

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Youngstown, Ohio

Personal Experience

O H 1019

JOHN HERRLICH

Interviewed

by

Phillip Bracy

on

June 4, 1981

B This is an interview with John Herrlich for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Germans in Youngstown, by Philip Bracy, on June 4, 1981

I would like to start by asking you, Mr Herrlich, a little bit about your background

H Well, first of all, I was born in Youngstown My mother was born in Youngstown However, their ancestors all came from Europe. My grandfather migrated over in the 1850's They came by sailboat It took them one hundred days on the water. That was prior to when they had the steamboats

B Do you know where in Germany he left from?

H Yes, they came in from the lower part of Germany, which would be in the Bautzen district The reason why people came from Europe was because of the economic conditions The Irish came over because of the potato famine, because they could not make a living over there A lot of them died because they had no food. But the Germans came over because they wanted to make a better life. They figured the United States was the place for them to come over to

Grandfather landed in Youngstown and made his home here A few years after that, the Civil War broke out At that time, as told to me by my mother, grandpa could buy his way out of the Army He had a family and he did not want to go He paid six hundred dollars for somebody else to go in his place But the other fellow never went

He worked the mines out on South Avenue They worked six days a week They had mules down there, which had never seen day light They never brought them up Of course, those mines are closed now, some of them are caving in Mrs Harris, of the Youngstown University, is finding these holes

My father came over in the 1890's because of the fact that he wanted to make a better life He also landed in Youngstown, but he ran out of money when he got into Pittsburgh so he had to go to the outskirts He fed the hogs and pigs at a farm until he got enough money to get into Youngstown He knew Father Klutey from St Joe's in Youngstown, an old church over on Rayen Avenue Father Klutey got my father a room over on Via Carmel, which is old Summit Avenue From there, he found and got acquainted with different people He immediately went to school to learn English He said, "If I am going to be an American, I have to talk English "

B Do you know where he went to school to learn English?

H I think he went to your institute?

B International Institute?

H Something similar to that if it was not the International Institute In those days we had a lot of brick layers He was a brick layer and a stone mason He worked for the Neider Myer

Company They put up the Wick building, Stambaugh, and other buildings in town When he married my mother in the 1890's, he took a boat on the canal here to Lowellville on his honeymoon Of course, he could not afford very much because they worked They got \$1 50 a day for six days a week His rent was ten or twelve dollars Eggs sold around ten cents per dozen

B You mentioned he took a ship on the canal Where did the canal run?

H The canal started, as I understood it, at the Market Street bridge I understand that the passenger boat line did not run at that time They had already stopped it I would assume that they took just an ordinary boat or somebody's boat and took it down to Lowellville

B Would that have been like, a sail ship?

H Yes, not a steamboat, just an ordinary paddle with oars I would imagine that is possibly what he took It might be interesting for you to know that we call our downtown the Cental square At that time, we used to call it the Diamond We had other districts, which we called the South Avenue districts, we called it Kyles Corners and Flynn Hill We even had a Flynn Hill school up on top of the hill on Indianola There were other people The Williamsons were neighbors to our people The Finney's were friends of ours At that time, the only Catholic Church in town was the Saint Columba's, which is now the cathedral Then the Germans started to build their church, which was Saint Joe's, now the Newman Center At the same time, the Irish people started theirs, which was Saint Ann's Saint Ann's is no longer in existence

B Do you know where that was?

H Yes Saint Ann's was out on West Federal Street, where the new highway took over They tore it down

B One thing do you know where your dad lived when he moved to Youngstown, what street?

H Summit Avenue, but when he married, they rented a home on South Avenue That house is still up near Williamson As I understand, the rent was just twelve dollars My dad wanted to go into business for himself He already had the land picked out over on South and Midlothian where the TV station is now

B Channel 27?

H I think that is it He said that is where I am going to put my home But it never really materialized because he got hurt on a job and died from the injuries His associates in business were the Shutrumps, the Bucheits, and the Linbergers Then Mr Shutrump went into business for himself, the Bucheits went into business for themselves; and Linberger

went into business for himself

B How old were you when your dad passed away?

H I was six years old, my sister was just born. She was three weeks old. My brothers were ten and twelve. We had a problem. I might also state that he died on November 23, right before Christmas. My sister was born on November second. We were going to have a very poor Christmas.

Christmas Eve we had a knock at the door and the secretary from the Youngstown Humane Society was there with his little daughter and they had two baskets of stuff for us. It has always been in my mind ever since. These people took it on themselves to visit people that really needed something for Christmas.

B You mentioned that Sakes, and said the cemetery does not exist anymore.

H Oh yes. That is another thing, too. Saint Joe's Church had their own cemetery out in Briar Hill, off of Fenton Street. They could not take care of it anymore and the fences were falling down, so we re-interred our dead and took them over to Calvary Cemetery. Even for the years that they were in the ground there was nothing left of the bodies, except for a few bones.

B What year did that re-interment take place approximately?

H 1920's or 1930's; something like that. A lot of things happened between that, and the town had grown. All of us had to go to school. We all had to work. I started real early and got a job unsolicited. I started when I was in the fifth grade and I have been working ever since.

B What was that first job? Do you remember?

H Yes, it was in a grocery store. I got four dollars a week.

B Where was it?

H Zook and Braudman, on the corner of Williamson and South Avenue. It helped us. I might also state that we went through the first epidemic in 1918. We took precautions and my mother took precautions so we would not get sick. South High School was a hospital at that time. We had a nurse that we knew and she gave up her job to take care of the sick at the hospital. I knew one family that was completely wiped out. They all died from that flu in 1918. I did not get it, neither did the family, because precautions were there. My mother would scald all the glasses and cups and boil water. It was cold when I was working in the grocery store. We had our coats on, the doors were open, and we did not get near the people. When we had to write, we kept many feet away from them so we would not catch any germs. But we went through without any problems.

- B What kind of epidemic was it?
- H A European Flu I think they called it It was really severe
- B Were there many people who died from that?
- H Yes, we had a lot of people in town here that died There is one section of Calvary Cemetery, the Catholic cemetery on the west side, that is practically all from the flu epidemic We had an opera house in town We brought in good shows
- B Okay, where was that located?
- H That was on the southwest corner of Public Square Then, when they closed George Oles, it moved in with his market.
- B Okay, now let me back up a minute. How long was that an opera house? Do you remember?
- H That I really do not know I do not know how long that was an opera house
- B Do you remember what year it closed, approximately?
- H In the 1900's up to the 1920's I would assume that would be about the time
- B Is there a building on that spot now?
- H The Mahoning Bank Building is in there They bought the whole piece of land that the opera house was on Then George Oles took over and he had these big barrels of pickles and onions They called them hogs head, I think  
Also, my mother has told me many times that the courthouse was not located where it is now The courthouse was over on the East Side of Wick Avenue near the bridge That is where the courthouse was  
She told me that at one time there was a murder in town and they arrested a man He was hung for the murder on circumstantial evidence My mother still thinks possibly that the guy did not do it We do not know. But they hung him down at this jail, the courthouse My mother went down with her father, which would be my grandfather, to witness this execution I think that was maybe the only noosing that was ever made in Youngstown  
There are other things that happened A lot of people never heard of Dry Run That is on the East Side My mother used to say Dry Run
- B Was that an ethnic neighborhood? What did Dry Run mean?
- H There was a little creek and it would dry up, you know, and they called it Dry Run

B Do you know where that was?

H It was out at McGuffey Road, the end of McGuffey Road out there Early Road and McGuffey, that is the area of Dry Run

B You mentioned that the first job you had was with Zook?

H Yes, Zook and Braudlen

B Where did you work after that?

H Oh, I went to school, business college I learned accounting I could have stayed in the grocery business, but I did not like it I went to the National Mattress Company I was their bookkeeper and accountant

B What year did you start with National Mattress?

H 1918

B What business college did you attend?

H Youngstown Business College, which was on East Federal Street. They then joined with the Youngstown College They their night school at the Youngstown College They called it the YMCA High School. I graduated from the YMCA High School, then I went to college and graduated from Youngstown College, down at Youngstown State University I might also mention I was the first class that graduated from Jones Hall

B From Youngstown College?

H Yes We are going to celebrate our fiftieth anniversary next year, May, 1982 We got our B A degrees from Youngstown College

B So, the first graduating class was 1932?

H 1932, from the new college As I recall, they also put one of those papers with our signatures written on it in the cornerstone I know I signed it They said that was what was going to happen So, if they ever tear it down, they will probably find our names in it Jenny Kinneliveson, myself, and Macintosh. We had seven that graduated from the business administration That was long ago

B Do you remember what your graduation ceremony was like?

H We had a baccalaureate at the First Presbyterian Church, I think it was

B At its present location? Was it still there?

H It was not downtown. It was some other place. It was an old one down on Wood and Wick. They have a new one there now. Then, we went to the college, we had our graduation there. They had seven hundred students. As a matter of fact, Howard Jones said we only had four hundred, but I think we had seven hundred.

I was on the student council at the time when Howard Jones came and we are still good friends. We were trying to get a reduction in tuition at that time, because it was pretty hard to pay.

B What was the tuition then?

H I have not the slightest idea. Books were rather expensive, ten dollars, which was a lot of money at that time. I still have some of them at home yet that I did not get rid of.

B Do you recall whether it was under fifty dollars for tuition? Were the books more expensive than tuition or anything?

H Oh, I understood it was only three hundred dollars a year, maybe. That was the whole thing. But at that time three hundred dollars was a lot when you were only making fifty dollars a month to start.

I recall going to night school and going downtown to eat dinner before I went to school. We went to Baumboalis' Restaurant on West Federal Street. I had a full-course meal for fifty cents. Then, during noon, I would stop downtown at Cox Restaurant across the street from McKelvey's. For only eighteen cents, why we could eat. That was during the Depression. People do not know what the Depression was, and people suffered. You know, people were out of work.

B When you started with the National Mattress Company, what did you do?

H I was office manager and bookkeeper.

B You worked with them for how many years?

H Twenty-five years, from 1918 to 1941. Then I went with Youngstown Building Materials, which is the Youngstown Ice and Youngstown Building Material Guild.

B Youngstown Ice was where then?

H Well, Youngstown Ice, when I came with them, was just a name. We had no more ice. At one time, Youngstown Ice would transport their ice from Wisconsin down here. They would bring it in ships from Milwaukee down to Cleveland, and then put it on railroad cars and bring it into Youngstown and lose fifty percent of it because it evaporated. That was before

my time I do not remember selling any ice, but I knew they did

B Do you remember how you found out about the stock market crash?

H Oh, yes, I can tell you about that When I was with the Mattress Company, we were making mattresses I could see that the dealers were stocking them rather than selling them I would ask the boss, "Do you know they're not selling them?" They were buying them, but they did not seem to be selling them He said, "Well, if they want them, we'll make them."

B Now, who was the boss at that time?

H Samuel Watson I recall in November of the crash in 1929 we had calls from the dealers who asked us to hold up their order Three weeks after that they said, "Cancel my order, cancel my order!" We were sitting with the merchandise and no sales They said, "Why don't you go out on the road We have to cut expenses " So, I went out on the road I even had mattresses at such ridiculous prices. People would not buy them, because they could not sell them

B Well, what was the mattress going for before the crash of the stock market, approximately?

H The cheapest mattress was around five dollars at that time wholesale But when the crash came, we could not even sell them for three dollars and fifty cents But when the crash came, we could not even sell them for three dollars and fifty cents I went up to Erie and told the guy I said, "You have just got to buy something from me, because I want to keep my men busy " They said, "Well, I just do not need them and there is no use of buying them if we cannot sell them "

B There was no TV in those days?

H No, we did not have TV

B So what entertainment did you have?

H See, radio did not come in until 1921, I think

B You mean mass sales?

H Yes

B How did you actually find out about the crash of Wall Street itself, from the radio or from anything?

H Yes, we knew something was coming because they were not selling and the other guy was



not selling. Then, of course, when they had the bank holiday, we knew there was something up.

B Yes, but the bank holiday did not actually take place until Roosevelt. Was it in 1933?

H Yes, until he came in.

B At the same time, if I am not mistaken, prohibition was in effect. Were there a lot of illegal speakeasies?

H Oh, yes, they had those. They had speakeasies. I remember one fellow telling me that he was going to buy some good proof whiskey. I gave the guy the money. Then what they bought were barrels of water. This actually happened. I will not give you any names, but there were quite a few speakeasies.

B That was in Youngstown?

H In Youngstown, yes.

B Was National Mattress a large concern?

H Yes.

B What kind of area did you serve? How wide of an area around here?

H Well, it does not pay to go more than fifty miles away. During the Depression, we could not sell our mattresses here, because of the condition. The better sales place was Oil City in Franklin, Pennsylvania. So we hit those more often than we would try to sell them in town here, because they were selling oil.

B That is where they get the name from?

H Oil City. They were selling oil and people had the time to go ahead and use their car, so they were always buying oil. So these people really did not know much about a Depression. Also, I understand, Charleston, West Virginia was making glass and so forth, and they did not know much about that, that there was a heavy depression.

B The local economy then, as it was up until prior to about 1977, was basically steel. Was industry pretty much relying on the steel industry in those days?

H Yes. I mentioned to you before that, on account of the potato famine, the Irish people came over. They came over because the steel companies needed laborers. They were very good product for labor. Then, of course, on top of that, the Italians came over and the Germans

came over They were working all in the mills

We do have an ethnic group of people in the city of Youngstown They had a lot of companies If I recall, we had Trussett Concrete Steel Company, rather than Trus-Con Steel Then they changed it to Trus-Con and Republic bought Trus-Con

Then we had Youngstown Sheet and Tube and they expanded Then, Republic came into town Then they were talking about the canal Ever since I have been a little boy, they have been talking about the canals As a matter of fact, we had a canal But we did not need the canal they said, because we have got railroads Now, we do not have railroads and we do not have a canal

B You mentioned that they had an opera house up until about 1920 No, I am sorry you said about 1900

H Yes, they had an opera house Esther Hamilton always mentioned that because they brought in old plays, you know I recall seeing it I have never been in it, because that was too before my time

B What other kind of cultural places did they have? What did Main Street look like? You know, were there other cultural centers, such as Powers Auditorium? Not necessarily Powers, but you know what I mean?

H Well, I do recall that each church had their own recreation place Saint Joe's used to go up at Briar Hill and have their picnic on Superior Street They had a big park It is right now where Saint Cazimir Church is On Sundays they would go there and have their German day

Then, we had Idora Park just coming into existence Then we would take the street car from downtown along the South Side We had open street cars

B Without windows?

H Yes, they had blinds hanging up If it got windy, we would lower the shade I still can see those They were really something, you know, to look and see them going to Idora Park That was a very good center We also had a Southern Park Race Track

B Now, where was that located at?

H It is out on top of a hill where the outdoor show is now, directly east of that It would be on McClurg Road It would be north of McClurg Road on Southern Boulevard on that corner We had Southern Park Race Track We had horses there They ran As a matter of fact, I think Russell worked on that in setting it up My brother was the little water boy for them, because they needed a water boy and he worked out there. He just took water to the employees Then, I do not know, it just deteriorated They just let it go They had the Southern Park and the Y & S Railroad all the way out there A lot of picnics were there

We had mentioned George Oles with his market in the opera house. But then he moved down to across from the city hall. He did not know what income was or expense. If there was any money left over, that was a profit. The IRS said, "Do you owe us some money?" He said, "Well, I do not know how much I owe you. Do you remember that?" Anyway, he sold more bread than any baker I have ever known. Ten loaves for one dollar I think it was, or twelve loaves for one dollar. He had the best corn pancakes that people would want. The men would come in there in the morning and have pancakes and maple syrup. He said he was going to run for mayor. He did run for mayor and was elected. He lasted three months and he could not stand it. He resigned and he wanted to get back in again.

B What year was that? Do you recall?

H No, I do not know. He notified Chelikus that he had to take his steps away from there at his restaurant and also the Central Bank. They said, "You cannot do that." But Mr. Oles did. At twelve o'clock one night they had a crew and they just moved the steps from the Central Bank. The next morning they had to take step ladders to go into the bank. I wonder if people remember that?

B Probably not. Oh, I know, I was going to get back to the Depression. What were the major buildings on the Public Square in those days? Like if you were to start where the Federal Plaza starts.

H Well, we had the Dollar Bank and the Stambaugh Building, and the Mahoning Bank Building. Those were the old ones at the time my father was there.

B That are still standing, you are talking about?

H Yes. The Union Bank is a newer bank. It was not an old bank there, but they put a new one up. That is a newer bank. McKelvey Company is an old established place. They also had another department store, J. N. Euwer Company. Woolworth's had a big store and they still have one there yet. They had Ridder and Myer clothing stores, which was an old established store. The Fordize Company was another established outfit. Leonard, Sherton, and Cane was another one that people always buy their communion clothes there.

B It was strictly for first communions?

H Yes, and they sold a lot of clothing. When my father was living, we would go up on Wood Street where the Shell Choffin Center is now, and on Sunday morning, get a surrey with a horse and take a trip way up to Midlothian Boulevard. That is way out in the country. That is how he saw this land and he wanted to buy it for our home. My father then wanted to give my oldest brother a gift for his birthday. He gave him a goat and a wagon. Oh gosh, they just went down the street and the thing turned upside down. He got stitches in his head, so

he took the goat and the wagon back from where he got it from. He could not control the goat I guess.

B: Who were the major leaders of the community during the Depression, that you recall?

H: Well, we always had the Wicks, and we had the Stambaughs. We had the Williamsons, who are connected with the radio stations. We had the Dutchins, if I recall, he had Stuffington. Those are the only ones that really I would know. Of course, we always had Dr. Buechner. Everyone seems to know him from way back.

B: What kind of doctor was he?

H: He was an MD. His office was in back of the Stambaugh Building on the corner, right by the YMCA. He had his home there. He was one of the old timers.

B: When you were growing up, did you have heroes, somebody who you looked up to?

H: Truthfully, I did not have time for heroes. I started when I was in the fifth grade and I had to work. All of us worked. We did not have a father. Really, I did not have time to play and I really worked.

B: You mentioned, getting back to the outbreak of the epidemic in 1918, I know we are jumping around a little, the time that your family members went to different homes.

H: Yes, well we had to bury the dead. I was an altar boy. The priest would call me up and say, "We have to do this and that." So I went out with the priest and took our equipment along. The priest would come to the front door and he said, "All windows open. Leave the door open." We would bless the body and make prayers or so forth, so the undertaker could take them to the cemetery. But there were so many dead that they had to stack them. They had to put them in the building there until they had time to dig all these graves.

B: Do you remember the priest's name?

H: No, I do not remember.

B: Okay, and he was from Saint Joe's?

H: Saint Joe's. I went many, many times with him. We stayed away from people and had the fresh air all of the time. So, we just did not want to get sick, which we did not.

B: We had mentioned your employment up until about 1941, when you worked with National Mattress. Where did you go when you left?

H YBM Corporation It was called the Youngstown Building Material and Field Graphic

B In what capacity did you work there?

H I went as office manager and that was in February

B Of 1941?

H Yes My wife was in the hospital at the time I was taking a new job It was really a little hard to do at the time I was told I would be office manager and I was to expect a man from the army who was going to be secretary He came in May and he was telling me he did not feel good We would go out to lunch together and he would say, "I just don't feel very good " I guess he did not, because he died August the fifteenth

B What did he die of?

H I do not know I was elected to assistant treasurer immediately From February to August, I was already assistant treasurer

B What kinds of services did Youngstown Building provide when you came on board?

H Well, we were in the concrete cement business You saw the trucks going around town We sold brick, sewer pipe, everything in the building except lumber That is what we were doing at the time

B Okay, you stayed there until you retired?

H I stayed there until I retired

B And what year did you retire?

H 1969

B You are still active with the corporation?

H I am still secretary to one of the directors of the YBM Corporation. I thought I would spend a few years with the Catholic Charities, but I am still here

B You came on as a temporary person here?

H Not exactly We put in data processing and they needed someone who could help with the data processing I offered my services They needed someone who knew accounting and so it just fit in very nicely Of course, I also coordinate the Senior City Pall Calls that comes

to this office for help. And, I am also now connected with the clothing drive. We ship up to fifty-five tons of lightweight clothing to people around the world.

B: Going back to the Depression, were there specific areas of Youngstown where certain ethnic groups lived?

H: Yes, let's take the East Side. I recall patrolman Kenney. He was a figure downtown. He was a policeman and they were from the East Side. We had the Irish on the East Side and the Italian people. We had Sacred Heart and Immaculate Conception, which is what you might say all Irish people. Then, we have got the Italian church, which is Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Then we come to the South Side. That is where most of the English descendants were, Cows Corners, Flynn Hill. Then the Italians came in and they had their Saint Anthony's Church on Federal Street. And Saint Ann's Church on Federal Street. So, we had then Saint Patrick's, which would be the Irish on Oak Hill Avenue.

B: Were there a lot of Irish in the Saint Pat's area?

H: Oh, yes there were many, many Irish.

B: At this point Youngstown was part of the Cleveland diocese?

H: That is right. Bishop Shrimms was the Bishop at that time.

B: So if anybody was looking for records of, let's say Irish Catholics, their records are probably still in Cleveland, are they not?

H: Well, each parish kept their own.

B: Oh, then it was not kept by the dioceses?

H: No.

B: Okay, I do not know, did we mention every side of town? What about the West Side?

H: The west side was not populated at that time. You would go out to Meridian Road. That would be a farm. Across the bridge would be populated.

B: Which would be about where Paisley Avenue is today.

H: Where Steel Street is. That is probably where the population started to dwindle down. The Youngstown Ice had ice houses at Mill Creek Park. Of course, there is one more thing that we have to remember. We did have a flood in 1913.

B Okay, now that spilled over from where?

H The Mahoning River here was flooded over. Down in Basin Street was really covered and Market Street Bridge was not closed, but they were afraid that maybe something would happen. But the paper, my brother worked at the Vindicator, and it kept moving. They got the papers out. The Mattress Company was flooded. The cotton bails in the basement were soaked. All the other things were soaked. All the other things were soaked. They had the flood mark on the door when I came to work with the mattress company.

B Yes, that was the problem. I do not think I asked you the location of National Mattress.

H It was on West Avenue, right off of Mahoning where Burley's is now.

B Do you know when the first Market Street bridge was built? They did not always have the bridge.

H They tell me that that is one thing I do not know about. But there were several Market Street bridges. There was a foot bridge as Howard Aley told me. Then, they put another one up and then the third one. It could be the fourth bridge. South Avenue had several bridges. I do not recall all of them. But the last two I know.

B Where were the two bridges on South Avenue?

H Well, they just replaced them.

B Oh, they are where they are now.

H The same bridge. They had a foot bridge and then they enlarged it and then they tore it down and put a new one up. This is about the fourth bridge, I believe, that is over the river.

B Now, when you say there were two of them, you are talking about the upper one that crosses at the Market Street bridge and the South Avenue bridge.

H Well, South Avenue was a very small bridge at one time. It just crossed the river. Then, they had to make it longer, so they raised it. Then that bridge was torn down and they put a higher bridge up to cover the mills. So, there must be three or four bridges that went over the area.

B Maybe it is just a contrast. You told us the major buildings were downtown in 1929, during that period. How significantly had it changed in, let's say, the 1940's and 1950's?

H Well, if I recall from when I was a little boy, there was not much difference between the East Side of the diamond of Public Square and the West Side. But then, in the years coming,

there seemed to be a difference between the people that were on the East Side and the West Side. And there still is a difference. We had this garage down on the east side and they are having difficulty in running it. The West Side seems to be where people like to do their marketing, not just on the east side. I just do not understand those connections.

B Why was Public Square called the "diamond?"

H It was the shape of a diamond. Instead of being round, it was this way. It was where the monument was. They just left the monument there. Also, there is nothing mentioned. We also had another bridge that was used for the street cars. That was down on the East Federal Street, running over Cedar Street. We called it the Elephant Bridge. Now, I do not know if you ever heard of that word or not. The bridge is still there yet. We had to make a change from the Williamson Avenue streetcar to go where we wanted to go.

B Do you know who owned the streetcar that ran? Or was it several companies that owned those tracks?

H At that time, I think it was just privately owned. You could take the streetcar for a nickel. Then they had passes for a dollar.

B Do you know what company owned that streetcar?

H Youngstown Muny, I think it was.

B A lot of people tell me that in the period of the 1940's and 1950's, maybe more in the 1950's, there were a lot of theaters downtown. Could you tell me about the major ones?

H Yes. The Dunn Theater was one that people really enjoyed. I remember seeing the first speaking movie. What do you call it?

B Talkies.

H Talkies. Al Jolson. That was at the Dunn Theater.

B Now, where was that?

H That would be where Brenner's have their jewelry store now. Hazel and Federal.

B Was it a very ornate theater, very fancy?

H Oh no, just an ordinary theater. Then, we had one downtown, the Dijou, where the Union Bank is now. There was a theater there. Of course, we had the other big theater, which was the one on the square, that they tore down. It was a very nice theater. They were going to



put another big building up there, which never materialized. They tore this beautiful show down.

B: Where was that one located at?

H: That was the East Side of the diamond. There is a parking lot there now. What did they call the theater?

B: It was not the State Theater.

H: No, the State Theater was another one, but that is a newer theater. Also, down on East Federal Street we had one. I do not recall the name that the East Side people would go to. Of course, we had theaters all over. We had them on Himrod Avenue. We had them on Glenwood Avenue. We had them on Market Street. We had a burlesque down on Champion Street.

B: Do you know the name of that burlesque theater?

H: Princess Theater.

B: Did you ever go there?

H: And we had the Park Theater.

B: Which was different from the Park?

H: The park was really a place where you went to see good pictures. The burlesque was across the street.

B: I was wondering if you went there and if any big names would come to Youngstown for the Park Theater.

H: Oh, the Park Theater, yes. I do not recall what those were. Idora Park would bring in shows. You know, the good shows. I recall one name Desmond, D-E-S-M-O-N-D, William Desmond. You could see that and other things and the Idora Park. They had nice shows.

B: We briefly mentioned the State Theater. Where was that one at?

H: Same place where it is now. Across from McKelveys.

B: That is not the Agora Club?

H: Yes, there is a club there now. But the State Theater was there. But that is still a newer

theater than ones before

B There was an auditorium, I believe, somewhere downtown, Central Auditorium. Where the union people used to meet a lot of times, from what I understand. I do not know what it was used for other than that. I know the 1937 strike people had told me that there was an auditorium downtown.

H The only auditorium that I know is next door to the Chance that had an auditorium where they had skating rinks and meetings and everything else. That is where the General Motors is. Outside of that, I do not know of anything downtown. Oh, and another thing, they had a Tod Hotel. They tore it down. That is where the new building is. That was an old residence and a nice place to go.

B Okay, when you say that, where they tore down which old building?

H Well, you know where the new U-tom is?

B Next door to the Realty Building, right around in that area?

H Well, it is across the street from the Mahoning Bank. It is empty now. That is where the Tod Hotel is. They served good meals. They had nice rooms. People would come in and really enjoy themselves. Now, we have no hotels downtown. The Todd House and the Hotel Ohio, were two hotels. But I do not know of any convention centers that we had downtown, except east of over here.

B You mentioned it, I think, his name was Pat Kinney, the policeman. Was that it?

H Pat Kinney. He was a figure in town. He was a big, tall fellow with rosey cheeks. He had his little house where, if it rained, he knew it. People knew him and they would holler at him.

B Where was he?

H Right down on the square.

B Right in the middle of the square?

H Right in the middle of the square. You see, we had no traffic lights. We had cops and Pat Kinney. I think a lot of people would recognize the name.

B Was there any other outstanding figure? I mean, not in the sense of the Wicks or anybody who was a big shot. But anybody, any individuals such as Mr. Kinney, who people would identify with no matter what their job was, necessarily. But who were none-the-less.

considered characters of sorts

H No, I do not really know of anybody

B You were active in the German community, being of German descent?

H Yes

B Did you join societies or was it a matter of just going to the church and then joining?

H No, at one time when the Germans put up their first church, which is in the same location

B Is that Saint Joe's, which is now the Newman Center?

H The Newman Center now They did not have too much money, so we were asked for money and work In German it is geld and arbeit So, the ones that could not give money would give the work That is how they put up the first church Then, the second church was done the same way They had the plaques up in the building, which says geld and arbeit So, that is how they put their church up

B Do you know the approximate date the first church went up?

H Oh, I have not the slightest 1870 I do not know.

B Then, the second one Did they tear down the old one?

H. Yes, they tore down the old one.

B Was it a wooden structure?

H Yes They put this new one up. Well, we have remodeled it in the years past But at that time, it served their purpose Then during the Depression, they put the basement in They raised it and put a basement in

B Oh, there was a question I wanted to ask you about There was some controversy about at one time, I guess, when they were working on the square They wanted to remove the statue from downtown, the man with the rifle

H Yes

B Do you know what that is all about?

H Well, the people in town did not want the statue moved They wanted it to stay in the same

location. At that time, I was on the Capital Improvements of the Youngstown Chamber of Commerce. The plans were to make a throughway from Federal Street west to Federal Street east and depress the street and put small shops underneath like they have in some other towns.

B Sort of like a mall?

H Like a mall underneath. But it never materialized because some thought it would be insecure, they could not patrol it, so they changed that to what we have today. Also, they really fought to keep the statue there, because it symbolized the people that died for democracy and the Civil War. So, they did do some moving, but it is still downtown.

B Approximately when were they discussing relocation of the monument?

H Oh, I would say it must be twenty some years ago. So, it must be around 1960 or so.

B Could you tell me a little bit about the Germans within the parish? What kind of organization did you have?

H Okay, the church itself had a school, which has just been torn down a few years ago. We had some three hundred boys and girls going to Saint Joe's school. They also had within the organization a Saint Joseph's Aid Society, which would help those men that were ill to receive some kind of a benefit when they were unable to work. That kept on going for many, many years. I was treasurer of that for sometime.

We also had another society, which all of the Germans belonged to. The Central Society, I think, just dissolved some years ago, because of the fact the organization said we were breaking up. They did meet all over the United States, Central Verine Society. I read that some time ago about the Central Verine Society keeping the German organizations together. Of course, the Germans have always kept their customs. They would have their liturgy and their German language and they would sing the German songs.

B Were there any German newspapers in Youngstown?

H Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, we had the German Rinshou, which was in the same building as the Vindicator. They would ship this German paper all around the diocese and all around the country until such a time that people began learning how to read English. They just dissolved the Rinshou. Now, there are still German papers, but we do not have them printed in this locality.

B The main purpose of the school was probably like most other Catholic schools. Was it a bilingual school? Did you speak German and English?

H. Yes, they were bilingual. They would teach us German. I feel sorry that they did not give

us more of that, because I think every ethnic group should have their language. The Slovaks have theirs. The Germans have theirs. The Italians did not seem to have their schools like the Germans. I recall the German Lutherans had their school. But when the First World War came, they more or less cut out the German language all together, because of insecurity and so forth.

B Was there a negative reaction toward German citizens during the First World War? Youngstown was an ethnic town.

H Well, in general, there was. But to us, we felt nothing, because we were part of Youngstown. They knew us. But I would imagine there was some discrimination in being German. But I, myself, had no problems. Our family had no problem.

B You mentioned the Central Society.

H Central Verine.

B Could you give me a little history of what you know of that organization?

H Well, I came in on the end of it. It was very strong at one time, keeping all of the German customs and the German societies together. They would meet and have a national convention and a state convention and all of these, and talk over what they do in other parts of Ohio and the other parts of the country. Maybe we could do the same thing to keep the German language and keep the Germans going. There is one irony of that, which is that we had one good Irishman as head of the Central Verine Society. But it was a good society as long as it was going.

B Now, you say you came in toward the tail end of it when it was ending?

H That was in the 1930's or 1940's.

B Okay. Who was the Irishman and how did he end up as president?

H Well, he married into the German people.

B He married a German.

H Yes, his wife was German. So, naturally, he just went into the German church. That is how he got to be involved in the German societies.

B The materials that they gathered, let's say songs from the old country. What kind of material did they save? Was there something comparable to a local museum where German materials were kept? Was someone responsible for collecting these in the society? Was there a central

location for these materials?

H No, I think very church seemed to carry their own weight Oh yes, they started to organize some groups called Maennerchor They still have two different Maennerchor They have the Hungarian Maennerchor They also have the German Maennerchor. We also have the third Maennerchor in town, which really hold the German group together in the German singing plus the English singing They go on conventions together They go all around They go to Cleveland and they join with their group there They go to Cincinnati and they go to Chicago They all have these different Maennerchors

B Beside the central organizations, what other societies existed? Were there specific German societies that existed outside of this central society or group?

H No, not too many

B Like, did they have their own Boy Scouts, for instance?

H No, they had no organization like that as far as I know That was the only group that I can recall

B There were, for instance, the Italians had the Duke of Abruzzi Hall, which they had some home written and some preserved from the old country plays and paraphernalia They used to act out certain dramas from the Italian community Was there some similar place for the German society to enact German plays or anything related to that?

H No, I do not know. I do not think they would use any of their halls They would just get together in any hall they could probably rent I do not recall any of those

B Did the Central Organization or any church societies bring in big name stars from Germany?

H No Not in Youngstown I do not recall

B Where would you have to go to?

H Cleveland, I think, would be doing that And Chicago and Cincinnati, which is more German down there than any place I think Hitler was even going to take over Milwaukee, there were so many Germans over there. But I would imagine those that have their halls and conventions and bring in a lot of the German choirs and things over But I do not recall any that came to town

B Did you ever go out of town to see any of these groups?

H No, I was never too connected with those I know people that have

- B Where did they get the sisters to teach? I am assuming they have sisters in the schools?
- H Yes, the Sisters of Notre Dame came to Saint Joe's because of the fact that Notre Dame is more or less German and from Germany than all over the world. Of course, there is some French Notre Dame's, too. They were a little different.
- B Is it similar to, let's say, the Oblate Sisters?
- H They came over and we have the Notre Dame's. They were from Cleveland. Now, the Notre Dame's are in Chagrin. Or, Chardon I think it is.
- B They have a Notre Dame College I think that is what it is.
- H Yes, a Notre Dame College. They taught. Then, eventually the Notre Dame's were teaching at Saint Joe's in Austintown and in Warren, Saint Mary's in Warren. But, the sisters are scarce today, so some of the schools just have lay people teaching. They do not have the nuns anymore.
- B How large a school is St. Joseph's?
- H We had approximately three hundred. They would need about eight teachers. They had their own place to live. We furnished that. The sisters would get fifty dollars a month for teaching. I think out of that, they even fed themselves, which today is a meager. It is a postage stamp.
- B Were there any other German parishes within the city here or metropolitan Youngstown at that time?
- H No, we only had the one German parish that I know of. Gee, we do not even have one in Campbell. There is an ethnic group, but we had no Germans there. The nearest ones would be in Ashtabula, then Cleveland.
- B Did the church have any mutual societies all through guild?
- H Yes.
- B Was there anything like the Knights of Columbus, or was that just Diocese-wide?
- H That would be Diocese-wide, yes. And citywide. In the big cities they had the knights of Saint John. I think they are still functioning. Some of our parishioners would join the Knights of Saint John, which was a big organization at that time. I still think they are functioning up in Pittsburgh, the Knights of Saint John.

- B What about the Lutherans? Was there a Lutheran parish in the city?
- H We had one. The Lutherans were right down on Wood Street. They had their school and they taught their catechism, same as we do. The Germans got along very well together.
- B Were there so-called high Germans, which is closer to Roman Catholicism, or were they the lower Germans?
- H No, they were the Martin Luther types, which would be the high Germans. I might also note that we had different people speaking different brogues. The Germans also have a brogue. The high Germans and low Germans, they talk different.
- B Did the three different groups live in specific areas? Was there a division in living?
- H Yes, since you mentioned it. The high German lived on the South side. The people from the East side seemed to come from the lower end of Germany, which would be part of Austria-Hungary and Boudan-Boudan, which is the lower part of Germany. They have different brogues. It seems they would settle in different areas.
- B You mentioned, the German language itself has different dialects. Was there a name given to the dialect that your father and yourself spoke?
- H No. High German and low German was as far as they would go.
- B Do you know the Provençe, since most of Germany at that time was still a provincial government? What Provençe was your father from?
- H I think my dad came from Prussia, which would be high German. The other one came from, I really do not know what they would call that Provençe down in Boudan-Boudan and the lower end of Germany.
- B Was there a patron saint?
- H Saint Joe's.
- B Saint Joseph's.
- H It seemed as if Saint Joseph's was always the patron saint.
- B Was there a local saint? In some parts of Europe, in a village or town, they will have a particular saint, like if they are a fishermen. Everybody has a patron saint.
- H No, I do not recall them talking to me about that. I do not know. I do not think we had any.



patron saints at all. The only one that I could think of would be Saint Joe's.

B The worker

H Yes, the worker The Germans seemed to be very good workers

B What statues did you have in the church in Saint Joseph's ?

H Well, they have changed the things in the last few years And taken some of the statues away But in our church, we have the Blessed Mary. We have Saint Joe's There are a lot of angels, small angels, which I thought was very, very beautiful

B What are they made of?

H We had Saint Frances, if I recall

B What were the angels made out of?

H Not plastic

B Stone?

H Yes We had the different other saints I think they got rid of those

B Yes, since Vatican II What did the interior of the church look like when it was Saint Joseph's, when it was still Saint Joseph's?

H Well, they painted that several times in my lifetime They would get a good painter from Cleveland Along the altar, they would put pictures of angels in gold with a blue background like sky, which I thought was very, very beautiful Then another time they changed it and it was not angels, but other kinds of markings Latin

B Was there any significance to, for instance, the people that would paint the angels? Did they use some old technique that was common in Germany, or was it just somebody? Where did you find these people?

H Well, they are specialized painters of churches You have to get those Cleveland or Pittsburgh or one of those places or bring them in from Chicago But they are really specialized in church painting. Also we had to get people who were specialized in repairing the church organs I think the old time organs were the nicest things that a church has, instead of getting some of the newer things We remodeled our organ over at Saint Joe's We took it all apart and had to go to England to get lamb's wool, because the ordinary domestic lamb's wool is not any good.

- B What did you use the lamb's wool for?
- H That goes inside the keys where they go down in pressure I did not see them put them in, but I know I worked on it with the organist Also, there are a lot of things in Europe that they make better than we do here Things like needles And they say the lamb's wool is made in England Needles are made in England Julius Brubaker, they make needles that do not wear too fast The ones that we make, the steel, I think, is a little softer  
Looking back on some of the church things, we sang Latin, of course Everybody knew Latin Now, when we listen to some of the English, I can tell you the Latin that the altar boys used to sing
- B I know in many communities, the organ was brought over
- H Some of them, yes
- B From Germany?
- H Some of them would we brought over from Germany and then would have to be set up Oh, I will tell you another thing, too, that I really enjoyed the bells Saint Joe's must have had fifteen beels up in the tower We would have certain ones for funerals, certain ones for weddings, certain ones for other doings or liturgy Never ring them all at once But the janitor would ring them sometimes when he felt like it He said, "I will ring them all " And, you just run all these things at once, clang, clang, clang
- B They were all hand rung?
- H All hand rung It was a beautiful sound.
- B Were the bells themselves made in Germany?
- H Oh, yes All made in Germany I think they are still over there yet I do not think they took them all down
- B Now, were they brought over for the second church or were they left over from the first one
- H Second church The first church was just wooden They did not have anything These bells were brought over, I am quite sure If they were not, they certainly were made by hand It was really something
- B Were they made about that period when the second church went up, or were they older?
- H They were older than that They must be made in the 1900's, right at the beginning of the century

B Did somebody train the bell ringer?

H Yes, he knew, they were marked One rope was longer than the other and one was shorter He knew which one to pull I rang them lots of times

B Who trained people? You do not do it automatically Somebody would have to show you how

H Yes They get trained from the sounds The ones that go bong, that is for funerals The other ones would be happier Also, they had a fire at the church in 1917 and the steeple fell off

B That is when it was the wooden structure?

H Oh, no This was the second one I think the pigeons were probably the cause of the fire We had pigeons flying in there It caught on fire and the fire department came. After the fire, we just leveled it off

B Then you did not have a head bell ringer?

H No, the janitor rang the bell If you would tell him it was going to be a funeral, he knew which one to ring If there was going to be a wedding, he knew which one to ring If it was going to be for hours, he knew Ring them all

B Was it the same man for a lot of years?

H Yes

B Who was the bell ringer?

H Joe Foreman He was the janitor there for many years When other German's would come in, he would say, "You cannot come in here," you know, "What is your name?" "Well, my name is so and so " They all learned a little bit of German. And they said, "Yes, yes " And they would leave them in. So, some of the other people would come in, because at that time you had to be a national parish.

B They did not have dioceses and parishes really?

H Yes. So, we wanted to stay in that parish We would say, "Yes, yes " And they would let them in They also used to have to pay rent, which today is never heard of But people would pay for the use of the pew. Every month we would take up a pew rent It was a source of income. Also, we had people entering in the church who would pay ten cents, which is an entrance fee. They have done away with that, too. They put bingo in its place

- B What ultimately caused the end of Saint Joseph's as a German parish?
- H People moving away Not that they did not have the funds, but people are just moving away It got to the point where there were less students in the school It went down to two hundred, to one hundred fifty, and it does not pay to carry the school So, we had to close the school Then, people moved away and they did not come down to the church except for the ones who lived near Once in awhile, they would come in It got to the point where the Bishop thought the best thing to do was to make it a Newman Center and let the people go to the churches of their choice
- B What year did the school close? Do you recall?
- H It must be twenty years ago
- B Okay Most of the people who attend Saint Joseph's live where?
- H The people at that time would be living on the South side of Youngstown, the East side and the west side But today they live as far as Columbiana, Canfield And, it did not pay them Today the cost of gas would be prohibitive They would not have a parish
- B All right Was Saint Joseph's one of the last ethnic churches to go?
- B National?
- B Yes, the last national church
- H No, no we still have Saint Cyril, which is Slovak We still have them in Campbell The Italian church is still going On the West side they have none
- B Yes, but what I am talking about is how, overall, most of them are diocesan. There was a shift from, let's say when you were growing up when many of them were established as national churches to where now, the majority of them are diocesan parishes Was Saint Joe's in that last group of major shifts?
- H Well, I would say that. You might say that because today, I do not think you consider any of them a national parish I do not think they have Slovak in Saint Cyril's Somebody said they still have a little bit But the old timers are gone and the younger people want to talk English They want to get away from this ethnic group
- B Are there any groups that you know of, besides the Maennerchor, that are trying to preserve German culture today, in the 1980's?
- H No, I think that is about the only limitation that I know of I do not know of any other

- B Well, is there anything that I probably should have asked you that I did not ask you, about the German community in Youngstown, that you feel is important and I should have asked?
- H No, I think we have told you See, Germans do not marry Germans They have married everything else but So, it is pretty hard to say, "Well, the Germans are going to stick together" Today is a different world We have changes made Our way of living has changed You do not tell the children who to go with. They marry whoever they fall in love with
- B Oh, one last thing that I have to ask you. What was going out like when you were a youngster? You know, what were the ground rules? You know, if you wanted to go out with a girl, how did you go about it?
- H Well, there were no ground rules We were told to go with somebody that was with the church That was, more or less, the ground rule
- B Yes, but was there a form? Like in some societies, your father would have to go to somebody else's father and say, "My son, " taking you with him
- H Our family never followed that rule Some of them have As a matter of fact, I never even asked my father-in-law if I could marry his daughter He just took it for granted that I was When my father landed he just asked the landlord, "Where are the girls?" He said, "You go out South Avenue, that is where the girls are There is five in one family " So that is it Usually they did not follow the customs of Europe I think they threw them away
- B In certain European societies there would be a dinner before you get married, and an exchange of gifts, or whatever you call it Even outside your own experience, because your dad passed away when you were young, did people do anything? Was there a formal dinner where you would sit down and have certain types of food? I realize I am asking you something that you really did not have.
- H No, I do not recall that There are certain types of food that the Germans make I know my father would buy a whole pig He would never waste anything of it. And he also made something that I could never find out how to make, "pawnhause" The nearest thing I could get to it was Philadelphia scrapel, which is all of the carcasses and everything all ground up And he made head cheese That is one German thing Also, the high Germans and the low Germans make different food. My dad loved pickled herring. My wife's people never heard of it That is not too far away from the higher Germans
- B John, could you tell me about any particular special foods that the Germans would have, like on Easter? Any particular breads?
- H At Easter time and Christmas, the Germans would do a lot of baking They made the same

as what the Slovaks would call kolachi, which is a roll with nuts in the center. They would also have prunes or apricot centers in the kolachi. They would make any number of cookies. They would have their own forms, which they would make hearts and Santa Clauses and so forth. They would bring these forms from Europe. As a matter of fact, you hardly buy these forms in the United States. We have been looking around trying to buy these old forms. So, my wife picks up the forms from her sister, because there is only one of these forms in the whole family. They would make these kolachies and cookies at Christmas time. That is possibly the most general. Also, they would have their Christmas parties at the different organizations, such as the Maennerchor. They would have a collection of German cookies, which is the kolachi and also these. I know one word that they use, linsidie, which is a cookie. I do not know how to spell it, but that is what they call it.

B What does this cookie look like?

H They would just be a small round cookie, or in a shape of Santa Claus or a tree. Not too thick. Like a Lornadon. It would be similar to that. But they would make at least five different doughs. Not just out of one dough. They would work for hours. Then, they would work on another cookie with another dough. During this whole day of baking, they would have any number of different doughs. It is kind of ridiculous to a man, but to a woman, I guess it is all right.

B Was it a very plain cookie?

H They are plain cookies. They do not put any frosting on them. They are just a regular, plain cookie, but they are delicious. They use a lot of butter and a lot of sugar. There are plenty of calories in them.

B Were there any other foods or breads that you recall being used?

H Well, they do not seem to do their own baking, such as with bread. Every once in awhile they do that. Since the bakeries are so plentiful, they would get away from baking bread. But the cookies were the main thing. Of course, they have their own way of cooking, too. Soups and that. I do not know too much about that. But they do have their own, like German sawerbraten. My mother used to have pickled herring, which was a delicacy in high Germany. Also, my dad would make pawnhause, which today, I think I mentioned to you, is scrapel. Those are the main things of what I remember.

B What about Christmas time? You mentioned the general stuff that you usually had between Easter and Christmas. Was there any special food you would have at Christmas?

H Not generally. There would be the staple items. Some would have a big roast or turkey. They would go in for ham. But other than that, it is just the ordinary cooking of the holiday meals.

B Was there a special way of curing the hams that they used?

H Well, they would use a smoked ham. I remember that the Germans would always have smoked ham. They would have their own smoke houses. There is one delicatessen that I know that my mother and mother-in-law would make, a very fine noodle. It was made in noodle soup. I would see her cut these noodles and you would think had cut her little fingers off, they are so fine. We would call it Wrigley's soup. It is delicious to me.

B Was it like a stock with the noodles? What does it consist of?

H Yes. They would buy the bones and all to make the noodle soup and make it very delicious. Some soup bone and the Wrigley, the very fine noodle. And it had a lot of eggs in it.

B Was there any other time of the year that you had special foods? Not necessarily just bread and soup.

H No, I do not recall anything that they would use over here that was any different than over there.

B The last thing I wanted to touch on, and it is kind of extensive, was the Depression itself. We talked about how you found out about the beginning of the Depression. What happened after Wall Street fell apart?

H Well, being in the mattress business, we could probably see it coming, because the stores were so loaded with bedding and they were not selling it. We were producing it and they were buying it. But it got to a saturation point where there were so many mattresses in every store and people were not buying it, so they just cut off. This developed in other categories, like automobiles. We had a saturation point of cars. People were not buying cars. One man said that if everybody who could afford to buy a car should do so and stimulate business.

That is exactly what the government today is trying to do. They are trying to stimulate business. To stimulate business, you put money in the hands of people. That is why we are trying to reduce our taxes today. And it was not any different than at that time in 1929 when we had this depression coming on. We were saturated with merchandise, inventories were high and nobody was buying. Now we have got to find money, to put into the hands of the people so they will buy, to put this country back on its feet. It is no different than in 1929.

B Was there an immediate impact on the steel industry?

H It seemed to drop out of the sky within twenty-four hours for me. Maybe to others it would be different. But it was just like coming out working in the morning and in the afternoon you were dead. You just did not have any business. It came so fast that it was surprising to me. People woke up to the fact that we have too much merchandise and just cancel order, cancel

order, cancel order, cancel order I remember that things were so cheap you could go downtown and get a full course meal for fifty cents because nobody had the money to buy it They were not working.

B Steel was kind of boom and bust industry It always has been Was the impact on the steel industry here in Youngstown immediate? Were there a lot of layoffs?

H It was immediate, too, because if you had a lot of cars on the market, they were not buying steel, so the mills were shut down. That is one thing that we were talking about, welfare I recall that the government had surplus foods They did not give them out as coupons They gave them out by the Welfare department We had an overflow of merchandise, so you could go and buy if you had a slip from welfare You could buy this merchandise for free if you had nothing to pay for it. I remember we had blankets. They had butter I know people went down to get this They went down to welfare and they got a slip and they bought the surplus foods I mean they got the foods for free

B The actual Depression lasted from about 1929 until about ?

H. I do not think we even got out of it until 1937 It was just a gradual upturn from 1929, 1930, 1931, and 1932. Yet in 1937 there were still people out of work But it came about with supply and demand Those two words, supply and demand That is what it all amounts to

B Were there soup lines in Youngstown? You see pictures and movies of the Depression and you see it

H No, I do not recall any soup lines Everybody helped each other. I remember the Saint Joe's Church over there The pastor of the church would have the people help him put a basement in the church. Then in return, he would feed them So, that took one mouth away, because the husband would come down and eat there They would find enough food for the family That was one way of doing it I do not remember any real soup kitchens Everybody seemed to help themselves The churches would help their parishioners.

B What did the people who you knew who were out of work, perhaps from the steel mills or other industries, do for a living, then? How did they get by?

H Well, this one organization that really helped was the St Vincent DePaul Society They really went out and took care of a lot of families Yet today, we hear that statement saying, "If it was not for the St Vincent DePaul, we would not be able to exist " They did do some good work. Also, some of the other churches did it, too But I do not remember of having a soup kitchen in town

B How did the St. Vincent DePaul help?



H Through the parishes They would serve meals in the churches

B And that was basically if somebody did not have work? Would they help the parish?

H Not necessarily The only one that I know of is St Joe's and the rest of them would just feed them If there was some work, they would do that But people wanted to eat at home Down in Struthers, one of the churches there would make soup. The whole district would come over there and get a bowl of soup That was Saint Nick's That happened for a long, long time Father O'Day, I remember, came Friday and he said, "We cannot use meat on Friday" And he did not want to make soup out of meat But the other people said, "We will eat it"

B Okay, to qualify for the meals that the parishes did, what did you have to do? You had to be layed off, I assume?

H I do not think it made any difference Anybody that was hungry they fed.

B Was there one meal a day or two?

H One meal a day It was about noon and they could take their pails home with soup They would come and get them They really made a lot of soup

B During that time, they passed some protective legislation where they were trying to get American goods advantage to put people back to work. Sinemet Steel and others Do you think the protection in tariffs that they tried to pass during the period helped the United States or did it hurt?

H Well, in my own estimation, the imports were not very heavy at that time The imports that we were getting were such merchandise that these special items I do not think it really hurt at that time Today is a little different

B Okay, what were your feelings about Franklin Roosevelt when he was running for president?

H I thought we needed a change His philosophy was possibly very good I thought that possibly he would be very good for the country

B What was his platform or what did he support?

H Put everybody back to work The only way he could put it back to work, he had PWA, Public Works Project, which, if you have got people working and money coming in, they are going to buy That is the same thing today If we put them to work, they are going to buy

B: Who was the Republican? Do you remember who the Republican was who was running?

H No, I do not. Hoover was President

B No, I mean, the Republican party must have run on a similar platform, putting people back to work

H Well, I suppose so I do not recall the politics

B So, when Franklin Roosevelt was elected, I believe in 1933, in March, did you feel optimistic that the country would pick up?

H Well, what he was doing immediately had an effect on the country, certainly I knew that something had to be done Apparently he was doing it I think today, what we are trying to do is put people to work, put money in people's pocket, so they can buy, and that will produce what we want

B A lot of people talk about the first one hundred days, where there was a lot of activity as far as the Roosevelt administration Did you see that as being very effective or was that just a public relations gimmick to look like activity when in fact there was not?

H Well, I saw things as going too slow One hundred days is not much time But I felt that there were so many things to be done and it went slow Roosevelt tried and he did do what he thought was right, the fastest way One thing he did, he knew the banks needed help We had a bank, it was a holiday, and that was something people went wild over. They thought they were going to lose their money But that was not so I remember that we did not have any money to pay our people, so we had to go and ask for cash so we could pay our people, instead of going to the bank Also, when the banks did open, they would not accept a check unless we would deposit it there and wait a couple days until it passed through, which is good common sense because we did not know the other people had the money in the bank You would have return checks I was just going around the territory getting checks and taking them to the bank and making deposits, just so the companies could exist

B Did any banks close in Youngstown during that period?

H We had a couple of consolidations The banks closed just for one day. Commercial Bank was closed Yes, we had one bank close, but the Union Bank picked them up and they consolidated.

B The present Union Bank?

H Yes, it was the First National at the time It is Union now. But they picked up the Commercial Bank and consolidated and made it the Union Bank City Trust closed The bank down on Watt Street closed I think that was a state One down near the city hall closed But after years, most of the money has been returned I do not think the people lost

that much

B What direct effect did the Roosevelt Administration have on Youngstown? I mean, what agencies, like the CCC Camps and the WPA, and the PWA? Those programs or others, were they in Youngstown?

H I think the WPA project helped a lot. The three C's was a very good program. I hear comments yet today about the three C's camps. Some of these men and young boys at that time, young men, would go back to see where they worked. I remember one was in Pokatella. I do not know. They went over there to see what he has done. Also, some of them worked down in southern Ohio in some of the forests down there. They go down and they still see the trees they planted. So, those programs were good. I would like to see those instituted again. I think they are very good programs.

B Do you know where they people who were in the Civilian Conservation Corp from Youngstown went? Did they go to that place you just mentioned?

H They went down near Marietta and Pokatella, Idaho, and out in the western states. They worked on some of these forests. Other than that, I do not know the specific place. I do know that they had them around in different states.

B Did a lot of people from Youngstown belong to these organizations, the CCC, the PWA and the WPA?

H Oh, yes. I had a cousin that worked with WPA. I think they did a lot of good. Temporary, it was not going to be permanent. But they put in a lot of sidewalks. They put in a lot of roads and they put people to work.

B Did they have recruiting offices here in Youngstown?

H I think they had an office but I do not recall. You had to sign up somewhere. I just do not know where the office would be. Probably down at city hall.

B Do you recall the difference between the Works Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration?

H No, I would not know the difference on that.

B Were there any other agencies that you can think of, or Federal Agencies that were instituted in Youngstown as a result of the New Deal?

H Not that I know of right now.

- B So, you think overall that the effect of the New Deal was these types of jobs?
- H Yes, I really think it helped the territory. It helped Youngstown. It put people to work and that is what they needed.
- B If you talk to many people, you get the reaction that Franklin Roosevelt was either a saint or a demon. When Franklin Roosevelt finally passed away during the Second World War, what was your impression of him?
- H I think he was a good president. I think he tried to help the people. Some of the things he did, I did not favor, but in his mind, I think he was doing what he thought was best for the people.
- B What do you attribute the end of the Depression in the Youngstown area to? Some of the people would say the end of the Depression was basically because of the coming of the Second World War.
- H I doubt that. I always thought that everybody would buy. At that time, we had a glut of autos, which is our basic item in this valley because there is more iron and steel that goes into a car than any other product. That is our bread and butter. So, if everybody would buy a car, and they tell me there are eight million cars made a year, and we bought eight million cars, we bought the supply for this year. To me, it is quite simple: buy and put the other guy to work. In contrast to that, we are selling millions of foreign made cars here. If we would buy our own cars, I think we would be out of this slump. Of course, the other fellows would be in it.
- B I did not ask you but, were there any German bakeries in Youngstown? Specifically, were there any geared toward German breads?
- H No, not that I recall. Years ago, we had old Orzerfsky's Brothers on Franklin Avenue. Oh, we had a couple of them of German descent up on Market Street. But other than that, no we did not have anything to amount to very much.
- B The other thing I was wondering about is in 1916, there was the East Youngstown fire riot.
- H Yes, that was what they call the East Youngstown riot. I did not go to see it, but all I know is that they did a lot of damage and burned a lot of buildings down. What the riot was for, I do not know.
- B. Thank you very much.

End of Interview