

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Westlake Terrace Project

Personal Experiences

O. H. 677

RALPH AND MARY DEL PLATO

Interviewed

by

Evelyn Mangie

on

November 5, 1985

RALPH DEL PLATO

Ralph Del Plato was born in Willoboughy on May 3, 1914, a son of Tony and Nicolletta Del Plato. The family moved to Youngstown where Ralph went to East High School. After graduation from Rayen High he worked for the W.P.A., building a stadium at the school. He married Mary Del Signore and is the father of five daughters. He worked for Commercial Shearing and Stamping in Youngstown, from where he is now retired. He and Mrs. Del Plato now reside at 615 Dumont Avenue in Campbell, Ohio.

## MARY DEL PLATO

Mary Del Plato (Honey) was born on September 13, 1916, in West Virginia, a daughter of Dom and Maria Del Signore. When she was seven years old, the family moved to Youngstown. She attended East High School in Youngstown, married Ralph Del Plato and had five daughters.

Mrs. Del Plato went to beautician school after her family was grown and had a beauty shop in the basement of her home until illness forced her to retire. She is active in her church and enjoys ceramics in her spare time.

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INTERVIEWEE: RALPH & MARY DEL PLATO

INTERVIEWER: Evelyn Mangie

SUBJECT: theaters, downtown, shopping, FDR

DATE: November 5, 1985

EM: This is an interview with Mary "Honey" Del Plato for Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Westlake Terrace, by Evelyn Mangie, at 615 Dumont Avenue, in Campbell, Ohio, on November 5, 1985, at 11:30 a.m. Mr. Ralph Del Plato is also present for the interview.

Tell me about your mother and father, where you came from, where you were born.

MD: I had a mother and father. I was one of seventeen children. We came from Coalton, West Virginia.

EM: Is that where you were born?

MD: Yes, I was born in Coalton, West Virginia. Most of us were born there. I have two brothers who were born here in Ohio. My father worked in the coal mines.

EM: In the coal mines in West Virginia?

MD: Yes.

EM: How old were you when you left?

MD: I was in the second grade. I guess I was seven or eight. When we moved here, we were so behind in learning out there that they put us back. They started us all over again, two whole grades. We managed to get along though.

EM: Why did your parents move here?

MD: There was no more work. They closed the mines. My oldest brother came here first. He was working in a mill. He got my other brother here, and then my dad came. When they found a house we all moved here.

EM: Was everybody glad to move?

MD: Yes, it was something different.

EM: What school did you go to when you got here?

MD: Madison. I went to Madison for a while and then we went to Lincoln School afterwards. I think we moved again.

EM: Where did you live at first?

MD: First we lived on Republic Avenue, and then we lived on Lansing Avenue. That was where we stayed.

EM: Was that a big house too?

MD: No, not very big, not too big. There were a lot of people there, but it wasn't too big. We were sleeping three in each bed.

EM: Do you remember Madison School?

MD: Yes.

EM: Where did you go after that?

MD: Then I got married.

EM: How old were you when you got married?

MD: I was eighteen.

EM: Where did you meet your husband?

MD: I met him at a dance.

EM: Where?

MD: At DAV on Albert Street and Republic Avenue right on the corner. I met him at a dance one night.

EM: What is DAV?

MD: They called it the DAV dance hall.

EM: Was it a dance hall?

MD: Yes, it was right on Albert Street.

EM: How long did you know him before you were married?

MD: Two years. I met him when I was sixteen. I was going to school at East High School. He was working for the WPA (Works Progress Administration) in the back of the school. I would see him all the time.

EM: What was he doing for the WPA?

MD: They were putting up those bleachers. They never finished them; they never did do anything about them.

EM: For a football field?

MD: Yes.

EM: Was it the same building that is there now? Have they done anything?

MD: It was brand new at the time. It was nice.

EM: Did he graduate from East?

MD: No, he was across the Oak Street Bridge. He graduated from Rayen High School. From where he was before you crossed the bridge you had to go to Rayen then. He came to East one year and they found out so they sent him back to Rayen. He wanted to come to East.

EM: After you got married where did you go to live?

MD: We lived with Ralph's parents and we rented.

RD: It was a great, big house. The owner and his wife lived in it. My mother and father had the main part of the house. We had one room. The owners lived up in the attic. They had it fixed up beautiful. My mother and father rented the whole house, and we just had one room which was a living room, and we converted it into a bedroom.

EM: Where was it?

RD: On Garland Avenue, on the east side.

EM: Do you remember downtown Youngstown? What was Youngstown like?

MD: It was nice. I loved it. We used to go downtown all the time. We used to walk down because we were living on Lansing Avenue and you could walk down on the private bridge; it was a shortcut.

EM: What did you do?

MD: We used to go grocery shopping at the meat store.

RD: Junedale, it was a meat market. The stores were someplace to go to just window-shop or to go in, because there were no plazas in those days. There were no malls, not anything. The whole city of Youngstown centralized on Federal Street, and the sidewalks were about as wide as this room. People were walking eight abreast. There were so many people. There were lines of people on both sides of Federal Street. Strouss', McKelvey's, Livingston's, Kline's, Woolworth's, Murphy's, most all were five and dime stores . . . As a matter of fact there were three Woolworth's stores downtown. One just closed lately, the one on West Federal Street.

EM: Where were the other two?

RD: One was next to the Park Theater, and one was on the corner of champion and Federal. When we would go to the Park Theater to the movies, we would walk a ramp from Federal Street leading into the theater. You could look down on the side and look into the store and see people shopping in the five and dime store. Then they changed the entrance to the side. Yes, it was quite a busy town then. That is all done now. Livingston's, one of the biggest stores and one of the most beautiful stores in the city is all boarded up.

EM: What kind of theater was the Park Thater? Was it a movie thater?

RD: It was a movie, and then on Sundays they had vaudeville. They had Thurston the Magician there, and they had a lot of cowboy movies. It was always packed. It was 15¢ for kids in those days and I think it was 25¢ for grown-ups. Across the street on Champion Street was the Princess Theater which had a burlesque show. I used to like to go there for the comedians; they were good. That was on the side on Champion Street. Facing Federal Street the entrance was to the Park Theater, but the Princess was there even on the side on Champion Street before the Park Theater.

MD: The Strand Theater was next to the Tod Hotel.

RD: That was just a movie theater. Then the Park changed their entrance. I don't know why they changed their entrance to the side right across the street from the Princess and closed the Federal Street entrance. Maybe it was because it interfered with Woolworth's, the five and dime store.

EM: What was the Princess?

RD: The Princess was a burlesque show. The Park was a vaudeville, live show and movies, but the Princess was strictly burlesque. Right next to it was a beer garden. If you would go in there and get a beer, you could see the actors in there eating and drinking.

The Hippodrome Show, which is now the bus arcade and is dilapidated, had movies and also Sunday live shows, vaudeville. It was big. It was bigger than the Warner, bigger than the Keith-Albee or the Palace. There was a show there. If I'm not mistaken, I think that if you go in there are still seats in there. The Hippodrome is boarded up; too bad it is closed.

MD: Powers is where the Warner was. I remember the Hippodrome.

RD: Whether they dismantled the place or what, I don't know. I do know the restrooms are still in there because I can see people going in and out of there, but that is as far as it goes.

EM: How did you get in, through the bus arcade?

RD: Yes, right in the bus arcade.

EM: You went into the bus arcade first and then you went down through there.

RD: Yes, there was a large hallway. The ticket buyer was right in the bus arcade. Then you would go inside and the ticket collector would be inside. It was all carpeted.

MD: It was beautiful.

RD: It is all gone now. I just can't believe it.

EM: There was an opera house or something down there too. Do you remember that?

MD: There was an opera house.

RD: It wasn't too big of a deal. It didn't go over too good. I don't actually remember the opera house. You know where the central tower building is at now. There used to be a restaurant, not this building--the old building because they razed the old building, and they put this central tower up. I think the other building was better than this central tower. You would go downstairs into the restaurant.

MD: That was a nice restaurant.



RD: You could sit there at the bar and order bean soup and crackers for 5¢. You could sit there and look up--you are in the basement now. You were looking on the sidewalk level, and you could see the legs walking; you couldn't see the bodies. All you could see were legs. It was like it is in the movies. I remember that because I used to go in there. That was the newspaper boys' corner where they used to sell all newspapers. They had mounds of papers on the sidewalk. There were so many people going back and forth and streetcars. You had no trouble selling 300 or 400 newspapers a day. Then across the street was another newspaper boy. They each had their corners.

EM: Just local papers or papers from . . .

RD: Vindicator and Telegram. There were two local newspapers then. Then the Vindicator bought the Telegram out. I used to peddle papers for the Telegram. It was sort of a rival thing.

I can remember the streetcars like she does. We used to go to Idora Park on the streetcar for 7¢.

EM: Take the streetcar to town?

MD: Oh, yes. It was 7¢.

RD: We used to go up Oak Hill. We would go from downtown, up Oak Hill, across to Glenwood and all the way up Glenwood where we would make a right. That would take us right into Idora Park.

EM: Was that way out of the city limits at the time?

RD: Yes. Those houses up there were exclusive like Gypsy Lane, but Gypsy Lane is not exclusive anymore.

MD: No, not anymore.

RD: A lot of it is gone.

MD: This is a ghost town really.

RD: A lot of it is lost; a lot of it is gone. The streetcars are what I remember most clearly and the movie houses like the old Regent.

MD: The Regent Theater.

RD: Yes, cowboys . . . It was 5¢.

MD: That was on East Federal Street.

RD: That was on East Federal Street. There used to be a Jenkins Drugstore. Klivans' was a hardware store which isn't there anymore. That is all cleared out.

MD: Murphy's was right on the corner.

RD: White's Drugstore used to be going down East Federal.

MD: There were fish markets. I remember that.

RD: They used to sell chickens right on the sidewalk from crates or coops.

MD: Live, yes, live. Then they would hit them in the head and that would kill them.

RD: There was no such thing as marketing in those days. You bought them all live.

MD: Yes, fresh.

RD: When I would go with my mother, she would pick them up and feel their breasts and see how much chicken breast you could get out of the deal.

MD: Meat, yes.

RD: Then she could see whether they were plump or soupy or whatever. They were right on the sidewalk.

EM: Then they would kill it before you took it home.

MD: If you wanted it killed.

RD: You could take it home and kill it.

MD: If you didn't want to kill it yourself, they would hit it over the head and do it for you for free.

RD: A lot of them took it home and killed it.

MD: They would chop the head off and then you would have to clean it all up.

RD: Yes, you had to put them in hot water, and that would loosen up the feathers.

Then the streetcars would keep going up and down the Federal Street. Mostly Jewish people possessed the stores.

MD: The owners were all Jewish.

RD: There were shoe stores like Reed Shoe Store.

MD: Shoe stores were right outside on the sidewalk.

EM: Outside?

RD: Oh, yes, you would wait right on the sidewalk. They had shoes hanging outside.

MD: You would pick out what you wanted. Then you would sit right there, and they would try them on you.

EM: What if the weather was bad?

MD: Then they would take them inside. My sister Lena worked at a shoe store. She was the only one. They only allowed one in the family to work.

EM: Who told you that you were only allowed to have one?

MD: That was all. They would only hire one person out of each family at that time to work. She got the job first so she started to work.

EM: Could you work someplace else?

MD: They didn't have women working at that time. At that time it wasn't a women's world.

RD: They would have men working in women's shops like Livingston's. They would have maybe two women working in the shoe store.

MD: Very few women.

RD: One woman would be trying on the shoes and the other one would be working on the cash register. You would buy a pair of shoes, and the clerk would write up the slip. Then you would put the money in a little vacuum tube and stick it up there. It would go upstairs, and you could see the lady grabbing it and taking the money out.

MD: She would put your change in.

RD: Then it would come back. I used to watch that.

EM: That was so they didn't have to have a cash register right there on the main floor.

MD: That is right.

RD: There was only one cashier and she was upstairs.

EM: So Youngtown was where everybody went to . . .

MD: . . . get a job. At that time the mills were going full time.

RD: It was very active in my day. You had to see the past and then the present. I used to go down there into Higbee's. Higbee's is closed now. They sold it and they put a junk store in there. Then they closed that. But just compare the activity. We used to bump each other when we would walk on the sidewalk.

MD: There were so many people, but not anymore.

EM: There were no movie theaters out in the neighborhoods?

MD: Yes.

RD: Very few of them. There was a Lincoln movie [theater] on Himrod Avenue.

MD: That was the only one.

RD: How about the one on McGuffey where we used to go? It was by Steve Fisher's house. Sure, we used to go there.

MD: I don't remember going there.

RD: How about the one on Belmont Avenue? It was a beautiful theater. Some guy in Girard owned it.

MD: The Liberty Theater?

RD: I don't know the name of it, but it was beautiful.

MD: I remember that one.

RD: That was the beginning of solving the parking problem. It was a little more expensive like 35¢, but a lot of people used to go up there. You had the whole area to park. You didn't have to worry about parking downtown and getting a ticket by the time you came out.

MD: That was a beautiful theater.

RD: That was the beginning of people wandering away from town. I can't think of the name of the show, but it was a brand new show and it was beautiful. Some guy from Girard owned it. Now it is an old tool, hardware, storage, plumbing thing.

MD: It is a junk place.

RD: It broke our hearts to see it go. We lived in Westlake Crossing in the projects.

MD: We used to walk up there to the movie house.

RD: We used to walk up there. It was about a mile and a half. We didn't have a car. We walked. We would get our groceries at the A & P. There was an A & P right across the street from the movie house. We used to get groceries with a small wagon. We put the girls in the wagon to take them up there. Then on the way back we were pulling the groceries so the girls would have to walk back.

Downtown was what you would really call downtown. If you ever see New York City on television now, that was downtown.

EM: That busy?

RD: Eleven o'clock, midnight, one o'clock, two o'clock you would come out of the show from the Warner or from the Park or the Palace . . .

MD: You would go to Jay's restaurant and have a hot dog.

RD: For 5¢. You never worried about getting mugged, no way. As a matter of fact, pressure was on the colored then too. It was almost worse than the south.

EM: What do you mean?

MD: They would push you off the sidewalk if you were walking.

RD: The south was very strict with them, and over here they knew their place. Downtown at 2:00 a.m. you were lucky if you saw one or maybe even one in the show unless he was a doctor like Dr. Jones; he was colored. You wouldn't see them in the hotels or downtown. I don't remember seeing them walking. I don't remember seeing them on the streetcars either.

EM: Did they make them sit in another part of the theater?

MD: Not here.

RD: I don't remember for sure.

MD: When we moved from West Virginia, there was not one black person there. I really didn't know who they were when we came here. I saw the first black in Youngstown.

RD: The Strand Theater used to be about . . .

MD: 10¢.

RD: Town used to open up about 10:00 in the morning. People

started to go down there then. If you got down there at 10:00 or 11:00, you would pay 5¢ to get in to see a movie. You could stay in there all day, which was what I used to do.

MD: But it was 10¢ after 12:00 noon.

RD: It was 15¢ sometime.

EM: You would watch the movie over and over again.

RD: Yes, over and over again. You would see people come in and go and come and go. I really don't remember seeing any colored.

MD: No.

RD: I don't remember; I really don't. I don't remember seeing black bus drivers or black streetcar conductors. They used to call the people who operated the streetcars, conductors.

EM: Did they ride the bus?

RD: I don't remember. The buses came much later.

MD: I don't remember seeing them.

RD: The first time I saw them riding on buses goes back to right after the Depression when I was going back and forth to work. I would say that was maybe 1935, 1936. I graduated in 1933 from Rayen and there were four colored people in our whole school. So you can imagine how many people who were black would be riding buses. Between then and now, which is fifty-two years, it is all black up there. The whites have . . .

MD: Moved away.

RD: It was exciting, very exciting especially at the stores at Christmastime. The people . . . It was so thick. There were so many people going back and forth between McKelvey's and Strouss', especially those two stores. There were people in the jewelry stores that you wouldn't believe. Livingston's was packed all the time.

EM: Do you remember the Depression?

MD: Oh, yes.

EM: What was it like during the Depression down there?

MD: Downtown?

EM: Yes.

RD: People were still down there. The only thing was that when you would go downtown with 5¢, you would buy one pound of bologna. Eggs were 15¢ a dozen, which wasn't too bad.

MD: I bought sugar for 5¢ for one-quarter of a pound.

RD: Yes, sugar was like 25¢. Where Haber's Furniture Store is downtown used to be Toth's Deluxe, a butcher shop. You would go down there and buy loaves of bread for 5¢. They were big loaves of bread for 5¢. They baked their own bread there. We would go down there and buy five loaves at a time. That used to be a butcher's shop and grocery store.

EM: Did your father have a job during the Depression?

RD: Sort of WPA from the government. He got \$16 a month just to keep him off of welfare.

EM: What did he do?

RD: He was like a stonecutter. A lot of them used to dig ditches, but he was a stonecutter. They used to have a stone quarry up here where this bridge caved in by Lincoln Park Drive. There used to be a stone quarry there, and they used to blast these big stones. Then they used to get them, and my father would chisel them and make curbing for the streets. They used to have a block and tackle to pick the stuff up and load them on a truck. Then the street workers used to get them. They would set them in and make curbing. You don't see very many of those sandstone curbings nowadays either. Most of it is concrete. He made sandstone curbing. That was what he used to do.

Besides that there used to be notices in the paper like free flour that was being given away. The government was giving away stuff for the unemployed or people who were making only so much.

MD: Then we had food stamps for coffee and cigarettes and butter.

RD: Downtown sticks out in my mind. I see the before and the after. It is so depressing because I compare the two. I know what it was like then and now. My kids go downtown and things are boarded up. They have no idea of what it was like. I can remember the horse drawn carriages.

MD: I can too.

RD: Funerals. That was about 1921. Black horses and black carriages carrying the coffin.

We just started to see daylight when we moved into the project.

MD: What year was that when we moved?

RD: 1937, 1938.

MD: We had three children.

RD: It was about 1939.

EM: The housings were brand new in 1939, all brick.

MD: We had two children.

RD: We never had a tile bath. That was what they had there. They had tile, ceramic. It was really something. Rent was \$18 a month.

MD: It was beautiful.

RD: Rent was according to your income. I was making maybe \$30 a pay like every two weeks. Then they started to raise it. Things started picking up.

MD: Around \$37.50 we paid later.

RD: It was around \$38, somewhere around there. Then they told us to get out because I was making too much. At around \$100 a month you had to get out. The part that burnt me up was that we gave them a \$100 deposit so that we took care of the place.

MD: You don't get that back.

RD: When you move out, you are supposed to wash the walls and sweep all of the floors.

MD: We washed all of the walls and everything.

RD: We did that, but they wouldn't give us the money back.

EM: You didn't get it back?

MD: They never gave us our money.

RD: We could have used it then because we were lucky if we had \$2 in our pocket in those days. I didn't even have a car.



EM: Do you remember them being built?

RD: Yes.

MD: We had dirt out there for at least three years.

RD: When we moved in, they didn't have any lawns. They weren't even graded.

MD: We were in there before they put the lawns in or anything.

EM: Do you remember the number of your unit?

MD: Yes, 361 and 347. We had two different ones. 347 was the first one. That was when Shirley was born.

RD: Then we asked for another one for more room.

MD: Kathy was born there too. I had two girls born there when I was at the project.

EM: Why did you move from one to the other?

MD: Because the rooms were bigger and there was an upstairs. We wanted an upstairs. We needed more rooms because our family was larger.

RD: There was an upstairs and a downstairs.

MD: Yes, there were a lot of prowlers there also.

RD: We used to play football games. They had a game under the lights. We used to sit there for hours and hours and hours and play football.

MD: We used to have a good time. For the first ten years we lived there it was beautiful. We had parties and everything. Every week we had a party.

RD: She had ladies who came up there and visited.

MD: All couples. In fact, he and I were the only ones who had four kids. Nobody had that many, only one or two. Some didn't have any.

EM: The people who lived there?

MD: Yes, in our whole court.

EM: What were the years, from when to when? You moved in 1939.

RD: We moved out at the end of World War II.

MD: I think it was 1945.

RD: 1945, 1946. We lived there about eight years. Those were nice years. It was sanitary, clean, something new. They had the colored living in one section and the whites living in another section. There wasn't too much . . . The maintenance men were black, but they were good like Mr. Green and . . .

MD: Mr. White.

RD: They were dependable.

EM: What did they do?

RD: Maintenance.

MD: Anything that happened to the laundry . . .

RD: We didn't touch anything. If the switch breaks or something, you call them. They didn't want you to mess around. They would send a man over to fix it up for you.

EM: That was all free?

RD: Yes.

MD: You should have seen the laundry dryers.

EM: I saw those. I have been down there in those rooms with the fence.

MD: You would die when you would go in there to hang your clothes--from the heat.

RD: We lived in the apartment that didn't have the basement, so we had to carry our clothes across the back patio or whatever you want to call it. She would wash over there.

EM: They haven't changed one bit.

RD: It is still the same thing. The routine is still the same.

EM: I think the restrictions are different on how you get in. They are a little looser. They were really tight. You had to have a marriage license.

MD: You couldn't live there without being married.

RD: Oh, yes, sure, you had to have birth certificates for how many kids you had. They would charge you rent according to your dependents.

MD: According to your kids, children.

RD: Every time you went down to pay your rent you would have to bring your pay stub with you to see how much money you got.

EM: So you couldn't lie.

RD: You couldn't say, "Well, I just made \$10 today." You had to show them; you had to show it to them. The only thing I didn't like about that was that we used to live in 347. She used to get her clothes and bring them across right next to the area where you go downstairs into the cellar where you wash your clothes. There used to be a garbage thing.

MD: They used to have a chute.

RD: It was a big doorway and you threw all of your garbage and paper in there. Then the rats began to really develop in that area. We would go out on the front stoop and they would be sitting out on our front stoop. They would get in there and eat that garbage and stuff. There were millions of them out there. By the time they got an exterminator it was too late.

MD: They were all under the porches because the porches weren't finished yet. The kids would feed them popcorn.

RD: That was under the front stoop.

EM: That was even before they were finished?

RD: It was hollow underneath.

EM: That was even before the yards were in and everything?

MD: Oh, yes.

RD: We pitched horseshoes for many, many months out there in the front yard. It was all dirt. Then they started to grade it. Then they planted grass.

MD: It was beautiful after they fixed it up.

RD: They used to cut the grass for you.

EM: Did they tell you which apartment you had to have or did you have a choice?

- RD: No, you didn't have a choice. They would tell you which one to move into like they told us to move into 347. Then you would go up and see where it was. You would walk around and find out where 347 was.
- MD: It all depended on how many rooms you needed.
- RD: They would tell you. It depended on how many kids you had. Then they told us to move to 347.
- MD: We had two bedrooms at the time. We had four girls and they all slept in one bedroom. We had two double beds. The bedrooms were big. Then we had our bed. We had a kitchen and a living room. That was all we had.
- RD: They furnished the stove and the refrigerator.
- EM: Eleanor Roosevelt came. Do you remember that?
- RD: Yes. I didn't see her, but it was in the papers. That was a big project. That was one of the biggest projects.
- MD: They were beautiful.
- RD: There were a few of them that were destroyed when they moved them because of the freeway location.
- EM: I don't think they destroyed any. I think they just moved them.
- RD: Moved them, yes. What a job that was. I would go down and watch them.
- EM: Do you remember that?
- RD: We didn't live there when they were doing that.
- MD: No, we already left.
- RD: There used to be a Chase Swimming Pool across the street. It was mostly colored.
- MD: It was for the blacks. We had the North Side Swimming Pool for the whites.
- EM: They had all of those little playgrounds here and there all over, but then they had this Settlement House too.
- MD: My kids went to kindergarten for five years straight when they were little.
- EM: What do you mean?

MD: That was at the Settlement House. They had kindergarten there.

EM: Your children went up there?

RD: We would send the kids there.

MD: They were going to school before they started.

RD: Preschool.

EM: What did they have for them up there?

MD: Everything like coloring. They used to make little projects and all kinds of stuff.

EM: All day long?

RD: They had teachers.

MD: All day.

EM: Did they have activities for you too, like the women?

MD: We used to have little parties for the children. We would bring them food and stuff.

RD: Thanksgiving parties.

MD: Yes, and little Halloween parties and stuff like that.

RD: The kids liked it. They really enjoyed it.

MD: They loved it. At two years old you could send them as long as they didn't wet themselves or anything. I think Sandra and Dee went five years straight in a row.

RD: That was good for them.

MD: It was better than them sitting at home and fighting outside.

RD: Swings, monkey bars.

MD: Every court has one.

EM: Yes, there are all kinds of little playgrounds.

RD: Yes, they called it a court. You walked across and you were in that other row of buildings. Everything was so new then. It was so beautiful.

MD: I liked it there.

EM: Actually they are really not bad.

MD: They are run-down.

EM: But they are so well-built. I have seen the plans. Those posts for the parking lot go down four feet.

RD: Yes, and they have copper spouting.

EM: They still do except for the downspouts. The downspouts have been restored. They have slate roof.

RD: Yes, slate roof.

MD: Oh, they still have the slate roof.

RD: They are well-constructed.

EM: Even in the ones they moved the plaster didn't crack.

RD: Yes, our plaster was beautiful.

MD: Are they all black there now?

EM: Yes.

RD: Yes, they are all black.

EM: When you lived there, I heard that they called Madison Avenue the Mason-Dixon Line.

MD: Yes.

RD: I don't remember that.

MD: Yes, I remember hearing that.

RD: The colored lived below Madison Avenue and from there back up to Evans Field, up on top of the hill, was mostly white. They were all good though.

EM: No problems?

RD: There used to be a grocery store down at the corner of Wirt and Federal Street.

MD: Labate's grocery store, everybody went there.

RD: Everybody would go there. We would walk down that hill.

MD: That was a big hill. Buses used to come once an hour.

EM: Every hour?

MD: No.

RD: That was when I got stuck that time. The buses used come once every half hour. They had weekly passes for 50¢. Then they went up to 75¢ for a weekly pass. That was when the buses came into the picture after we got married and we moved up there. Before we got married there were streetcars. You were about ten and I was about fourteen or thirteen or something like that when the streetcars were very active downtown. Imagine getting on a streetcar with your grocery bags and then ringing the bell to get off.

EM: That was a good experience then living at Westlake?

MD: Yes, it was. Then we moved back to 19 South Fruit Street.

RD: That was when they kicked us out of the project because I was making too much money. I was making like \$90 a month.

MD: Then we moved out of your mother's house and we moved to Truesdale.

RD: Then we lived with Lena and Uncle Jimmy for a while there too on Prospect. Then we lived with Freddie and Rose on Jackson. Then later on we moved from Fruit Street. We moved quite a bit. Then from there we found a nice house on Truesdale in an upstairs apartment. We sure missed those projects.

MD: I liked it at first, yes. We met a lot of friends out there.

RD: Yes, we sure did.

EM: Do you remember the end of the war?

RD: Yes, vividly. We used to go out beating pots and pans. Everybody was marching outside and making noise.

EM: Were you at Westlake at the time?

RD: Yes, we were just winding up there. I think that same year or the following year we were told to get out.

EM: What happened at the end of that year? Did everybody go downtown? Was there a parade?

MD: We never went because of the children and no car, but there was. There was all kind of action.

RD: All the families came out beating their pots and pans. There was a lot of racket.

EM: Your experience at Westlake was a good experience?

MD: Yes, good experience in the eight years that we lived there. I wouldn't want to go back.

EM: Not now. Is there anything that you can think of that maybe we missed?

MD: I don't know, no.

EM: Okay, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW