

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Niles Police Department

Personal Experience

O. H. 519

JOHN CHARLES CROW

Interviewed

by

Stephen G. Papalas

on

June 21, 1982

JOHN CHARLES CROW, SR.

John Crow was born to Charles and Ruth Crow on October 24, 1908 in Niles, Ohio. His father, a popular baseball pitcher, was one of the greatest mayors Niles ever had. Most notable were the elder Crow's successful battles against the railroad, his attempt to combat racketeering and his refusal to cooperate with the Ku Klux Klan.

John Crow graduated from St. Petersburg High School. He went on to attend Stetson College and graduated from Ohio State University. He was employed by the E. W. Bliss Company in Salem, Ohio until he retired in 1973.

After Crow's father had served four terms as Niles' mayor, the family moved to St. Petersburg, Florida where the elder Crow owned and operated a small restaurant near the New York Yankees' Spring Training Camp. This provided Crow with some outstanding memories of Babe Ruth and other players who hung out at the restaurant when not on the field.

Crow's memory of life on Main Street in Niles was excellent. He was also helpful in describing the personalities of several police officers and chiefs of police.

John C. Crow, Sr., married the former Lucy Inglis of Youngstown. Crow and his wife reside on Hartzell Avenue in Niles and have two children, John, Jr. of Niles and Sara Crow Williamson of McDonald, and two grandchildren. John, Sr. is a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Niles, Mahoning Lodge #394, and was the past president of the Trumbull Shrine Club, Al Koran Unit.

April 9, 1987--John C. Crow, Sr. died on December 11, 1983,  
and his wife died on December 31, 1985.

Sara Crow Williamson

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Niles Police Department

INTERVIEWEE: JOHN CROW

INTERVIEWER: Stephen G. Papalas

SUBJECT: Main Street, Niles, mayors, police, businesses,  
Florida, Ku Klux Klan, retirement

DATE: June 21, 1982

P: This is an interview with Mr. John Charles Crow for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program dealing with the Niles Police Department and the mayors during that period of time. The interview is by Stephen G. Papalas at Mr. Crow's home at 1308 Hartzell Avenue in Niles. The date is June 21, 1982 at 8:20 p.m.

I want to ask you first, what you can remember about your dad's background before he became mayor of Niles. Where did he come from? Where was he born? Where did he work and so forth?

C: He was born in Coal Center, Pennsylvania which is down near Monessen in that area. He was a coal miner. He worked in there all during his youth and he finally got fed up on that and decided he didn't want to be a coal miner anymore. He started playing baseball. He eventually ended up in Niles because they had a baseball team here. My dad came over here to play ball. They organized the old O & P League, Ohio and Pennsylvania League. Niles was a member of that league. My dad was manager and pitcher of the team.

P: How old was he at the time?

C: I suppose dad must have been in his early twenties, somewhere along that line. I do remember one thing about it. They had a manger, but I don't recall what his name was. He was a little bit of a crooked deal. When they played ball for a week and when it came pay day, each one of the players got one silver dollar. My dad, with the short temper that he had, took it out and threw it

as far as he could throw it. A cousin of his, George England, was police commissioner of Pittsburgh. He chased it and got it. He said, "I am going to keep it for the first son that Charlie ever has." I have it. I have the first dollar that dad ever earned in Niles. I think it was 1904. I still have it and you couldn't pry that loose from me. Then after that he got into business here in town. He had a shoe store down about where Theis Drugstore is now.

P: What was the name of it, do you remember?

C: Niles Shoe Store. Then, that is where he got in the business and then he got into politics after that.

P: Mr. Crow, I would like to ask you now of your earliest recollections of Niles. You were born in 1908?

C: Yes.

P: Where were you born? Where was the house located?

C: It is on Arlington Avenue in Niles. It is next to where the Edison Junior High is now. We lived there for years and years. I remember going to grade school on Warren Avenue.

P: That is the Niles Board of Education Building.

C: Right. I remember some of the teachers that I had up there. One was Mammy Craig. Mrs. Thomas and a Mary Morrall were there as I remember it.

P: Who was the principal?

C: I presume that Mrs. Craig was. She was the ringleader of the whole gang up there and you didn't sass her. You got your ears cuffed if you did.

P: Who were some of your classmates, do you remember?

C: No, offhand I don't remember.

P: Who was your favorite teacher?

C: I don't know that I could pinpoint that down. Going to high school for the first two years, Miss Clausser was her name. She was a mathematics teacher. Mathematics was one of my favorite subjects. I think she was probably my favorite one of the bunch although I used to get a hard time from her. She was still a good one.

I think some of my classmates at that time were Carter McConnell and Joe Bassett, Herb Richards, Davey Bileski,

and George Cera. We had lockers all in a row when I was going to high school down there near Pop Zeller's office. He was the principal of the high school. We used to do a lot of things for Pop Zeller because he always liked the five of us. We had our nicknames over our lockers. Mine was Mayor on account of my dad being mayor. Joe Bassett was Joe. George Cera was Spider. Davey Bileski was Trutski and Herb was Herb. I think they are all gone now.

P: Your last year of high school you spent down in St. Petersburg, Florida, right?

C: That last two years. It was my junior and senior years.

P: That is where you graduated, St. Petersburg High School?

C: Right, in 1926.

P: When did you move back to Niles?

C: In about 1929 I moved back.

When I was going to Ohio State, I took sick with pneumonia. My dad used to go to Florida for his health in the winter-time. I went down this one year to recuperate from this spell I had. It was a pretty bad one. I went down there and I saw a friend of my dad's who used to be here in town. His name was George Patterson who was with the Angle Aircraft at the time here during the war.

P: Where was that aircraft factory?

C: It is back by Stevens' Mill, the Republic Steel, the barrel works down there. It was back on Erie Street.

P: Is that where it was?

C: Yes. That was Angle Aircraft.

P: They built those planes during the First World War, right?

C: Yes. My dad and George Patterson were very close friends. We went down to see him the next day. The next day I was there, I started to work for him at General Electric. He had the refrigeration department for Florida. I worked down there for a year for him or for the company. I moved back to Ohio and then got into flying afterwards. I used to fly out of Akron. I got through there by Bill Young.

P: How many years were you a pilot?

C: About two years I would imagine.

P: You did it for a hobby?

C: Yes. This Bill Young was head of all the aeronautical sales for the Goodyear. He was the one responsible for giving the contract for building the Akron and the Macon there. They were two big dirigibles. Bill and my folks were very close friends. I went over to Akron and got into flying through him. Then I dropped that afterwards because there wasn't a chance of getting into commercial flying at that time. There just wasn't any call for it. Also, it turned out that I was color-blind, which was not good in the flying field.

P: Moving back into the years about the time you were in high school, did your dad have his shoe store at that time? He was probably mayor by this time.

C: Yes. We got rid of the store by that time.

P: Going back to 1914 or 1915, years before your dad was elected the mayor and the shoe store--which is located on Main Street in Niles--was owned by your father, what do you remember about the vicinity? Tell me what a typical day would be, like on June '21, 1914, if you were walking down Main Street. What could you tell me about it?

C: Well, I don't know. I would probably go down there after school and help out around the store. I would put buttons on the shoes because they were all button shoes at that time. We had a machine. I remember he had a machine down there that put buttons on the shoes. I probably would go down to one of the theaters. I had a permanent pass for both theaters, the Warner Brothers and the Stafford Theater at that time.

P: The Warner Brothers Theater was owned by the brothers who later opened up the movie studios in Hollywood?

C: That is right.

P: They were right here in Niles?

C: Oh yes. They were born here in Niles. They had Stafford Theater down there. It is down where the barber shop is located now. It used to be across a bridge down there on State Street.

P: Is that where the old Central Park was?

C: Yes. The Stafford Theater was there.

P: The big building there, the big apartment complex for the elderly people is located there now, right? It is just

before the tracks.

C: Well, yes, but the theater was down closer to Park Avenue. It was on the corner of Park Avenue and State Street.

P: I see.

C: Of course, in later years, it was torn down. That is where the Stafford Theater was.

P: Where was the Warner Brothers Theater?

C: There is a furniture store in there now.

P: Reisman's?

C: Yes.

P: The corner of . . .

C: It is not on the corner. It was about in the middle of the block.

P: I see. It would be next to Reisman's on Main Street across from the Spot Restaurant.

C: No.

P: No?

C: This is down on State Street, down on the back street. Remember where Eddie Fusco used to have the dry cleaning. It was the building right across the street from that. That was the original Warner Brothers. The original Warner Brothers was an open-air theater though where a parking lot is now on State Street next to the Chamber of Commerce building. They used to have a theater with a show out in the open there.

P: What did it look like?

C: Nothing. They had park benches in there and the screen up there just like your drive-ins now. The projection booth was in the back.

P: How many people could sit in there?

C: A couple of hundred I guess. That was one of their first Warner Brother Theaters that they had there. Then they moved on after into Youngstown and so forth. They originated here in town. I used to know their family real well, the father and the mother and the boys.



P: Where did the boys live at, do you know?

C: I don't think any of them are living now.

P: I mean when they were in Niles. Where was their home at?

C: There used to be an apartment house down there right next to the Masonic Temple towards Main Street. I don't recall what the name of the apartment was, but they lived in there. From there, I think they moved to Youngstown.

P: Tell me some more about your father's store, As you walked into the front door, what would be off to your left? Were there racks of shoes?

C: There were all the shoes that you could see. There were cases of shoes on display. In the back room there was a repair place. We used to have a miniature shoe repair and so forth. Up towards the front was a cash register.

P: Were there wooden floors?

C: Oh yes, yes.

P: What about the lighting? Was there electric lighting?

C: Yes. There was electric lighting. It was just bulbs hanging down from the ceiling. That was about all. There was no fancy stuff at all.

P: What about Main Street itself? Who were some of the merchants that you can remember? Is there anyone that you knew personally? What were the businesses?

C: There was a Ferguson Drugstore. There was a Zip Brothers. They had a pool hall down there and a soft drink place right next to the store. Above that was Anderson's Grocery Store. Down around the corner there was Freck's Meat Market. I know there was a Sayer's. They made downspouts and so forth. Tinning is what I think they called it. It was Sayer's Tinning Company. That was just the corner when you were going down to the depot. Down the corner there was Sam Rubenstein's Five and Ten. I think he was up on Main Street there. There was a bank on the corner, the Niles Trust Company. It was on the corner.

P: Hoffman's?

C: Oh, yes. Hoffman's was there.

P: Hallaway's was downtown, wasn't it?

C: Yes, it was. There was Clarity, a tailor who had a store

or an office, whatever you might call it, in the bank building. Then up above there, going towards where the Dollar Bank is, there was another clothing store. I can't think of what the name of that clothing store was.

P: Let me ask you another question. Was there a patrolman who walked a beat there to protect the businesses at night?

C: I don't know about walking at night. We never had problems down there. You would see them walking around during the daytime but I don't recall walking the beat at night because we never had problems.

P: Who were some of the policemen? Do you remember them?

C: The only ones that I can think of are Linc Rounds, who was the chief, then there was Dick Witticker. As I recall, I think there was a colored policeman by the name of Peterson.

P: What do you know about Whitticker? What can you tell me about him?

C: He was a big fellow. He was quite a loud talker. I don't know as I can tell you much about him. I don't recall that much about him.

P: What color hair did he have? Did he have a mustache? Do you remember any of that?

C: No, I don't.

P: About how tall would you say he was?

C: He was well above six feet tall. He was a good sized guy.

P: A couple of hundred pounds?

C: Yes.

P: Do you remember a police chief Brooder, John Brooder?

C: No, I don't. I remember that name. I think that was before my dad got into office.

P: Oh yes, it sure was. As a matter of fact, he was probably the chief at the time you were born or before.

C: That could very well be.

P: What about Officer Neiss, Dickey Neiss?

C: Oh yes, Dickey Neiss. He was the old style policeman.

You never argued with him at all. He was very fine and easygoing and so forth. He was one of those old-timers that you wouldn't want to cross. He would let you have it.

P: He was pretty firm then?

C: Oh, yes. He was very easy to get along with as I recall. I would walk down the street with him. Of course being the mayor's son maybe that was the reason that I got along with him. He was a very, very fine gentleman.

P: What about some of these men, Whitticker for example, did he have a nickname?

C: It was Windy Dick?

P: Why did they call him Windy Dick?

C: He just loved talking.

P: Okay. What about Neiss? Did he have any nicknames?

C: I don't recall if he had, no. I don't recall if he had any nicknames at all.

P: What could you tell me about Police Chief Rounds?

C: He was a very nice fellow. We used to go golfing. He was in very good shape as I recall. We went right into his office and talked to him anytime at all. He would be out there beside the fire department and we would be sitting out there on the bench talking with the firemen. He was a very fine person as I recall. We never had any problems at all. We never did between us.

P: Can you remember any incident or activity that dealt with the police department at that time in those years that stick out in your mind?

C: No.

P: Was there any criminal activity that they might have had to deal with?

C: No, I can't recall of any.

P: How did they do during the flood? Did the police department have their hands full? I would imagine so.

C: There wasn't much that you could do.

P: That was 1913, right?

- C: Yes. You couldn't get over to the south side because the water was over the bridge there. That's all it was. Everything was at a standstill. There were no streetcars running or anything like that. That is all there was. Patrolling places and so forth, calling the National Guard, there wasn't anything like that. It was a pretty well-behaved town. They probably had their characters I suppose, but I don't recall any of them.
- P: What possessed your dad to run for a political office?
- C: I suppose some of the businessmen down there wanted him to get into it for a change and so forth. Dad was, I suppose, very highly respected and they wanted somebody in there that would make a change and get the town back on its feet again or keep it going. That is about the only thing I would know as to why he got into it.
- P: How long was your dad in office?
- C: Right years.
- P: Eight years as the mayor?
- C: Yes.
- P: At this point, that is the longest that any man has been mayor of Niles.
- C: Yes. He was there from 1916 to 1924. It was eight years.
- P: Do you remember any experiences he might have had as mayor that were interesting? What were some of the hardest times that he had? What were some of the challenges that he might have faced?
- C: During the war of course, fuel was very short. Dad was food and fuel administrator of Ohio during the war. There was one time I recall down there that there wasn't any coal to be had in town at all. Coal was the main thing. This train, I remember, was coming down the B & O. It was a coal train and dad went down there and stopped it. He made them pull three or four cars off of one of the sidings and said to the people, "Help yourselves." That was it. They were going to send him up the road and everything else for it, but he said, "Go ahead," and they never did.
- P: You mean the railroad was going to?
- C: Oh, yes. After all, he was stealing from railroad property. He said, "Go ahead," but it never happened.
- P: About what year was that?

C: That was probably 1917 or 1918. It was something like that.

P: Was that a particularly hard winter?

C: There just wasn't any coal available. Then he was in the Secret Service during the war. He and Harding were very close friends. I know that Harding doesn't have such a good reputation now.

P: President Harding?

C: Yes. Dad was very close to him. When they built the memorial down here, they had the dedication for the memorial and Coolidge was there. He was the vice-president. Harding couldn't get here, so he sent Coolidge. Coolidge and his wife, mother, and dad and so forth were all together during the dedication. It was quite an appearance. I remember I rode the fire truck down there in the parade.

P: Did you see the vice-president?

C: Oh, yes. I was on the reviewing stand there.

P: That would be outstanding.

C: Yes, it was quite a deal for the town. Of course, the memorial is quite a deal too.

P: What other experiences did your dad have?

C: Oh, I don't know. Some of them I wouldn't want to discuss at all. It might bring back too many memories of people concerned.

P: They had policies concerning bootleggers in Niles. There were policies against the industry. They sent the police chiefs into these areas and time after time there were arrests that were made, some just off of Robbins Avenue here. Some were on the east end. There was only one on the south side that I count so far. The policemen had their hands full and the mayors in each of those years had their hands full. What was your father's policy concerning the bootleggers? Did he have any problems with them?

C: No, because every time they found one, they went out and broke up a still and confiscated any of the products and destroyed them, of course. Oh, they destroyed an awful lot of moonshine. They confiscated a lot of stills. They were after them all of the time, but then, of course, it is just like one of those things you couldn't keep up with all of the time. They ran whether you stopped them one day and the next day they would be back in business.

- P: What about back in the early 1920's when your father was the mayor? I understand there was a man known as Eliot Ness. The story called The Untouchables is based on him. He was a government agent who came to Niles and raided a house on Fulton Street, near the corner dairy. Do you remember that?
- C: No. I have heard that story before, but I know nothing of that one at all.
- P: It might have been after your dad then.
- C: That is very possible. I don't recall that at all, outside of hearsay.
- P: In the early 1920's, Niles had a problem with the Ku Klux Klan. Is there anything that you personally can remember about that? Is there anything that you saw at that time?
- C: No, because it was just the mere starting of it, when dad got out of office.
- P: It began after your dad got out of office?
- C: Yes. I don't know much about the details though because we were in Florida at the time. We had moved to Florida before that. I don't know. There were a lot of enemies made there between the Klan and Knights of the Flaming Circle. I was very thankful--we all were--that we weren't in town during that time because we had friends on both sides. We were glad that we didn't get involved with it at all.
- P: Tell me a little bit about your dad's personality and a little bit of his character. What kind of man was he? Can you give me any examples?
- C: Dad was very strict. There wasn't anything that he wouldn't do for you. Anything he could do to help out anybody he sure would. He would give them the shirt off of his back. You didn't cross dad at all. If you did, that was a definite no-no.
- I saw him hit one man that tried to pull something funny. Dad grabbed him and he hit him and he must have woke up a couple of hours later. I don't know as I could tell you more about dad. As I say, he was a very, very fine person. I wish I could have lived up to all of the things that he did and so forth.
- P: In the newspaper, the picture of him on the night he was elected to his first term, he looks like a very prominent man and an extremely proud man. How tall was he? How big was the man?

C: Dad was just about six feet tall. He weighed about two hundred pounds.

P: About how old was he when he was elected to office?

C: I would say 40 or 45 years old maybe.

P: He was very young at the time.

C: Yes. Dad was always a very, very fine dresser.

I remember the one piece in the paper that came out one time. They said that this fellow could always remember dad walking down the street with a big smile on his face and a big cigar in his mouth. Dad never smoked in his life so I don't know where they got the idea that he had a cigar in his mouth.

He was noted for very white teeth. One time when he was in the hospital a nurse said to him and I always will remember it, "Mr. Crow, if you will take your teeth out, I will put them aside for you until the morning." Dad said, "There have been bigger people than you who have tried to get them out and they haven't gotten them yet."

P: He seemed to be an amiable person and the type that a lot of people would like and respect.

C: Yes. I don't know if you talked to any of the old-timers around here or not, but you won't hear any of them say anything against him.

I was down at the newsstand some time ago, I forget who was there, but they asked me if my name was Crow and I said, "Yes, that is right." They asked if I had a relation to Charlie Crow and I said, "Yes, he was my dad." "Oh, boy. The best mayor the town had or ever will have." They said that he was just tops. Those are the remarks that you get from the people who knew him. Whether they said the same things about him when he was living or not, I don't know. Maybe they didn't.

P: You, of course, probably experienced some of the recessions at that time that you lived here in Niles. I think 1906 was the year that some of the businesses closed out. Did your dad ever talk to you about those years?

C: No, no. That was before my time of knowing anything about the business world.

P: You left Niles to go to Florida. After you went to Florida, you graduated, got a job there, and came back to Niles. Did Niles change much from the time you had previously left

some years earlier to the time you came back in the 1920's? You came back in 1929, you said?

- C: It was about 1929. I don't think that it had. It was somewhat about the same. There probably were changes made, but I don't recall them as any noticeable changes in the town outside of a few buildings that were gone downtown and others built. No, I can't say that I noticed or remember, as I recall, any amount of difference at all.
- P: While your dad was the mayor and even in his later years afterwards, did he ever talk about the police department? What was his policy concerning the department? Did he get along well with the police chief? Did he get along well with the police officers?
- C: Yes, I think he did. I can't recall him digging in the issues with them at all, but no, I don't recall him saying anything about the department. I'm sure he made sure it was run on the straight and narrow or they wouldn't have been around long.
- P: He was mayor for eight years. Could you explain anything about the last election that he ran in and why he lost? Who beat him?
- C: Harvey Kissler.
- P: Harvey Kissler? He became the next man?
- C: Yes. That was about the time that Klan was becoming prominent. They got dad out of office.
- P: Your father obviously didn't get along with the Klan?
- C: No.
- P: They got together to help defeat him at the polls?
- C: As I recall that, I wouldn't take an oath on it, but that was what it was. I know the starting of it was that they wanted to have a parade and wear their uniforms and dad would not give them a permit to parade providing they wore the covering over their face. He said that if they were too ashamed to show their face, they could not parade. That is what started it. They had a couple of heated arguments there. They accused dad of not being 100% American because he didn't belong to it. He very emphatically told them he was 100% American because he didn't have to go around with that hood or sheet over his face waving an American flag at everybody. That is what started it.
- P: How did he accept his defeat?



C: Well, he wasn't quite too happy about it. I think dad knew it was coming. He could see the handwriting on the wall, the way they were playing the cards. That is the way it was.

P: After his defeat and you moved to Florida and even during his retirement, did he ever talk to you about the years that he was mayor?

C: Not that I can recall.

P: Did he ever miss the office?

C: Oh, I don't know that he ever missed it. Even when we came back from Florida, he was very prominent in town and very sociable. I don't think he actually out-and-out missed it too much. I think maybe he might have been glad to get from under the strain of it.

P: Do you think there was anything your father had maybe felt that he left unfinished or maybe something that he would have liked to have seen done yet after his defeat?

C: I couldn't answer that question. I don't know. I wouldn't have any idea.

P: What about some of his accomplishments?

C: I suppose there were quite a few accomplishments. I can't recall any right now.

P: Was he active with the development of the waterworks and Mr. Holloway's endeavor there?

C: I would imagine he was, yes. He and Burt Holloway got along very good together. I don't recall any problems there at all.

P: How old was your father when he passed away?

C: He was about sixty.

P: Sixty years old?

C: Yes.

P: Was it here in Niles?

C: Well, he died in Cleveland Clinic.

P: I see.

C: He had had a bad heart. He had a pretty serious operation

when we were in Florida. I don't think he ever fully recovered from that. When he came back home again and afterwards that is when his heart started going bad and is why we took him to Cleveland. He died in Cleveland.

P: What year was that?

C: It was about 1930.

P: He was born then in 1870. He was sixty years old.

C: Yes.

P: Where is he interred today?

C: Union Cemetery in Niles.

P: Union Cemetery?

C: Along with my mother, yes.

P: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

C: I had one sister, Geraldine Crow, Mrs. Gilbert N. Williams. She died several years ago. She was always very active in the church too.

P: That is the First Presbyterian Church?

C: Yes.

P: The same one your dad went to?

C: Dad never went to church. I can never remember seeing dad in church. It is not that he didn't believe in it or anything like that, but he just never did. That is all.

P: Is there anything else you would like to say about your father in closing?

C: No, I can't think of anything.

P: I have one more question then to ask. In his retirement years, what did he do?

C: We had a trucking line in town out there. My brother-in-law, Gil Williams, formed this trucking line through hauling the steel for the steel industry and metal products. Ed Thompson was the head of the Steven's Metal down there and my brother-in-law was working as a salesman in there. Then he decided to form this truck line and now it is the G. N. Williams Trucking Company. He and my dad started that together.

P: They started Williams' Trucking?

C: Yes. They started up with one truck. I used to help drive it.

P: That is great. So, he had a pretty active life then?

C: Yes.

P: Mr. Crow, one more question that I want to get into. During the years after your father was mayor, when your family moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, what did your dad do down there?

C: We had a lunch counter and billiard parlor. It was run very high-class and we had a lot of prominent people come out and have lunch. The mayor of St. Petersburg and his wife came down and had lunch. The Yankee ball club came down, Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and of course the manager Miller Huggins, Lazery, Coombs, Nowing. They used to walk past our house going out to the ballfield. Ruth and Gehrig would be walking together. If there were any kids playing ball on the side there, the Babe would have to stop and play cards with them. You didn't dare say anything against the Babe in St. Petersburg. If you did, they would run you out of town on a rail.

I remember one particular time they asked him to give a talk in chapel in high school. He had the foghorn voice there and when he came out on stage he said, "I don't know why they asked me to come out and talk to you. I don't know anything about balls and games. The only thing that I know is that I step up to the plate and if the apple comes over, you hit it." He said, "If there is anything we can do to help your team out, then let us know. We would be glad to help you." Their training field was across from a little bit of a lake, from the high school training field. The captain of the high school team asked him afterwards for old baseballs. "We are always looking for old balls for practice." Babe said, "We probably have a few around. We will see that you get them." This one afternoon Ruth stood on the pitcher's mound and Gehrig was on third base. That was right in line with the high school field. He started pitching to Ruth and Ruth hit about two dozen brand new baseballs right of the lake, right in the middle of the high school baseball field. After they were all gone, they looked around and wanted to know, where did they go? Did anybody catch them? I guess they all went into the lake. That was it. The high school got a couple of dozen brand new baseballs out of it. He was that type of a guy. He was a fine guy, a very fine guy.

P: Your father knew these men personally?

C: Yes. Very well.

P: They came by his establishment there?

C: Yes. We used to go down to the ballpark in St. Petersburg and watch them play their games. I can't think of the other team down there in St. Petersburg that had the training grounds other than the Yankees. They used to play exhibition games down there. We would go down there and sit in the VIP box. The Babe and Gehrig would come over and talk to us. We went up to Cleveland a couple of times to see them up there.

Billy Evans, who was the general manager of Cleveland, gave dad credit for saving his life. They were playing one of their games here in Niles, when they had the team in Niles.

P: What year was that?

C: This must have been back before I was born. It was back probably in 1906, 1907 or something like that. This Billy Evans was one of the umpires. He called what the players thought was the wrong decision on Niles. They were going to kill him. Dad finally got out there and said it was a fair decision and he didn't have any argument against it. We got him out of town. We got him into Youngstown. We put him on a streetcar and got him to Youngstown. He always gave dad credit for saving his life. When we would go up to Cleveland, we would stop in to see him.

I remember one of the first times we went up there. Dad said he was going to stop out and see Billy and then we would get our seats. That was out in the old Reed Park. He went up to Billy's office to see if he was busy as I recall at the time. Dad said we would go out and get our tickets. When Evans came out, dad greeted him with open arms; of course, he asked if dad was going to the game. Dad said, "Yes." Evans asked if he had tickets. Dad said, "Yes, we have them." He said, "No, you don't. You haven't got them yet. Where are they?" Dad said, "Well, I've got them." He said, "You don't have anything of the kind. Don't give me that." He turned to me and said, "Does your dad have tickets for it?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Do you?" We said, "Do you?" "No, no," he said, "so you are going to sit in my box." We went up and sat in Billy Evans' box up there. All of the players came over to him to see what they were going to do.

P: Why did your dad return?

C: I don't know actually. I don't know why we came back to Niles. Whether they got kind of tired of being in Florida and decided that they wanted to come back home again . . .

I don't know why we came back to Niles.

P: Who brought him here in the first place years and years before you were born?

C: Baseball got him over here. That is when they had the old leagues here, the old O & P League. Dad started playing in that and they organized the Niles games and then he was manager of the Niles game.

P: Where did they play their games at?

C: I don't know. I know it was over around the high school there some place. I don't recall exactly where it was. No, I don't recall.

P: I thank you for the interview.

C: I hope I gave you a little bit of information.

END OF INTERVIEW