the Roosevelt administration So when my dad passed away, it was still a little grocery store After he died and after the house was sold at a sheriff's sale, my mother did not know too much what to do with it She had a big book All during the time when that crash of 1929 came along, all the groceries were supplied to all our neighbors and were put on what they call put on tick or on the book. I remember when we were leaving after the house was sold at the sheriff's sale and what not, my mother had the book, and I remember her saying, "Oh, poor so-and-so Her man has not worked in so long, and she can not pay this " That was the same story right down the line, and, finally, she just tossed the book, got rid of it, and that was the end of that

P That is beautiful, Dad.

M Yeah

P You told me that she also knew Cardinal Mooney's mother.

M Oh, yeah The neighbor up the street, maybe eight or ten houses up the street from us, was where Cardinal Mooney's family lived My mother and Cardinal Mooney's mother were very good friends There was a lot of the old Irish all settled down in the Poland Avenue section We were all from the same part over in Ireland I believe it was mostly Cork and down below where the Cavanaugh's

lived. Most of the families were from County Mayo. That is what I understand. Other parts of Youngstown had different ones. Up on Briar Hill, certain Irish people came from certain parts of Ireland. They were very clannish. They all lived up Briar Hill or on the East side, they all lived around Lansing Avenue and so forth. Of course, down where I lived was Old Kilkenny, which is now Poland Avenue. At that time it was called Old Kilkenny. That is because they came from the same part of Ireland.

P You told me that your mother had hurt her leg. Was that an accident at the house?

M Yeah. Sitting on the swing in front of our house. It was a nice night. They were just swinging, and the darn swing broke, and it came down on her leg and broke her leg. After that, she was more or less immobilized. She could not leave the house. She could hardly walk with canes or crutches. She just never got out of the house too much. She was pretty well immobilized. Incidentally, that house of ours at 902 Poland Avenue where we lived was right across the street, at the foot of the street from Alpine Street. A big hill going up the hill. I remember two or three times somebody would let off the brake of a parked car up on Alpine Street, and it would come right down across the street and right into our front porch, right into the house. About two or three times that happened.

P You have mentioned other neighbors, too, just so that we mention these names. I have heard the Cleary's. I have heard George Kelly and Nellie McHugh.

M Oh yeah. Yes.

P When you talked about the Cavanaugh's, you said there were family parties.

M Oh, yeah.

P What kind of parties? Did they bring their own food?

M Yes. I can remember, maybe it would be my mother's or my father's birthday. I am not sure which at the time. I was real little. But I can remember we would all be sitting around having our supper, and the front door bell would ring. My mother would go answer it. Oh, the door would open and in would come forty or fifty people all Cavanaugh's and relatives with the birthday cake and candles. That is the way they were years ago. They would all come barging in and have a big cake and a big Irish celebration. They were great for that. They were very clannish. The Cavanaugh's were wonderful people. That was my mother's maiden name. That was her side of the family.

P You said her sister Mayme married somebody by the name of Mullally.

M· Mullally, yes.

P· And they moved to Cleveland?

M· Yes, years ago. They moved to Cleveland. I believe Mr. Mullally, my uncle by marriage, married Mayme. I think he passed away before they moved to Cleveland. But her and her girls and her boys moved to Cleveland.

P· Okay, I have the names of the Cavanaugh's here. Maybe we should put that in the record. That would be your mother and then, I think, her brothers and sisters, and this is her parents. Edward Cavanaugh was born the fourteenth of October, 1824.

M· I do not know too many of them. That was before my time. But, I know Edward was my uncle Ed. I remember Dennis was a brother. He used to keep in contact with my brother Regis. The rest of these I never knew. I never knew Peter, James, John. Edward was Uncle Ed. I remember the name Daniel and Dennis. My mother's name was Margaret, and my aunt Mayme was Maryanne. I always knew her as Aunt Mayme, and my mother was known as Maggie.

P· When you were little, your mother probably taught you your religion. Do you remember anything special she had you do?

M· We used to say a prayer every night and, of course, a little prayer got longer and longer. After she passed away, it was Lord have mercy on poor pa's soul and poor ma's soul and uncles and aunts, dear Aloysius, Uncle Jim's, Uncle John's, Uncle Dan's, Aunt Kate's, Margaret's and John's, and Margaret and Mary, Mr. and Mrs. Clemens, Father Mears, Father Anthony, and Father Maurer's soul and all suffering souls in purgatory. That continued, got longer and longer all the time. That was taught by my mother, and I still continue in it.

P· I think that that is amazing that you remember that after all these years.

M· Oh, yeah.

P· Your dad's two brothers each married and had wives. For the record, Uncle Tom married who?

M· My Aunt Kate. She was Aunt Kate Moran. I remember that. The Moran's lived up on Franklin Avenue, also.

P· Uncle Pat married someone named Sarah.

M· Aunt Sarah. She was a wonderful woman. I do not remember her last name. They had no children, but she was a wonderful lady.

- P Do you know where they lived?
- M On Parkview Avenue, off of Old Hill, on the South side of Youngstown.
- P That is real good. And then Johnny We might find some information about this Johnny and Gert
- M Yeah They lived on Elm Street, right across from Saint Columba's church, right next to the old Welsh church His name was Murphy Apparently, I kind of forgot about him, Uncle John. He must have been a brother of my father's too, that I forgot about. But, I remember his wife was Gert I remember her I do not remember John He must have been dead Maybe that is why I did not remember too much about him I remember my Aunt Gert They had a son, John, the same age as I was John Murphy I kind of lost track of them. But I remember Frances Krause, my brother-in-law, later on in years became friends with John Murphy -- this same John Murphy -- on the West side They were good friends. I kind of lost all track of him, and he was my cousin
- P Okay, you used to have some odd jobs to do How about the Gibson springs? What did you do there?
- M. Oh, yeah I would walk down almost every day, either I or my brother, Bernard That was our job We would walk down and get a jug or two of good Gibson spring water On the way down, I remember there was a garage This was about 1922, or in that area In that garage was a real good friend, an Irish friend, by the name of Hank Downy That is when there were still horses and everything But a few trucks and everything were starting to show up about that time He was a mechanic, and he was the nicest guy. I remember we used to stop to see him every time we were walking down to Gibson's for the water We would always stop and chat with Downy at Downy's garage
- P Okay, when your father died, I have the date in the book as September 1, 1927 You had slept with him that night
- M Yes, yes My mother, when she called us to come down for breakfast, I remember he kind of gave me a little nudge He says, "You get up and go down and tell Mom I will be down in a little while " So, I went down and sat down and was having my breakfast Then we heard moans up there Right away my mother, she knew something was going on Apparently through the night my dad was maybe getting up and coming down, and she knew something was wrong When she heard him moaning up there -- my mother could not walk, she could not climb steps or go down steps or anything -- she almost ran up those two flights of steps up to the second floor My dad was dying or gone about that time I recall that. I remember Father Trainor came down, who later became Monsignor Trainor from Saint Columba's He gave him the last rights, but my

dad was dead. So, I do remember that

P The wakes were at home then. So, would that have been like in the parlor of your house?

M Yes, yes. They were held in the parlor. Of course, it was the Irish wake. I remember all the women who were in there were all crying and saying prayers and everything, and all the guys were in back or down the cellar somewhere drinking beer. The usual Irish wake. They did not mean anything disrespectful, but that is the way it was, I remember.

P You have mentioned the crash of 1929 and your mom having to sell everything at the sheriff's sale. When you moved to 120 Carol Street to live with Gene and Margaret Mary, Gene was kind of famous for something else around town.

M Oh, he was Youngstown's Irish tenor. He was one of the greatest Irish singers we had in our area. He was on the R.K.O. Vaudeville Circuit. He traveled around. Different fellows like Morton Downy, they used to come. When the Keith Circuit would be playing in Youngstown, they would all come down to my house. My mother was a great cook and made great devil's food cake. They all would come down and have dinner with her. There was quite a few. But I do remember Morton Downy for one. He was an Irish tenor, too, but everybody said Gene was the best of the two as far as the Irish tenors, and he was. It was a gift of the Lord. Gene had a wonderful voice.

P And education. Where did you go to school?

M I went to Saint Columba's school up on the corner of Elm and Rayen Street. Gene started school at the old Saint Columba on Franklin Avenue and Hadnutt Street, then went to school at Elm and Rayen, and so did Regis and myself and Bernard. We all went to Saint Columba's school.

P Which of your brothers put his feet through the ceiling one day?

M That was Bernard, yeah. That was in the eighth grade, and I believe sister Dorothea was his teacher at the time.

P Which is a Cavanaugh cousin?

M Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sister Dorothea was a Cavanaugh. She was Dorothy Cavanaugh. Her and the Deible girl, Sister Rosemary. Dorothy Cavanaugh and Rosemary Deible. Oh, there was a whole bunch of them young girls who all went in together. I remember the story was around all the young boys around Youngstown. They were almost in tears to see those two go into the convent. I guess they were so pretty and so popular. But they went in and became



wonderful Ursuline nuns

P Then, after Saint Columba, you went to South High

M South High

P. What year did you leave South High School?

M I graduated in 1934. When I went to Saint Calumba's, that is where I met my wife. She was a year behind me. Betty Alcook. Baptized Elizabeth Alcook, her mother was the former Mayme Welsh, and her grandmother, Mary Harlow, was born in County Donegal, Ireland. Her dad, Bill Alcook, his family originated in Wales. We used to have little parties in seventh and eighth grade like you do at different times of the year. I used to think she was the most stuck up little girl. A very pretty little girl, but very stuck up, I always thought. I never thought too much about her until I came home. After I got out of high school, I went out to California, and I came back home. I bumped into her again. To make a long story short, I never went back to California. I stayed home, and we got married. She was a wonderful person, the best little girl you could ever know or meet.

P Well, I know that for a fact.

M: Yeah.

P I remember you telling about your wedding and about the terrible snow that happened, and your honeymoon plans had got shortened up.

M Yeah, yeah. When we got married, it was Thanksgiving.

P. It was 1938.

M Yeah, and Thanksgiving. We were going to go to Chicago. That is sort of where our plans were. But there was a Rayen and South football game on that day, and they were trying to play football in that blizzard. We had the radio on. The state highway was coming on saying, "Everybody, you should stay home. Do not do any traveling unless it is absolutely necessary." We thought it was necessary. We started out, and as far as we could get was Warren. Warren, Ohio. So, that is where we had our honeymoon, in the Hotel Warner in Warren, Ohio. That was as far as we got.

P Was that in your new car, or was that a year or so later where you told me you had a club coup?

M Oh, that club coup came later. The little car, I think, was a little Terraplane. It was not much of a car. It was in good enough shape on an ordinary day weather.

to take us to Chicago. But as far as we got was Warren.

P You talked about, when you and Mom got to know each other, about some of the friends of Saint Columba. Was there a club, a Tresian club.

M Yeah, yeah.

P Were a lot of friends involved in it?

M The Tresian club was for the girls, and the Columba club was for the boys. Both your mother and Eleanor and, I think, maybe Cass were all past presidents of the Tresian club. They were very active in it. Father Dunn was the priest in charge. He was beloved by all the girls, Eleanor and Cass and Betty. They thought the world of Father Dunn.

P: When you were out going out, you mentioned that the Irish used to get together at some place called the Jester Club.

M Oh, yeah. That was up on Market Street. I am trying to think of the young lad. The partners were Corkey Kiltch and Jack Mulally. He was a member of the Columba club that was one of the partners there. That was in my high school days. That was a very popular place for us to stop on Market Street, was the Jester Club.

P Well, I know that I was born in 1940, and then you went off to the war. Could you tell just a little bit about where you trained and what ship you were on?

M That was about 1943, I think it was, when I went in. Sally, you were only about four years old, if you were that. I guess you were just about four. I went up to Great Lakes, trained up at Great Lakes in a crash course of about four weeks. Then, I was shipped off to California.

P Point Loma Naval Base.

M Yeah. San Diego, that is where I got my training. Then I had another four week crash course on radar and was trained. I was assigned to a jumping off place. I can not think of it right now. Camp Shoemaker. There were thousands of us there that were ready to be shipped off. I finally was assigned to a ship. I and about thirty-four other lads from Shoemaker was assigned to the Sicard, U S S Sicard DM 21. She just came back from Kisky, and they had her at the Bethlehem steel yards. They were refitting her. About that time, while they were refitting her, we had some time to spend out around there in California, San Francisco, and that area. The little town of San Diego, if I remember right, was about 20,000 people at that time. Now, I do not know, San Diego must be two or three million. But anyway, then it was small. Of course [with] all the war activity,

there was no room for anything. All you could see was soldiers, sailors, marines

Anyway, Betty wanted to come out, and I told her "no. You do not dare come out." Her and Sally were going to come out. I tried to tell her how bad things were out there. But anyway, I got a telegram that she was on her way and would be at the San Diego depot at such and such a time, and [there was] nothing I could do about it. So, I went down to the Hotel Grant. Through the Red Cross, I got a room for one week. They came out, and sure enough, we had the room for one week. At the end of the week, they wanted us out. I went and twisted their arm again, and I got an extension for one more week and that was all. So after that second week, we had to get out. There was no place for us to go at that time.

Finally, through the Red Cross, they recommended a little hotel somewhere on the outskirts that we went and found. Oh gosh, it was a dive. So, I did not know what to do. We were very desperate at the time. There was one other hotel in San Diego besides the Grant. At this other hotel, I went in and tried to twist somebody's arm there to get us a room there and to no avail. But anyway, while I was talking to them, a nice little old lady came over and tapped me on the back and said, "Do you need a room?" I said yes. She says, "Here, I live in such and so a street. You take the bus and get off at such a stop. You go in the back door. The back door will be open." She says, "You go up to the second floor, and there will be the room." She says, "Now, you will have to get out at 8:00 tomorrow morning." So, we went and got in that room. She says, "That will be twenty dollars." [Laughter] The war effort. This nice old lady opened her house to a nice group for twenty dollars, which was a lot of money back in those days.

Anyway, next morning Sally and Betty were going back to Al and Bonnie Hallden's. That is my good friend from Youngstown, Ohio, that were living out there. They were going to take Betty and Sally in. So, that was that story. Yeah.

P: That is a good story. Well, I remember I got the measles there. Was that not where I got sort of quarantined with their kids?

M: That was a little bit later than that. We were shipping out. I had said goodbye to you and your mother, and we were going down to National City. That is just before you get down to Tijuana. We were staying over at National City for another day or so. I remember being in the room with all these fellows. Oh, how was that now? I am going back on that story a little bit. When Betty and Sally came, I was in San Francisco. Now remember, I had my training in San Diego. But Camp Shoemaker was in the San Francisco area. I was in with thousands of sailors that were ready to be shipped off. There was a bunch playing little cards and sitting around, and I was kind of watching them play cards. One fellow said, "Geez, my wife lives in L.A. [Los Angeles]. She has got a car, but she does not know how to drive. She would like to come out so bad before I leave, but she can not drive. She has got the car, but she can not drive." I said, "Your wife is in

the L A area?" "Yeah " I said, "So is my wife and little girl " So, we got together We got on the telephone, called her I gave her Betty's number, who was staying with the Hallden's. They called each other, and first thing we knew, Betty was driving They were on their way out to see this fellow That is how I got to see Betty and Sally when I was out around the San Francisco area before we were leaving

Anyway, when I said goodbye to her at Camp Shoemaker when we was leaving, I thought we were on our way overseas But, we had orders that were kind of sealed or quiet During the war years, you did not know too much about what was going on But, here it turned out we were going right down to National City, and that is when I called Betty and told her "Well, I can say hello to you again because we are not on the way overseas We are down in National City." So by God if she did not hop on a train and her and Sally came down to National City There I am again with my best girls and no place to stay So we went to a little Catholic church that somebody recommended to go to and see the good Father down there at National City at this Catholic Church And I told him our predicament He invited us in the back, the court yard of the church The only thing that I can figure out [is] he was waiting until I itched his palm with some green stuff, which we did not have any too much left to go on So anyway, he said, "Well, goodbye Good luck "

I put her back on the train back to L A. and back to Al and Bonnie's. And on the way back, Sally picked up the damn measles I remember Betty telling me the story The trains were so crowded then, standing room only everywhere At the back towards one of the restrooms before you went into the restroom, there was an outer room with a sofa-like chair in it with three or four sailors or so sitting on it This old chief came up, and he met Betty He says, "That little girl is sick " He says, "I got little girls too like that " He said, "Come with me " And he took her into that room, and he said to those sailors, "Out, out, out " He got them out, and he put Sally down on the davenport Until they got back to L.A , that is where they slept When we got to L A , Betty says, "My God, I cannot take her up to Al and Bonnie's," because Al and Bonnie had two little girls about the same age as Sally So, she called Bonnie from L A and told her the predicament "We just got back from National City, and Sally is covered with measles " And Bonnie says, "Bring her right up " And, thank God, it turned out to be only the three day measles It was not the long ones So that was a wonderful friend we had out in California, Al and Bonnie They were real good friends from back home in my high school days and what not.

P During the war, Dad, where all did you serve? Where did your ship pull in?

M Well, I picked up the Sicard She had just been refitted She had just been refitted, and our first trip was down our own coast from San Francisco down to San Diego and back before we were to go overseas and pick up our orders On the way back after we came from San Diego, I had had, which I was not too used to, a little too much of tequila I kind of got a little sick. Coming back a couple of

my buddies said, "Geez if you get permission to go over and toss up your cookies, you will feel a lot better " So, I did I got permission from the captain to go out I leaned over the side, and I remember the waters was real rough out along our own shoreline. I remember I was leaning over The water would almost hit my nose Then, it would go way back and be way down there rolling the other way And I made myself sick, and I heard a clunk A lump came out of my mouth It was my new upper plate that I had put in I tossed it to the sharks The first thing, I almost went over after it If I was sick before that, you should have saw me I was really sick after that.

When we got back to San Francisco, they wanted to put me ashore My young officer in charge of our division, young Ensign McDonald, he raised cane with our captain He says, "No " He says, "Murph is a part of our crew, a three man crew " There was Ralph Farmer and Arky Chambers and myself were the three new ones, the three radar men aboard the ship. We were a crew So anyway, the captain said, "We cannot be babying him We are going on sealed orders, but we know, as far as our sealed orders are, first stop would be Honolulu But from then on, our orders are sealed We do not know where we are going " He says, "I will leave him on the ship as far as we all go over to Honolulu And if they cannot make him the teeth in a few days before we leave, we will have to leave him in Honolulu Join up with another outfit out there " That was that I went to Honolulu To make a long story short, I got my plate, and I stayed with the ship and my crew

Our sealed orders, actually it was a darn shame Going over, our ship that had just been outfitted had run into trouble down below. They had to put us in dry dock. They gave our orders to another ship, to a sister ship, the U.S S Pruett We did not know The young rookies did not know But the old-timers said, "Oh geez, we lost a good deal Now we lost our orders Now God knows what we are going to get " So after we came out, our new orders sent us to Midway Island to work with our submarines While we were down there, we got the word Our sealed orders on the U.S.S. Pruett and all that radioed, "We are going down." It was when they invaded Iwojima Our sister ship, the Pruett, we had heard, had taken a bomb right down one of her stacks, and she was gone That could have been our guys who were raising so much cane about losing a good deal I mean the good Lord saved us It was too bad for the Pruett, but it was not us So, that was it

P Okay, when you came back home, that is where you changed jobs You went into from the Sanitary Dairy to the fire department

M Oh, yeah, yeah Before the war, I had taken the exam for the fire department, and I was on the list But, of course, I was drafted before they got to my name on the list When I came back home, my brother Gene said, "You can get reinstated, if you care to, on that list " I was not too interested I said, "I do not know, Gene " He said, "Yeah." He said, "I will call Catherine Klee " She was head of the civil service or the secretary of the civil service, and he talked to her

And I got the card in the mail that said, "If you care to be put back on the list again, just come on down and sign up." I went down, and she put me on the list. Sure enough, I got a call that I was up for appointment. I was going to turn it down because I had a real good job with the Sealtest Dairy at the time. Very lucrative. That was in about 1943 or 1944, and I was making pretty good money as a milk man at that time, which was probably a lot more money than fellows with darn good jobs down at any of the mills was making. I thought, Geez I can not go on the fire department making not even half as much as I am making over here.

So, my brother Gene again said, "I am a good friend of Chief C B Thomas," of the Youngstown Fire Department at the time." He said, "I want you to go down and personally talk to him and turn in your resignation. You are going to turn it down to him." He said, "You have to have the courtesy to do that." So, I went down, and he says, "Sit down." He said, "If I was not such a good friend of your brother Gene's, I would not do this." He asked me how much I made at Sealtest, and I told him. He said, "Well, you would make not quite half on this job." I said, "No." He said, "Well, could they use you on your off day?" At that time they worked one day on and one day off. So, he made me call up my boss. I says, "My boss does not even know I am down here with a dairy truck parked in front of city hall." He says, "Call him up."

I called up Dailey. Oh he said, "You damn dumb Irishmen," and he started on me. I told him. I said, "Well, I am down thinking about taking the job or not taking it. Could you use me about three days a week up at Sealtest?" He cussed me out a little bit more and finally said, "Yeah, you are darn right we could." He says, "You are a good man." He says, "Sure we could." So, that is how I took the job. Chief Thomas told me. He says, "What if something would happen if you got hurt up at the milk company?" I says, "Well, if I got hurt, I would be hurt." "Well, what would happen to your wife or your daughter?" At that time, I believe I had a son also. Mike was born. I says, "Nothing. We have no benefits or anything like that." He began to tell me about a civil service job. If something would happen, Betty and the kids would be taken care of. He sold me on the idea, so many benefits and what not. So, I took the job. So, that was the end of that story.

P Yeah. Well, I remember you had some friends from the Sealtest Sanitary Dairy. [Tape stopped]

M Yeah, yeah, yeah. We had this Lucky Seven club, and we would play poker. We had different fellows' homes. Big Al King, Frank Shance, Betty Morrow's husband. What the hell was his name? I forget. The mayor of Canfield.

P Earl Roudabush.

M Roudabush, he was one of them. There was six or seven of us that played together all the time. There was one of our super salesmen that I never knew.

too much but, he was supposed to be a good talker and a good seller of our dairy products, and he was invited there. But he was a big loud fellow, and he used language up there in front of my mother-in-law and my wife that I did not appreciate. Mamie made the best cherry pies. Big Al King said, "Murph, when we come up to play cards, have Mamie make some cherry pies." So, she always did. But anyway, this fellow started to get a little loud while he was playing, and I cautioned him a few times. Of course, maybe he had a few beers that was bothering him, too. Finally after he let out another burst, I got up and I grabbed him. I was ready to toss him out of the house. I was kind of hot-headed when I was young. I did not appreciate that, the language. I did not mind his language up at the dairy, but not there in front of Mamie and Betty and the kids around.

P· A long time ago, you told me that you knew a little bit about the background of how Mamie, or my grandmother, purchased that house. They were renting on Custer.

M· Oh, yeah. A fellow from Poland was the owner. I am not sure whether it was Osgood or something like that. The house used to be facing Fifth Avenue at the corner of Custer, and it was moved across the street to a little postage stamp lot. It would be the first house going down Custer Avenue. It would be 306, right next to Carey's on the left and Tinney's on the right. It was a little postage size lot. You would not know they could put a house there, but they did. There was not enough room. There was clearance between the one house on the left of maybe about four to five feet, and on the other side there was not much more than maybe eight or nine feet, which was not wide enough to put a driveway in between Tinney's and Alcook's. It was moved over there.

Anyway, they were paying rent, Mamie and Bill. This fellow, the owner, he got to telling Bill, "Why do you not buy it? Instead of paying this rent all the time, why do you not buy this house?" "Oh no, no." Bill did not want no part of it. So, he talked to Mamie. She agreed. She said, "That is a good idea." So, she went ahead, and she signed whatever she had to sign and bought the house. Bill thought he was paying rent for all these years, and first thing you know the house was paid for. Back in those days, it was not much. I do not know, a couple of thousand dollars for the thing, or maybe even less than that back then. That is how they got the house on Custer Avenue. Bill always thought he was paying rent. Here, Mamie signed the thing, and she bought the house. So, that was that.

P Okay, you were active in the fire department. I remember you were in charge of some fire department communion breakfasts.

M Oh yeah. I think the second communion breakfast I had charge of up at Saint Columba's. I am not sure if today they are still carrying that on, but they carried that on for years. That was a good idea. The Catholics had their communion breakfast, and the Protestant boys had theirs. It was a very, very good thing. I

was, like I say, in charge of it That was the second year That would be back around 1951 or 1952, I guess

P And that would be around when my brother was about six, seven years old

M Yeah, yeah I do not think he was that old That was the big snow. So, what year was your brother born?

P 1946

M 1946

P December the first

M That would be 1951, was the big snow We were still living on Custer Avenue after I come home from the war You were living with your mother on Custer, and when I come home, that is where we were I stayed there for several years Mike was born there on Custer Avenue I remember the big snow of 1951 Oh gosh, he was not very old When was he born, 1946? So in 1951, he would be about five years old. The snow was so darn big it covered all the cars parked out It was the biggest snow we ever had around our area that I can remember, maybe, in my lifetime. The snow covered the cars It covered the streets. I was so afraid that Mike, if he was outside, he would drop, and the snow would be over his head. He would suffocate That is how deep the snow was

P I remember you built a little wooden gate on the front porch for him so we could play on the front porch

M Oh, yeah But then, after a couple of days, the city trucks could not take care of it The neighbors had to take care of their own street So all the neighbors would get together, fifteen, twenty, thirty of the neighbors, with shovels They would start on one end of the street and start shoveling to open a path so you could move a car or two up and down the street. I remember Then when they got up to your car where your car was parked on the street, they would not do anything about that You would have to go out yourself and finish that job of clearing your car and get it running For two or three days after that big snow in 1951, nothing moved Nothing at all could move Not even our fire trucks could move The army sent up six by sixes that they had We transferred some of our hoses and some of our equipment and put them on these army trucks They worked on the radio, and they made the announcement "For God's sake, make sure you do not start any fires or be awfully careful that you do not start any fires at all." During that two or three days before they got things open, we only had, if I remember right, one fire. Up at Briar Hill was a grocery store that burnt down. If anything would burn, it would go right to the ground because nobody could even get there You know, no fire trucks or anything



P: When you talk about fire, it makes me think of the demise of the cathedral where all our family had had all their sacraments Your brothers and sisters with their baptisms and your wedding and everything

M Yeah, yeah, yeah That was a sad thing

P: It was my birthday, September 2, 1954

M Yeah, yeah. We were up at the fire station Oh, it was [a] terrible storm, a thunder storm and what not We heard this big clap of thunder Up at the station we all jumped. I remember John Kelly, engineer on the pump, number seven pump, went over and put on his boots I thought, "Gee, what is he doing? John is an old-timer He knows what he is doing." So, I went over and put on my boots, and nothing happened for about a half hour. Then the bell came. The word came in. The cathedral was on fire Here it was burning inside, and nobody knew It was such a closed cathedral-type building, nobody knew there was anything going It started up in the organ loft at the rear of the church and, geez, we shot right down there

We went in, and our guys all come out after a little while, all tickled to death We had put the darn thing out They thought they had put it out But here the cathedral, like many other buildings back in those days, had no fire stops up in their ceilings, their false ceilings, whatever they had back in those days And here that fire had started at the back of the organ loft and travelled all the way to the front of the church and broke out right over the altar way at the other end of the church nowhere near the organ loft By then, the whole darn building was engulfed, everything there We tried everything Everything in Youngstown was there that night I saw firemen, older fellows than me, crying like babies because their whole life was around Saint Columba's Like you said, Sally, we were born there, baptized there, made my first communion there, was married there, and everything Went to school there Everything was around Saint Columba's.

I know I was up on the rectory next door, which was, oh, three stories and more It went up three stories, and it had a sort of an attic roof that went up another story or two It had a little plot on top about the size of a good kitchen table. That was a little flat surface up top of this I remember a couple of our boys We put up our fifty foot ladder, which we did not ever use too much That was a fifty foot ladder that we put up manually We got those boys up there with a line They were fighting the fire from up on top there One of them was, I remember, Conz Luccie, and the other was Jeeper Stevens I went up that ladder, and I got on the roof Now there is these shingles another fifteen or twenty feet going up, sliding up to this top surface where they were on It was awfully slippery, the water coming down and everything I remember starting to go up those shingles and starting to slide backwards And I grabbed the hose that they had up there, and I remember holding on to that hose. And the hose kept giving a little slack, and I kept going backwards I remember I thought, "Uh

oh, I am going off this big building." Finally, it came tight. Here, I guess I pulled on the two fellows up there. Anyway, that is how I got up on the roof.

The three of us were up there, and Conz Luccie when he went up was smart enough. He was a constructual steel worker. He worked on big towers and things, and he knew a little bit more than the ordinary firemen knew about. He had a big thing of rope which he threw over the other side right next store to [what] used to be the Rayen flower shop. There was a driveway in between the rectory and the Rayen flower shop. He says, "If that cathedral starts to come down on us, we got to shimmy down this rope as fast as we can. There is no other way." [Laughter] Thank God it never came down. They were so afraid that that big cathedral was going to just cave in. But, it burnt all out from one end to the other, but it never caved. So, that was the end of that one.

P: Yeah, that was the end of an era. But, now there is the beginning of a new one with the new cathedral.

M: Yes, yes.

P: You have full life of fun and leisure too, Dad. You golf. You fish. You bowl. You follow Notre Dame. You have been to Ireland. What of those things would you want to talk about or tell your great grandkids stories about?

M: I loved all of that. I love fishing. Back years ago, that was the real popular thing. My little girl, Sally, she just loved to go fishing. She was a little tomboy. Me and Grandpa Alcook and my friends, Summers and Joe Paulcivic, would go fishing a lot together, and Sally would come out. "Oh, can I go?" And I would say, "Oh you cannot go, Sally. It is us." So, the guys out-voted me. Summers and Joe Paulcivic said, "Oh no, we will take her." So alright, you came with us, and we would take you up. We went up to Mosquito Lake this one trip and parked the car. Them guys went right down with their fishing gear and their night crawlers, and they were throwing their lines right in way out. And I was going real slow with you, walking you down the side over the big rocks.

On the way down I found a little can of blood red manure worms somebody had left there that was fishing earlier. So I picked them up and went down and put you on a rock. All you had was a little bamboo pole with a little line on it and a bobber and a small hook. I put a little one of those blood worms on the end of the hook, and you put it out. Now sooner would you hit the water, you would pull out a little blue gill or a little crappie. You must have caught, oh, I would say, twenty or thirty of them little fish in no time at all. And those other guys, Summers and your grandpa and Paulcivic, they all came down next to you with their night crawlers, throwing them right in. And they was not getting nothing. [Laughter] I did not tell them that our secret was the little blood red worms that we found. [Laughter] So, we had a lot of fun fishing. Fishing is so good for the little ones. I would like to take Daniel, Sean, Anthony, Lauren, Rachel, Little Jack, and my Michigan great-grandchildren, Elizabeth, Kathleen,

and Stephen, as they get a little older

P. You make me think of places you have taken our sons and Mike's, Michael and Bobby, down to walk down the Beaver canal and your hiking

M Yeah We got into that Little Michael and his cousin, Jimmy Krause, and the little next-door neighbor, Beatle Bailey, and the Rogers kids, they all got into that I would take them down to the Beaver Valley There was nothing down there. There was Gaston's Mill It, at one time, was a flour mill You could walk over when we were down there I know that one or two of us could push that building, and it would have fell right over. The wheel was not working anymore. See, that was working back around in the 1830's and in that area But anyway, the Beaver Creek was running down there then So we thought we would just start hiking We did not know too much. But we run into a lock. We run into another lock, and we thought, "What the dickens is this?" Here we found out it was a system from back then. The Sandy and Beaver canal system it was So we went to the library and got a book by Max Gard on the Sandy and Beaver Canal And it started right there where we were at Gaston's Mill, and it started right down from one lock to the next lock to the next lock Where is that restaurant, Sally?

P Lock 24 Elkton

M No, not Elkton The Spread Eagle What is the name of the town though?

P Hanoverton

M Anyway, it was supposed to be the future capital of the state of Ohio, which never matured because the canal never went through But anyway, I cannot think of it But that little town was supposed to be the capital of Ohio on account of we were going to get merchandise and business from all over Europe right into that area One into the other But anyway, the kids loved that We walked all the way down and down below Lisbon where this was We would go down to Dungannon where they put all the workers that built this canal and the locks. [They] were the Irish immigrants, and they shunned them all. The people in Lisbon and all the other areas did not want them around them They shunned them all down to Dungannon That was were the little Irish area of Dungannon was formed. They had the first Catholic mass in that area [It] was said down there in Dungannon because those little Irish were naturally all Catholic-Irish people A priest from Salem came over and said their first mass in a little log cabin on a cabinet down there The kids really got into that, and that was so wonderful That took a few years of us kids going all through that and following all what Max Gard had in his book It was very interesting.

Later on, when Sally's children got a little older -- when Marty and John were about twelve, thirteen years old or in that area -- they wanted to walk down Their dad came down with us We walked down We kept going and kept going

There was no roads or no lanes or nothing like you had in a park. You just climb down, follow the creek down and climb over fallen trees and what have you. That is the way it was, real wild back there We got down, and I was a little worried because it was soon going to be dark. I remember telling them, "Hey guys, better not go any further because as far as we go down, we got to turn around and come back And it is going to get dark, and we had better get back before it gets dark " So, we did. We got down to a place where Mike and his buddies named "the Alamo " We came out on a little bit of a road across that creek There was this one building, four walls, no roof or nothing on it It was shaped like the Alamo was in Texas. Jimmy Krause and Mike and them named it "the Alamo " That was way down I do not know I guess around Elkton or somewhere in that area

Anyway, we came back, and I remember Michael or Marty and John got a taste of that, too They got into it But, I remember Marty, the papa I guess the night before -- I never knew it until later on, he told me -- he was out the night before, and boy was he dragging The kids were going, going, going and poor Marty I guess it was kind of tough on him on that trip

P. You have also had lots of fun golfing Even now as an adult, I see you out there going to Salem Hills with Mike and Maureen, and now Bobby is such a good golfer out there

M Oh, yeah, yeah We enjoyed it [I] love golfing

P. Do you remember anything about our trip to Ireland? When we were there, it was 1978 I know we were there sixteen days

M Yeah It was a wonderful trip. I loved it, loved every bit of it. I know you loved it You keep going back I know you have been back quite a few times Yeah, we had a wonderful trip It is a beautiful country, and the people were very friendly It is funny how you cared so much about that, and your brother, Mike, he could care less

P He is helping me with the archival now He is doing some computer work He is getting involved

M Yeah, but not too much like you were You went gun-ho over it.

P. Well, I guess it is just I am that much older He will catch up

M Yeah

P This is really for the grandchildren, and all these stories are going to be something that they are going to value Thanks very much I appreciate it I have learned a lot myself today, and I thought I knew most of it

M Yeah, yeah.

P Thanks

End of Interview