

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Niles Project

Personal Experience

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ANNE MARIE MACALI

Interviewed

by

Marcelle Wilson

on

October 25, 1994

ANNE MARIE MACALI

Anne Marie Macali was born on April 25, 1925 in Warren, Ohio. She was the only child of Edward and Constance De Crescentis. Mrs. Macali grew up in Niles and attended Jefferson School and graduated from Niles McKinley High School in 1943. She worked as a laboratory assistant in St. Elizabeth Hospital from 1944 to 1948. She attended Youngstown College, where she received a Bachelor of Science in the field of Education. From 1956-1992, Mrs. Macali taught reading, English, math, science and biology in the Niles City Schools. In the 1970's, she attended Westminster College and graduated with a Master's Degree in Counseling in 1978. Retiring in 1992, Mrs. Macali is active in the Ohio Retired Teacher's Association, the Niles Historical Society, the Friends of McKinley Memorial Library, the A.A.R.P. and the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary. She is a member of both Sigma Phi and Kappa Delta Pi.

Anna Marie Macali married Carl A. Macali on June 27, 1946. They have three sons, Carl D., age 47, Gregory J., age 44, and David M., age 42. Mrs. Macali visits with her sons often and remains active in her community and church.

-- Marcelle Wilson

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INTERVIEWEE ANNA MARIE MACALI

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W This is an interview with Anna Marie Macali for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Niles Project, by Marcelle Wilson, on October 25, 1994, at 6 00

What was your childhood like growing up in Niles?

M My childhood was very quiet I was an only child Ever since I can remember I was a reader I liked to play and be with other kids, but I had to have alone time almost everyday

W What kind of books did you read?

M Most of the classics like Heidi, So Big, or any of them that were out I did not read Sunny Books and things of that nature I did, I think, read them as I got older and into Junior High When I was younger, I read mostly classics As I said Heidi, and So Big are the two that come to my mind We had to go to the Downtown Niles-McKinley Library because we had no library books in our school We walked a mile down and a

mile back. This is with two miles of walking to school, but we did walk. We played a lot of neighborhood games. Most of us stayed within our block.

W: What block was that?

M: I grew up on Ambrose Avenue, which is not too far from here. It is over where the Presbyterian Church is and it is one block below Crandon Avenue. Most of the kids who played there came from that city block between Crandon, Ambrose, and Gilbert. We all sort of congregated in the middle, which was Ambrose and we played lots of games. Hide-and-go-seek and Kick the Can are the two that I remember. When the swimming pool opened in the thirties, we swam almost everyday at Waddell Park. It was ten cents to get in. We did walk. It would be about three miles. We would leave early. You are bringing back a lot of memories. We would pack a lunch, leave early, and go into the pool or eat in the picnic area. We were allowed to eat at the pool because we watched our litter. Then we talked awhile and went in for a swim. We stayed until maybe four or five o'clock.

W: Everyday in the summer?

M: Almost everyday unless there was really bad weather like storms and that sort of thing. It is surprising to me because I do not see kids walking there anymore, but that is understandable because times have changed. We walked to school, too.

W: Did you come home for lunch?

M: Yes.

W: Did you come home everyday?

M: Yes. I went to Jefferson School in the grade school, which was only two blocks from my home. Then for seventh and eighth grade I went to Washington which is about a mile away, but we walked home for lunch. They did have a cafeteria at Washington. Money was tight at that time. Many times during the winter if it was really bad out, we were able to buy a little lunch if we had the money. I was fortunate because sometimes I could stay. However, Washington did go to the ninth grade at the time. I played clarinet and I was in the band. If you were good enough, the director sent you to the high school, which was then where Edison is at the present time. I went to the high school from grades nine to twelve. We had over an hour for lunch and we walked home everyday, and it was cold. I wore long stockings that were cotton. (LAUGHTER)

W: Was the high school's name Niles High School?

M: Niles-McKinley High School.

W What was the ethnic make-up of your neighborhood as you were growing up?

M My neighborhood was mainly Italian, a few Hungarians, two Welsh families, and two Jewish families

W And did you all get along?

M We all got along very well. Most of the families that lived there were first generation Italians. My mother was born in Niles. My father had come from Italy. The people who lived around me came mostly from Europe, Wales, Italy, and Hungary. I think we had one German family, also. Their children, as a result, were first born children of immigrants. They were the first generation.

W Did your parents speak Italian at home or strictly spoke English?

M No. They spoke English all of the time. My mother was born here, but she could understand Italian and speak it. By the time my father had married my mother, he had command of the English language. At that time, the saying was, "When in Rome, you do as the Romans do." So, my father said he would speak English. He learned how to read and write in English. I wish I could speak Italian.

W My relatives are from Lithuania, and my grand-mother spoke it. She only spoke English when I was around. So I can understand that you really wish you had learned it back then.

M Yes, your tongue is more flexible as a child.

W How many people in your family lived in your house. Was it just the three of you?

M Just the three of us. Occasionally, my mother's unmarried sister would stay with us. When I was in junior high, she moved west and never stayed with us anymore, but I was the only one. Most of the time it was my mother and dad and myself.

W Who were some of your best friends when you were growing up?

M That's a tough one.

W You don't recall?

M I remember having good friends after I had gotten into high school in the band. This was in Junior High I would say, and when I was in the band. There were some neighborhood girls, a couple of boys, and we played a lot together. I could not relate to them because I

was such a reader. It seems that I didn't have anything in common with them. We didn't know what to talk about. If we could play, that was fine. When I was in junior high school, the movie Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was released, and we had the "Seven Dwarfs" club. There were seven of us. We were not all from the same neighborhood. They were my best friends at the time, but we were scattered throughout Niles.

W Did you go to the movies often when you were growing up?

M Yes I did. I had to go every Tuesday night. I even dreamed of going all week because we got a dish at the McKinley Theater and it was only a dime. (LAUGHTER) I still have those dishes. I will show them to you later. They are packed for my daughter-in-law.

W It was only a dime to get in.

M It was only ten cents to get in. I remember during the Depression, they had all a sorts of things like bank night, and the free dishes for a very minimal charge. You could get in into the movies on good nights for canned goods, potatoes, home canning, and produce from gardens. Many of the kids my age would hang around the theater and wait until a young couple would go in. If they had what was considered an ample fee, say six potatoes, the ushers would let two or three children in with them. So, they got to go in free. The Peruzzis owned the theater at that time.

W What was the theater called?

M I think it was the Robin's Theater. We had three theaters. Robin's, Warner Theater, and the McKinley Theater. They have all been torn down now.

W Who would the food go to, like the canned goods or something? Was it for charity or was it for the theater?

M They maybe brought some of it to what we called the soup kitchen. Mainly they kept it for their employees for pay. I am surmising this. Maybe they sold or gave it to needy people they knew.

W Did people in your neighborhood have big gardens?

M Yes.

W Did your family?

M. Yes, my father had a big garden. My mother canned everything. She could revolve a meal between the garden and an egg.

W What were some of your meals like as you were growing up?

M We would have fried peppers, tomatoes, zucchini, whatever was in the garden. Then she would put an egg through it. May be even shred potato in it. That is called -- I had seen it on the menu in some restaurants -- Frittata. I am probably not saying it properly. It is F-R-I-T-T-A-T-A. I often think if my mother saw me paying six dollars for this, I would be yelled at. We had very good meals. We had a lot of macaroni. We often had beans. We had spaghetti every Thursday or some pasta. On Friday we had beans and macaroni. On some days the food varied because it depended on how much money we had. I am thinking of something interesting right now.

My grand-daughter asked me a couple of years ago, "What was the Depression like?" I tried to remember. She was in fifth or sixth grade at the time and I wanted to tell her so she would understand it. I asked if she knew what a dime was, she said, "Yes, ten pennies." I said, "My mother, your great grand-mother gave me a dime." I would go to the back of the garden and right across the other garden to Rizzi's store on Gilbert Street. I would go in with a dime and buy two slices of bologna, a couple of potatoes, and a soup bone if he had one. I had change from the dime.

I have this magazine Reminisces. Someone had sent me a sample copy, and in that magazine was an article concerning the Depression. Potatoes at that time were a nickel a pound. Living was different. Incidentally, it was ten cents to get in when we went swimming at Waddell Pool. By that time, in the 1930's, we were coming out of the Depression and people were starting to work. When I think back now, my mother had that fifty cents for me every week to go swimming, ten cents a day. And we could eat on that (ten cents) during the Depression, and even a couple of meals. You know, this was what I bought at the store and the garden.

W Did your father work through the Depression? Was he employed?

M He was working and was laid off.

W Where was he working at?

M I think it was Republic. Everything closed down. Because he knew how to read and write, he took a test for the WPA (Work Progress Administration) and he was able to get a chauffeur's license. That meant he could drive a truck for the WPA. He made a little better salary per week because he was a truck driver. He delivered things when they were building Meander Dam. They planted all those trees out there. If they needed cement or whatever, he delivered. That is why we had fairly good money. I don't remember exactly how much he made every week, but I do know it was better than average. Before that time, he worked at the city. Many men did. In fact, some women did, too. You got paid enough to be able to work out and pay your electric and water bill.

W So he worked all through the Depression?

M Most of the Depression. Before that he would cut lawns. He did anything he could so he could pay our gas bill. Of course, as I said, we ate from the garden. People did a lot of gardening at the time. For some reason my mom could grow good asparagus. So she would trade asparagus with one of the neighbors who had a lot of chickens and he would give us eggs. So they did a lot of bartering. At that time, there were a lot of unemployed people, mainly men, whom we called "bums". They would come in by train. They were hiding in a box car. They would walk through the city going door to door begging. They always asked to work it out. They would dig your garden, basically, and do any kind of work. Then you would pay them and give them something to eat. Surprisingly, maybe they had a beard, but they were always clean. I could remember that.

W Were they dressed in suits or shabby clothes?

M They wore shabby clothes, jeans, and so on. Those were rags at that time, but that kind of fabric was always clean. May be not ironed, but clean. They were trustworthy.

W Do you think crime was increased during the Depression?

M No, it did not. No, as I said, we walked downtown, we walked to the swimming pool, we walked to school. No one was worried if their children went to the movies on Saturday or Sunday afternoon. I see parents now at certain ages, with their children wanting to go to the mall. The parents drive their children and their friends out to the mall, and the parents would sit at one end of the mall and say, "Come and check-in with me in an hour." When they go to the movies on weekends there is usually an adult going to the movie with them. The adults sit in the back and the children sit elsewhere. Naturally, the children want to be alone. They are not doing anything wrong, but the parents are very aware of the crime rate and things that happen. We were never afraid. Everybody was helpful when I was growing up in the neighborhood. I miss that. If you noticed, I have an alarm that I turn on. Everybody has an alarm system. It makes a difference.

W Did you go to high school and college?

M Yes.

W Did you get a degree in teaching?

M When I first went to college, I was a pre-med because I was a medical technician. I worked up at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. I was in the lab for a long time. I was driving at the time.

W About what year would this be?

M This was 1945 until the 1950s I don't know how I got through some roads because we didn't have snow tires Nobody cleaned the roads I had a black Chevrolet and it went through Belmont Avenue I never got hung up in the snow

W Did you have chains on the tires?

M No I always carried them I still have the chains in my basement I always carried them just in case I don't know if I would have been able to put them on Later, I had three boys and I thought, "I can't go back to the lab " I liked that work, I really did We were working every third weekend, all day Saturday and all day Sunday We had night call every third night There was a shortage of medical technicians at that time just as there was a shortage of teachers After my third son was born, I went to Youngstown College and I got certified in teaching When my youngest son went to school, I was fortunate enough that in 1956 I got a job teaching I taught thirty-six straight years and retired

W What school did you teach at?

M I taught mainly fifth and sixth grade at Washington School I taught junior high math for a long time Washington School was Kindergarten to ninth grade I taught English and reading back to back It was sort of a whole language approach in the early sixties That is how I got into the junior high Supervision wanted someone with a reading background So I did teach the English and the reading back to back Then when that program was discontinued, I taught the math and some classes of Ohio History and Geography I also taught Mr Al Moritz's classes when he took a sabbatical leave I had a dual certificate because of my science background When he needed a year off to work on his doctorate, he would take sabbatical and I taught for him I taught in high school for one year in 1957

W. What was Youngstown College like when you attended there?

M It was much different from what it is now Most of our classes were in the main building

W Which building was that?

M It was on the corner of Wick and Lincoln

W Do you mean Jones Hall?

M It is the main building and you walk up the steps Is that Lincoln Avenue?

W At the corner of Lincoln and Wick is Jones Hall

- M It was a tall building, and most of our classes were there
- W It might have been renamed or something
- M It is caddie-corner across the street from Youngstown Public Library
- W Yes, that is Jones Hall
- M Occasionally, we had a class in houses that the university was starting to buy at the time Those were mainly English Some of the general course work that is required such as sociology classes and psychology classes were taught there Sciences were all in that main building, as well as all of the laboratory classes
- W What was tuition back then?
- M Not much Something like two hundred dollars a semester The text books, the ones that had to do with my major, science, were expensive even then They were from twelve to eighteen dollars Most of the other ones were not that expensive You knew everyone on campus I started there in September of 1942, the first year of the war, and most of the men were gone.
- W Were there a lot of women?
- M This is not a very nice term, but the men who did not go to war were called Four F'ers Usually they had an eye problem, some sort of a physical problem which disqualified them from serving in the service They could not pass the physical examination We had Alumni weekend two weekends ago at Youngstown State and I saw many these men Some of them are lab assistants and two of them are doctors in Youngstown now They were very, very nice people who contributed a lot to the community I thought calling someone a Four F'er was a bad thing I did not say that to people, that isn't in my nature, but that is the way it was at the time At the time, kids call it like it is
- W What did you do during the war besides going to school? Did you do any kind of volunteer work, or did you have a job?
- M Very few people volunteered because they needed the money I worked at Strauss and JC Penney I sold mainly children's clothing I worked on Saturdays and during the summer. Then, when I got into the medical technology, I worked at St Elizabeth's in the laboratory if they needed help for a day or two, but usually as a lab assistant until I was hired
- W What were those years like during the war?

M The thing that I remember the most is that a lot of things were rationed. You had coupons for sugar, shoes, and gasoline, which were the three big things. Personally, I did not miss the sugar, but I was hard on shoes and I was very hard to be fitted because I have narrow feet. I wear a nine a-a-a-a (nine quad). I had to get the two pairs to fit exactly. You needed a ration stamp for what we called galoshes or boots. What they came out with was summer shoes that were made out of cecal or rope, you did not need a stamp to get a pair of those.

Gasoline was difficult. By 1945, I was working at St. Elizabeth's in the lab, and I was riding the bus. I rode the bus just like I did when I went to college. The buses became like a little community because the same people took the seven o'clock every morning. They were so busy during the rush hour that buses ran every fifteen minutes, seven, seven-fifteen, seven-thirty, and so on. When someone was missing we often wondered, "Are they sick today?"

There was a friend of mine who owned a barber shop in Downtown Youngstown. His name is Birdie Rounds. He still has his barber shop in the Youngstown Hotel. He goes down about two days a week. He said he is semi-retired. He drove up everyday. He said, "I will pick you up Anna Marie, right at the corner of Ambrose and Robbins Avenue." I said, "Okay." The gas stamps my father didn't use, I gave to Birdie because he never had enough gas to last the week driving to Youngstown and back. My father never used all of his rationing coupons because he worked at Republic. Republic was working again and it was only about a mile and a half away. Very often they can pool. Nobody had the money to buy extra gas just to go and joyride. I gave my extra ration stamps to Birdie. A couple of us did. So that was a boon for us because we got a ride. It was very, very different.

You had a winter coat. It lasted four or five years and they never wore out. I remember when I was in seventh grade, my mother bought me a coat. It was maroon. I don't know how many sizes too big it was, but she folded under the sleeves and took them up. She did the same thing with the hem. I was still wearing the coat when I was going down to the high school in eleven grade. Each year she would drop these hems. The last year I wore the coat the sleeves were a little too short, so she bought me long gloves. (LAUGHTER) I didn't like the color maroon. That was true for everyone that was in the same position. We never worried about it. We had a good time. People were closer. It wasn't so materialistic as it is now. My uncle gave my father a car back then.

W What kind of car?

M It was a Ford. If we had it now, it would be a collector's item. When my father bought a Ford Coup, I was in college at the time. We had that car for many, many years. He had it until he died.

W Where did you go to church?

M I went to Mount Carmel Church on Robbins Avenue in Niles.

- W Did your whole family go?
- M Yes
- W Who were some of your ministers? Do you remember?
- M We had Father Santori. He was the first or second priest to come in. He was responsible for building the church and the small parish house. Then Father Oreste came. He was here for many, many years. Father Oreste was responsible for a lot of innovations at the church such as the nuns home, the parish house, and the school. Then Father Nick came. We did not have parochial school at Mount Carmel in Niles when I was going to school. St. Steven's had a small parochial school. We had to go to religion classes every Saturday or on Sunday, either day, to prepare for communion and confirmation. Down at St. Steven's, Father Roach, who liked young people, had a religion class. I think that was on Thursday nights. He organized picnics and field trips for us.
- W You would mix with that church?
- M Yes. Almost everyone in the Seven Dwarfs Club went there.
- W Did you participate in church functions or church fundraising?
- M I did when I was married because there was more of that sort of thing. Before that time, when I was in college and in high school, my parents did what they could to help the church.
- W What were some of your favorite things to do as you were growing up?
- M I liked to read, but I loved concerts and music. I am an opera goer. I go to most of the symphonies. I like musicals, jazz, and big bands. That is what I mainly did growing up. I never missed a parade.
- W Did they have a lot of parades in Niles?
- M There were more parades during that time than there are now. We had at least two or three a year.
- W What did you like least as you were growing up? Did you dislike chores?
- M When I was a child, my worst fear was that my parents would lose their house during the Depression. I would hear them discuss this at home when I wasn't supposed to hear. I would have dreams, literally, that I would come home from school at lunch and we would

be locked out. That happened to a couple of different families. I am sure the banks notified them. The banks would repossess your house. I think my parents built our home for five or six thousand dollars. After they had made the down payment, the payments were thirty dollars a month. I still have the original big sheets of paper that my mother wrote on every time she made a payment. If she had five dollars extra during the month, she went down and put it on the house. Of course, that came strictly from the principle. She had made many extra payments while my father was still working before everything closed down. That often would carry her an extra month in the house. That was my biggest fear, that we would lose our house. I often thought, "Where would we ever sleep?"

W What did people do when they were locked out of their homes? Did they go to neighbors or relatives?

M They stayed with relatives or neighbors. I have a good friend whose family lost their home three times during the Depression. She said that feeling never left her, that fear. That was my biggest fear. Things like throwing out the garbage and that kind of thing didn't bother me. The one chore that used to worry me was removing the ashes from the grate at the bottom of the coal furnace, but my mother and father were always with me. They wanted to teach me how. They were so hot that you had to have a metal can in which to put these ashes. I didn't like to do that. I was afraid of the fire.

W What did the house you grew up in look like?

M We had an average size kitchen. The dining room was as big as the kitchen. It had a long living room about 10x20 feet. It had three bedrooms upstairs. The house was built in about 1930. I am not sure of the year. We had indoor plumbing. We always lived with indoor plumbing.

W Did you have a basement?

M We had a basement and cement block walls. Before that time, the walls were sort of like mud and stones.

W What kind of refrigeration did you use back then?

M I have the ice box in the corner over there in the family room. We had nothing at first and then we had the wooden ice box. Joe Rossi would come around with a horse and wagon selling block and ice. We also bought milk everyday.

W How much was the ice, do you remember?

M. It wasn't very much. I can remember a nickel a block, or twelve by twelve. As time went

on, that became a little more expensive. He would get it from down in Russia Field somewhere from what was called the Ice House. I don't know how they kept it all summer.

W Did your family keep a lot of groceries in the house or did you have to go to the market a lot?

M We went to the market often. Meat did not keep well in an ice box. Whenever we had it, my mother cooked it and then put it directly on the ice. When refrigerators became common and we had the little freezer compartment. Then we bought more groceries. My mother always canned a lot. Even when she had money she canned a lot. She canned things like tomatoes.

W When you went to the local grocer did you always pay your bill or did you run a tab?

M. My mother always paid her bill. She never ran a tab. Many people did run tabs. My mother never did. I think she was afraid that she would get used to charging and then maybe she wouldn't have enough money to pay the bill. She was a pay as you go person. When she got her first charge account at General Motors McKelvey Company in Youngstown, she said the first time she used it, "Anna Marie, I thought I was committing a sin because I bought something and I hadn't paid for it." (LAUGHTER)

W She never got used to that?

M No. I can remember when she had bought a new living room seat, and that was a big thing. She charged it, but she had the money at home to pay for it. Most people were like that at the time.

W Did your family run or own a business in addition to your father working?

M No. We were not business oriented.

W What did your family do to celebrate a birthday or the holidays?

M We always had a little birthday party for everyone's birthday. When it was my turn, my friends and the neighborhood kids would come over and we would always have cake and ice cream. It was a big thing. Usually, we never had enough candles. There was one single candle. It was done that way during that time. My parents' birthdays were mainly family oriented. On holidays my aunts would come up. My father had one brother who lived in Youngstown and he would come down. When he married, he brought his family. It was so nice during the summer because my mother had planted lilac bushes around the outside of the dining room. She would open the windows and you could smell the lilacs. We had a big dining room.

W What about Christmas?

M Christmas was the same. My parents had some friends who did not have family here so they would come up and spend Christmas Eve with us. They would bring their children. We always had stockings filled with some kind of a present for everyone. They could have been homemade or even a food item. When we had a little more money we bought things, but they were always practical gifts.

W What were some of the gifts you remember?

M I can remember my mother making certain types of cookies that some of her friends liked and she would box them and wrap them real pretty. She would crochet around handkerchiefs and give those to family members or embroider their names on the corner. They made doilies and all sorts of things.

W Did she start early in the year to make those?

M She did that all year long. Women of that generation never just sat around. You didn't have television. If you were fortunate you had a radio. You would listen to the radio or sit out on the front porch during the summer months and their hands were going all of the time. They were either crocheting or embroidering. My mother did a lot of cut work. She would cut little designs on pillow cases. For example, she would cut out a flower and then embroidery around the edges to keep that from fraying. That was called cut work. You would spend a lot of hours on a item like that and then they were given as gifts. I have lots of those things.

W That is a nice tradition.

M Yes, it is.

W Did you listen to the radio a lot as you were growing up?

M Yes I did. I can remember Amos and Andy and Jack Benny. We had a Philco radio and a couple of rocking chairs. Every Saturday afternoon my father would turn on the opera. He would sit and rock and listen to it. I sat on his lap for the entire opera and he would sort of direct and I listened. We spent almost every Saturday afternoon doing that during the opera season. I think this is where I got my love for music. Later, we bought a Brunswick radio. We were only allowed -- when I say we, I am an only child, but my mother was there -- to listen to certain programs because when the tubes of the inner part of the radio burned out, you had to buy a new one. When you don't have money, you use that sparingly. We listened to the news, certain programs, the opera, and that sort of thing. Otherwise, the radio was off.

W Was this just to conserve it?

M We were very conservative

W Who was the first person on your block to get a television?

M I think it was Mary Marsico Their parents had died and there were three or four girls living alone She always worked from the time she graduated until she retired not too many years ago I think she bought the first television on that street

W Was your family the second family on the street to have it?

M We were the second or third There was a house between Mary's and my mother's and I think they got it after my mother

W Was it black and white?

M It was black and white, maybe twelve inches by thirteen inches I bought a television in 1952 They had been out a while I remember buying one about that time My children were young They were six, three, and a year old Every Friday night we watched, "I Remember Mama " That's why I can remember the year we got it I bought a television in my house after my mom bought hers One of the reasons I bought one was because my sons were saying, "Oh Mommy, Ronald got a television and they are watching it " I thought, "Well, we better get one " Times were changing

W. Were you pressured by your children?

M That is what it is called, keeping up with the Jones'

W What were some of the other shows you watched?

M I never watched very much television I watched "I Remember Mama." There was a scary movie on but I don't remember the exact name of it, maybe "Inter Sanction"?

W I don't know that It was a radio show, I know that

M Something similar to that came on television My family did not sit and watch television until sports came on Then they watched football games and other sports They never watched a lot of television They were always too busy They all played musical instruments They were all in the Junior Military Band, in the high school band, and school activities They didn't have time I think they are watching more television now than they did when they were growing up simply because they were active They are

active now, too, but you know in the evening they can sit and watch television

W Did your parents belong to any of the social clubs in Niles like the Eagles, Elks, or maybe an Italian Club?

M My mother did not belong to anything. She did help out at the church when she could, but she did not belong to the organizations. She was not a joiner. My father was more social. He belonged to the San Phillippe Neri. San Phillip and the last one is N-E-R-I. They were two of the Italian clubs. He belonged to both of them. Belle Napoli, I think was the other one. I think both are still active. He would go down and once in a while they had little projects. They would contribute to the church, the boy scouts, or whatever. They did make some contributions.

My mother would get annoyed sometimes because my father would say, "I am going down to the club." Then she would say, "All right." And she would say, "You know, Anna Marie, maybe it is good that Papa goes to the club because they like to talk about the homelands." I thought about it as I got older, I think it was like therapy for some of those men. They talked about their homelands, when they were growing up, what their parents had done around the holidays, and different customs, and they felt good. Those men drank a little bit and they played a couple of card games. My father never came home drunk during that time. Most of them walked. By that time, we did have a car, but my father walked and it probably took fifteen minutes.

W: Were there a lot of pubs around where you lived?

M No. There were no bars or saloons. It is down on Ambrose right on Robbins Avenue. Do you know where the Presbyterian church is in Niles?

W I am not quite sure.

M Do you know where Washington School is, Hartzel Avenue?

W Yes.

M If you go down to Robbins, Ambrose is a half a block up from Hartzel. That is all residential. The saloon and the pubs were towards the end of Mason Street and in downtown Niles. Now they are all out on the Strip. There weren't any at all. I think the first time I saw one was when mother and I had gone to the movies and I saw one across from Warner Theater in Downtown Niles. I remember asking her what it was. All she said was, "They sell beer there, and you are not allowed to go." (LAUGHTER)

W What happened when a family member, relative, or neighbor died when you were young and growing up?

- M: I could remember when my grandmother died. I was five years old. They showed her body at the home.
- W: They showed her at home?
- M: Yes. They had folding chairs. I can remember seeing her in the coffin. I was closing one of the folding chairs and I caught my finger in it and it hurt badly, but I didn't say anything. I was afraid. It was a new experience for me. My grandmother lived about five minutes from our house. I remember getting so upset that I asked my mother if I would be allowed to go home if I went straight to bed. She said, "Okay." I did not go to the funeral, I went to the church, but I did not go to the cemetery at all. Most calling hours were always in the home at that time. Much later the custom started of having calling hours at the funeral home.
- W: Were there any funeral homes back then?
- M: There was Rossi's and Holloway's. Those are the only two I remember. Holton's could have been there, but I am not sure. I remember Rossi's because it is on the avenue up from the church.
- W: What did some things cost as you were growing up, like a cup of coffee, for example?
- M: A cup of coffee was just a nickel and a couple of pennies. I can remember buying a good pair of shoes at Downtown Leopold's for a dollar and ninety-eight cents for a good pair of shoes. Also, I don't know whether it was good for you or not, but we always had our feet x-rayed when we were trying on shoes. You would put your feet into two slots and peer down through this long tube, and you could see the outline of your shoe and the bones in your toes. If they were bent a little bit, you could see your toes were too close to the edge of the shoe. You had to go to the next size. (LAUGHTER)
- W: I never heard that.
- M: That practice was discontinued. I can remember having my sons at Lustig's at the Liberty Shopping Plaza. I can remember them having an x-ray machine there. By that time I thought, "This was not good for us, unless it is absolutely necessary." So I never allowed my sons to have their feet x-rayed. I can remember when that was done to me, not forcibly or anything. It was a big thing, it was a common practice at the time. Lots of people, even in the fifties, still had their feet x-rayed.
- W: What happened when you or your mom or your father would get sick as you were growing up?
- M: We had home remedies. For a sore throat, you would gargle with salt water. Lots of

people did use turpentine, but my family did not. We gargled. If you had a cold you used the mustard plaster or Vicks. You rubbed Vicks on the chest, forehead and under the nose. Then people would use flannel clothes over their throat keeping the area warm. A lot of people drank hot wine. We did not because my father did not like wine. He never had it at home and he never made it. We never did that, but a lot of my neighbors would often say, "I had a very bad cold and my mother gave me hot wine and I went to sleep and I just sweat it out." Whatever it was, it worked. The only time that you went to the doctor when I was growing up was if you broke an arm or a leg. I had a feeling, if people could put a splint on reasonably well, they would do it themselves and not go to the doctor.

W Was it more because the doctor was expensive or didn't you trust them?

M We didn't have the money. They used a lot of home remedies. In the Spring, it was sassafras tea and black strap molasses for the iron. They say you should have something with a lot of iron. If you had a stomach ache, the older people made Chamomile tea for the young children. That is supposed to settle your stomach, you would use ginger. They used a lot of home remedies. From what I read in the paper, home remedies are coming back. If you go to the health food store, you can buy some of these products. Very often people would make toast with a little bit of oleo and smashed garlic. It was like a little paste, they would put that on the toast and eat it. Hopefully that would ward off colds or cure what you had. People used a lot of garlic.

W Was there a lot of problems with Polio as you were growing up?

M Yes. In fact, my very best friend got Polio. To this day, she feels very lucky because she is still wearing a brace, but they are made of plastic and they are very light weight. She doesn't have to carry a cane or anything like that. Until a few years ago, she had to use a cane to help her because the weight of the brace was so heavy. Polio affected just her right side. As a result, that leg never grew and of course she did. When she walked, she was limping so much that it affected her back and her hips. Everything was out of sync.

She said that now she is doing fine because the braces are not heavy. She can even drive. They made special equipment in the car so she is able to drive and get out. I lived over on Ambrose and she lived almost a mile away, at the end of Lincoln. I would walk to her house, I think I went everyday while she was sick and we read together. Her name was Mae. She was a nice person.

W What kind of treatment did they give to people with Polio? Was she just bed ridden?

M She was just bed ridden. They didn't have any medication at all that I know about. I think what they did was just keep her comfortable. She had high fevers. Her mother would just wipe her off with cool water and put cool packs under her armpits. Other than making those people comfortable, there wasn't much you could do. I think about her so

often I see her occasionally I don't know of anyone else our age who had gotten Polio. I don't know of anyone in Niles who was affected by that There could have been milder cases Her case was very severe

W What about tuberculosis?

M Not too many that I know of got tuberculosis I think by that time I had started to grow up, better medications and better diets warded a lot of that off Tuberculosis is on the rise again

W Yes, especially in New York. How much was a gallon of gasoline when you started driving?

M Gas was twenty-five cents a gallon Then the first jump was to 33 cents. It stayed between 33 and 35 cents for many, many years The price jumped during the big crunch That was the late 1960s or so

W How about a loaf of bread?

M We never bought much bread because my mother made it My mother baked I could not tell you what it was during the Depression, but I could remember getting what we called store bought bread for twelve cents a loaf Jones' bread was made in Niles That was over across the viaduct in Niles It was good, too

W Did your family participate in any local politics?

M No My father campaigned for some of his friends who ran for different local offices in Niles He would speak down at some of the clubs for his friends, but only if he believed in what they were campaigning for Other than voting, no He never got active, never worked for a politician or anything like that

W Who was the first President you voted for?

M I can't even remember We had to be twenty-one before we voted I was born in 1925 It could have been Roosevelt at the end of the war I think it was because he was a four termer Yes, then later Truman and Eisenhower were presidents

W Thank you very much, Mrs Macali.

M You are very welcome

END OF INTERVIEW