

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Youngstown-East Side

Personal Experience

O.H. 1270

GEORGIA CALCAGNI

Interviewed

by

Ronald Stoops

on

July 12, 1989

S: This is an interview with Georgia Calcagni for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Life on the East side of Youngstown in the 1930's through 1950's, by Ronald Stoops, on July 12, 1989.

Mrs. Calcagni, would you like to begin by telling me a little about your personal background, your family, sisters, or brothers?

C: I was born on North Hine Street. I was six years old when my mother passed away and I moved to Rose Street with my oldest sister who was nineteen years old, married, and had one child. She took the family in with her, my dad and seven children. Then went to Oakstreet Middle School, I started down there then we moved up to Willow Street, and I went to Lincoln School and East High School and went to the eleventh grade. I had to then quit school and stay home and help my sister Rose and her family. She had five children of her own, and seven of us. She needed help so I quit school to help her.

S: If I could just ask you, where do you fit in with the seven children? All your sisters raised you, where were you?

C: I was next to the last.

S: Next to the youngest.

C: My youngest sister was two years old, then myself, I was six years old, and the oldest boy was seventeen years old. Her husband treated us as though we were kids, took me and my dad also. He had to be an angel, taking in that many people and working for them. My dad worked some. We worked at the Street Car Company. The boys were like sixteen and seventeen years old and they tried helping out with everything, too. Really there was not too much to do for them. From there we just all grew up.

S: That would have been about 1920 or so when your mother passed away.

C: Yes, 1921 when my mother passed away.

S: And so they helped raise you and get you started through the tough years of the Depression. Did you remember that those were tough years?

C: Yes, very tough years through the Depression. Luckily, he worked in a company that stayed in business even though he did not make that much money. But it was enough to keep us from going on welfare.

S: This is your sister's husband?

C: Yes, this is my sister's husband.

- S: And who was it that he worked for?
- C: Youngstown Municipal Railway at the time. Yes, we did go through the tough years, believe me. We always had food, no gifts like children have today. I do not remember ever having a doll, we just could not afford it. When the smaller children came along, she had two children very close together, a girl then a boy, they got more than we ever got because we helped too. She became a registered nurse and he was a college professor. Every one of them did really well.
- S: Can you tell me how you ended up on Garland Avenue, or why Garland, or why you chose the East Side of Youngstown to make it your home?
- C: I made it over this way because it was all I ever knew. The people were like family. Everybody's problem was everybody's problem. We were just there, it was just a close knit. In fact, the East Side was always like that. I can remember going into my own neighborhood here. You had everyone with you, you never went alone. I think that was the reason, I just felt the closeness of people. When it came time to buy a home, my sister already lived up on the other block. She was more than a mother to me; I idolized her and her husband, and it was almost a natural thing for me to do.
- S: When you say it was close and when someone else had a problem you had a problem, did you help each other out financial or with babysitters?
- C: Financial and any way we could.
- S: Any particular incidence or story that you might relate, a particular hardship that you helped someone through or that someone helped you through?
- C: Yes, my mother's sister lived right next door to us. My sister was not only feeding us, but she was feeding them also.
- S: So three families altogether?
- C: Yes, that is right. She was an extraordinary person.
- S: How about in terms of the neighborhood. Did people lock their doors or did people go in and out of people's houses?
- C: Never did anyone lock their doors. Yes, that is one thing, we went in and out of people's houses. It was just like one family, the back and forth thing. You did not know who belonged to who, let us just put it that way. It was a small street, I do not know how many families there were there, but it was a very short street.

- S: What about here on Garland Avenue, did you find it to be the same way as on your street?
- C: Yes, absolutely. It was very similar, very good neighbors and there were good memories up until about ten years ago. They are not bad neighbors now, I cannot say that because we have never had any problems. The worst thing that happened to us, I bought a beautiful big basket for my porch, I think for Mother's Day, and I only had it that day and the next morning it was gone. That is the only thing I ever remember being taken away from me.
- S: How long ago was that?
- C: It was about fifteen years ago.
- S: Never locked your doors, do you have locks on them now?
- C: Definitely. Double locks.
- S: When did you do this?
- C: In about the past ten years. The past ten or fifteen years we have been real careful about that, yes.
- S: Could you maybe tell me or maybe describe to me a typical day was like once you moved down on Garland and when you were a wife and a young mother, just what a typical day was like on the East Side.
- C: A typical day for me was get up early in the morning with the children, and I had a girlfriend. She was one of the daughters, and she would come down in the morning and sit and have coffee until about ten or eleven o'clock. Then on it was just take care of the garden, clean, get ready for the children, cook meals. I loved to bake and cook meals all the time.
- S: What time did you get up in the morning?
- C: Well, he would go to work at seven o'clock and he would leave at about six forty-five. I would always get up with him, not that he would eat, I did not cook a big breakfast because he just never cared for it, just the coffee and the donuts. That was about it.
- S: How about supper? Did you have a regular schedule?
- C: Yes, it was always ready when he would come home at five o'clock, even after everyone was married. We still have supper.
- S: And all the kids come?

- C: Yes, they used to come every Sunday. We fed what we got and they would come.
- S: So you got him off to work at about six forty-five and supper at five and coffee in the morning. How about the kids; any particular activities? They were old enough to go outside and start doing some things, what did they do during the day?
- C: They would be over at Lincoln School playing all day.
- S: And Lincoln is the school right around the corner?
- C: Right around the corner. There were classrooms right in front our kitchen window. I belonged to the PTA there, and I was with them all through school.
- S: What sort of things would the kids do over at Lincoln?
- C: Baseball. I do not know what else because I found out now things that they did, I cannot believe it.
- S: They started admitting some of the mischievous things that they did.
- C: Oh yes. Yes, they did.
- S: Anything worthy of mentioning that is not incriminating?
- C: No, that is one thing, they never got in trouble. Just boy stuff, jumping over people's fences, messing up flowers, and other nasty things, not harmful.
- S: You mentioned them playing baseball. It seems that maybe that is a trademark that some of the great players started out on the East Side.
- C: My oldest son Raymond loved baseball and he played a lot of baseball. I cannot think of any of the names of the teams that he played with, but he loved baseball. Now, Bob was an all-around sport, he was not too crazy about baseball, but he liked to play baseball. He played football, but he was a good basketball player. Any kind of sport, he really loved it. Ray, after baseball, he was a fisherman, he loved to go.
- S: Where would the kids fish?
- C: Jay's father, their grandfather, always took them fishing, I have no idea where they went.
- S: Was it at East Lake?
- C: No, that belongs to the Ohio Water Services, but my son worked for them, so he fell

right into it.

S: You are not allowed to fish there now are you?

C: They only had one lake open at the time, I do not know which one it is now, Pine Lake or Hamilton. Their grandfather took them and they went to Milton Dam.

S: How about the girls? The boys would go down to Lincoln School and play baseball; what kind of things would the girls do?

C: Not really too much but to play.

S: Did they have bicycles?

C: I was not too fond of them because we had a bus going down the street.

S: Most or any of the kids have bicycles? Was that kind of a luxury?

C: No, not many and yes, it was a luxury. Jay worked all the time, he was never out of work, he never made a great deal of money, but it was enough to keep our family and we lived in a home like this.

S: When the kids would go down to the school to play, would they come home for lunch or did you have a hard time tracking them down.

C: No, they would be home for lunch, they would also bring friends with them home, always.

S: Was that pretty much routine with all the kids or were other families a little bit different?

C: No. They would come home when they were hungry, they knew. They did play in the street a lot because traffic was not real heavy, the only thing was that bus coming down here. And this is down hill so if they got on a bike, it was a little dangerous.

S: How about house chores, anything that was unique about doing household chores in the forties?

C: I would have to wash in a double washer and pick up the big baskets and take them out to the backyard and hang them and bring them back in. That was a full days work, it really was.

S: Hang them out to dry?

C: Yes, and every single thing would get ironed and when I think of it now, I wonder how I got

through those days.

- S: Going back to how close the community was and the people, in terms of ethnic groups, was there a variance of groups, or was there a certain nationality with influence on the kids or the groups of people you would hang out with.
- C: No, none at all. Mr. Drumond lived next door, they were Irish. There was Italian, across the street. And on the hill towards your grandmothers, there were a couple Italians up there and Irish. Mostly all Italian and Irish and Slovaks and that was it. Nobody really thought about nationality at the time. Everybody was just everybody.
- S: So often in text books we read about and things we read about these little Italian sections and Irish sections and certain animosity and so on, but none of that at all?
- C: No, none of that. I remember one year we had a reunion for this block from Himrod to Charlotte and we had a big party up on the hill. Everybody was there, just like a big party.
- S: Would the Italians bring certain types of their foods, the sausage and things.
- C: Yes, they would bring their food, everybody brought their own favorite dish.
- S: How about the kids, did they eat some of everybody's?
- C: Oh, of course. Yes, they did.
- S: Would you like to tell me about any particular incident or any dramatic event that stands out in your mind that had a big effect on your area through that time of the forties or the fifties, natural disasters or fires?
- C: No, not really
- S: It seems like there would be old debts that we would not have the medicine that we do now,
- C: Going back to my mom, that is what happened. She would have not died had she died today. She died at child birth, she just hemorrhaged and there was nothing that they could do about.
- S: About the East Side, was the East Side different, did you feel like it was better or worse then some other parts of town or some other neighborhoods, or what made the East Side different?
- C: I think the friendliness and the closeness of people is about the only thing. I do not know of any place else where people are as close as they are here. And I have asked and they admit that they moved away from here because the people around here today just do not care. Now my sister, she moved up into Liberty, and the man next door died and she never knew it.

Nobody bothered to tell anybody, it just happened. Just different. When somebody died in this neighborhood, everyone was there, you were never left alone, somebody was with you all the time. That was the difference. I have another sister that moved up that way too, and she says the same thing. There is nobody that bothers, there is nobody that wants to bother with you.

S: You had told me before or at one point you lived on the South Side. When you were first married you lived on Philadelphia.

C: We moved in with my brother on Third Street for about a year I think and then we moved into an apartment on East Philadelphia.

S: In what year?

C: In 1939 I think it was, because Bob was born then, on East Philadelphia with the Lepore's. You probably know Mr. Lepore from Youngstown. I was never comfortable, just did not bother, that is all. You would say hello to a friend, when you are used to that closeness it gets to be rather strange, so I was kind of anxious to get back over here. So we decided to come back and we found this house. Chuck Walsh lived here, incidently, and they moved across the street and we took this house.

S: And that was what year?

C: 1941.

S: We were trying to get a feel for a typical kind of day. How about on Sunday? I know you belonged to Immaculate Conception. Can you describe a Sunday, was it a special day in the neighborhood?

C: It was a very special day. We would go to mass early in the morning, in fact we would go at five thirty in the morning. Bob was an alter boy, he would get up and go to mass with us. Then we would come home and, nine times out of ten, we would go back to bed for about an hour or so. Then we would get up and have breakfast and I would cook a big dinner. We would get together with my sister's family in the afternoon, that was one of the big things and everybody would just congregate up to her house on Garland and we would be at her house all afternoon. Then we would come home in the evening and just spend an evening at home with the neighbors, get company.

S: You went to Immaculate Conception.

C: Yes, I was very active.

S: What did you do for entertainment?



- C: We loved to dance. We went to Yankee Lake almost every Saturday night, we really did, and we enjoyed it.
- S: This is when you had children, in the forties?
- C: We had two boys. It was a little harder when the girl came. We still went, but not as often, because my sister was always there to take care of my two boys. Then after Darlene came it was a little harder, we just did not go as much. His family, his uncle, had a cottage at Geneva on the Lake. Jay would go up there almost every weekend, they built the cottage and he would just take off and go to the lake, or I would go with him with the boys sometimes. And we would spend time there in the summer. Before we got the cottage we had a tent, a very large tent, and we would camp. We would go to Geneva Campgrounds and spend weekends out there with the boys. We would always bring some of the family with us naturally. That was our life. That was our entertainment.
- S: How about Yankee Lake? Do you remember some of the bands or the music.
- C: Sure, we were really good friends with them. Oh, what was his name, I cannot remember.
- S: Did they play jazz music or everything?
- C: Just about everything, mostly waltzes. We became pretty good friends with him too, is that not terrible that I cannot remember his name. He was there all the time. Part of that time he worked at General American in Masury and he had a lot of fellows from down around there.
- S: Would you go to dinner first?
- C: No, they would have like a buffet later. We had our dinner at home and that was great fun for us.
- S: What time would you go dancing?
- C: About eight o'clock, and about midnight we would be on our way home.
- S: Did that go on during the war years, too?
- C: Yes, because that was why he was not drafted because of his work. The tanks, he was a welder and the boys were not old enough. Bob joined the National Guard later.
- S: So the dances, then, did continue?
- C: Oh, yes, they had to. When the boys were drafted, they all left from Lincoln School, the buses would go from there.

- S: Did they recruit?
- C: They took my brother, my nephews, and probably few in my family. We knew that this was the parting. It was quite sad.
- S: Did the neighbors and the families congregate down there?
- C: Yes.
- S: Can you describe that a little bit?
- C: Sad. It was very, very sad.
- S: The impression is patriotism and everything, almost like a celebration, but that is not the feeling that you had.
- C: No, not really.
- S: Did they try and act as if it did not bother them.
- C: Yes, they did. When the bus pulled away, that was the climax, that was it. It was sad.
- S: Talking about the war in the forties, how might things have changed or did things change very much during those years? Did people do anything differently?
- C: Everything just settled down. It was a strange change. Everyone seemed so happy and the boys, well most of the boys, were old enough to go, and they left. The family was sad and we were sad with them. It really was not those happy days that they were before.
- S: In special things in terms of helping the war cause, did you have victory gardens or any special things?
- C: I would just write letters all the time because I had nephews and my brother, they were all in it, and send packages to them.
- S: What did the children do, theaters?
- C: Yes, that was about it. They would go to theaters. They just had fun playing with the neighbor boys.
- S: Was the theater a real special treat? Did they go once a month or a couple times a year?
- C: Yes. They would go pretty often, really there was nothing else for them to do.

S: How about outside of the movies, anything else?

C: Back to where we got a television. I think we were about the seventh family on the street to get a television, so this was the hang up for all the boys.

S: And what year would that be about?

C: 1950. All the boys would sit around and watch television, that would be one of their past times.

S: How about prior to that? Would you spend a lot of evenings around the radio?

C: Yes, we always had boys here.

S: How about the radio?

C: Yes, they would have a radio.

S: How about some of those famous talk shows or comedies that they would have on the radio?

C: "Amos and Andy" and the "Goldbirds."

S: Was that a routine, pretty regular in the evening?

C: That was regular.

S: After supper?

C: Yes, after supper. They had fights and everybody would congregate for that.

S: Boxing matches, we are talking about?

C: Yes.

S: Where did you do your grocery shopping? Was it local?

C: Yes, most of the time we went on East Federal Street, there were some stores there, or to Hughes, the meat market.

S: Where was Hughes?

C: On East Federal Street. Just on this side of the new plaza.

- S: Were there ethnic type stores there. Were there Italian store there or a meat market around here or something?
- C: Yes, Rulli Brothers was down there on East Federal Street and that is where we did all our shopping. That was really mostly where you could do your shopping.
- S: What would typical meals be like?
- C: Well, naturally, spaghetti and meatballs, and chicken.
- S: How often did you have spaghetti and meatballs?
- C: We had spaghetti every Thursday and every Sunday. It is very rarely that we have it now.
- S: Other meals were chicken?
- C: Chicken, sausage and other things.
- S: Did you make any of your own sauces?
- C: Yes, we made our own.
- S: Did you have your own garden?
- C: Oh, yes we had a garden, we never had a very large garden but it was enough for our meals, yes.
- S: What were some of the things in your garden?
- C: Tomatoes and peppers and lettuce and cucumbers, a lot of little cucumbers.
- S: Did you can them?
- C: Yes, I always canned my tomatoes.
- S: Did you have a fruit cellar?
- C: I have a big fruit cellar. Then when the freezers came along, I did a lot of freezing.
- S: Would you say you spent a lot of time in the kitchen?
- C: Yes, I really did. I loved to cook and I still do.

- S: Any other special homemade meals?
- C: Wedding Soup, that is his favorite.
- S: How about the way kids dressed back then in the forties, was it much different then today?
- C: I guess. Jeans were definitely out, there were no jeans. The only people that wore jeans were the people that worked. That is one thing I would rather dress my children. I always had boys that were dressed up, I did not care. I made most of my clothes. I can remember Bob was in college, he came home, they were having Sadie Hawkins Day, he says, "Mom, can I please have a pair of jeans today?" Because you only dressed up to go to college, I really mean dressed up. He did not wear a tie all the time, but they almost always dressed in the suit. And he asked me that day saying, mom, can I please wear a pair of jeans to Sadie Hawkins Day. I think that was the first time he was allowed to have jeans to go to school. The boys dressed really well, but they were always handed down. My family worked a union, trench coats, they both had one and we handed them down. I bet about six people in the family wore them. We paid good money for them at that time, I always bought there clothes at the Parsells on East Federal Street. They wore well, I do not know how many boys wore them down in the family till they wore them out. They dress so much differently.
- S: But they were very durable?
- C: Yes, they were very durable. They were made well.
- S: You mentioned that you went shopping down at Parsells and went downtown to go grocery shopping. How would you get there?
- C: Walked.
- S: About how far would that be?
- C: I think it was a mile from Rose Street, so it is a little over a mile from here. We walked, but then Jay had a car. In fact, when I married him, he had a brand new car.
- S: He had a car when you got married? What year was this?
- C: 1937. We always had a car. I never drove, though, he drove.
- S: Did you ever get your driver's license?
- C: Yes, I did about fifteen years ago. The children were young, we would walk unless we went grocery shopping in the afternoon. Walking was the thing, and we thought nothing of it. When we were youngsters on Rose Street, we used to walk up

Mahoning Avenue to Isaly's there and back for a ten cent cone.

S: Is that right?

C: Absolutely. We thought nothing of it.

S: Was it over a mile?

C: Oh sure, that was way over a mile. That was way out on Mahoning Avenue. We made the Novena at St. Pat's for years and years while I was in high school because I would come home from high school and stop home and pick up a cousin of mine and we would go up to St. Pat's for Novena.

S: St. Pat's up on Oak Hill?

C: Yes. We would walk there. We walked to school, came home for lunch and went back, it was four trips. We would stay just long enough to have a sandwich and walk back. That was the natural thing to do.

S: And your boys walked too?

C: Yes, absolutely they walked. They did not have a car until after they graduated. They both bought their own cars, and the uncle who was living with us at the time helped.

S: So you said you did not have your driver's license. Did many or any women have their driver's license that you knew of?

C: Not too many. My sister did, but that was ten or fifteen years before I got mine. Women just did not drive, at least not that many.

S: There was one car at the most?

C: Yes.

S: Were there quite a few families that did not have a car?

C: Yes. There were a lot of people that did not have a car. Over the years, I can remember the people across the street, they had a car. When we did get a car, we had it for a few years. There were not too many.

S: A lot of walking?

C: Yes, a lot of walking, right.

- S: What do you remember about East High School, you went there and all your children went there?
- C: They were happy days, I loved going to school, I really did. Circumstances kept me from being there.
- S: Would you say that the school or the church or one or the other were like a focal point of some of the social activities for the area there?
- C: Do you mean the time I went to school?
- S: At that time that you went to school which would be about the twenties and early thirties.
- C: I graduated in 1932. My dad then was a very strict person, I could not attend any of the school affairs.
- S: So did you have a job then?
- C: No, he would not let me go to work, women did not work.
- S: Until when or ever?
- C: When I got married, my sister got a job, she was allowed to get a job then. No, he just did not think women should work. There place was to stay home with their family and have dinner ready when they came home.
- S: So that has changed quite a bit?
- C: Very much.
- S: Do you have any feelings about that?
- C: I would have loved to go to work, I really would have. A short time I worked at my friends little restaurant on Lincoln Avenue across from college. It was a joy, it really was.
- S: Was this after you got married?
- C: Yes, that was about fifteen years ago. I just loved it.
- S: Was it pretty typical of a lot of the fathers and a lot of the girls?
- C: Yes, a lot of them. A lot of fathers felt that way.

- S: That would be around the late twenties, early thirties?
- C: Yes.
- S: That kind of eased up, that general rule?
- C: Yes, it did. My sisters' children worked. It gradually eased off and women got to go to work.
- S: It seems to me that everyone on the East Side knew one another, as if there was some feeling there.
- C: Yes, there is. There is a deep feeling there. You can feel it. When you meet somebody you can feel it.
- S: Why do you suppose that is?
- C: I do not know. Because of being so caring. People, they really care. You hear of people saying I do not care. It was just so different. People did care back then. They cared about everything. I know if we had any problems, my neighbors were beside me through all my troubles.
- S: You feel like the East Side is a special place?
- C: Very special, absolutely. I can honestly say that. I know it is going to be hard when you do that, but you are going to have to get out now. In fact I think maybe at the end of the month we are just going to have to move into an apartment because it is just a little bit too, too much. I know it is going to be a heartbreaker.
- S: What might be your fondest memories when you look back to maybe the forties or just this house when you bought it in 1941? What might you see as you look outside?
- C: We moved into this house and we had a lot of work to do. All the homes were beautiful, everybody picked up their yard so beautifully outside and inside. Everything just is deteriorating.
- S: That must be hard.
- C: Yes, it is. This you used to be the most beautiful block.
- S: What would be your fondest memory of this house or this town?



- C: There are so many, I would not know where to begin. Having my children and when they graduated from high school. It was just so beautiful when they graduated. Our life here was, we had hard times, it was not like it was all a bed of roses, but it is hard to say. I cannot explain it to you. Christmas was always beautiful. Up until about seven or eight years ago, we had Christmas here all the time, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, they come and stay. We would have Christmas Eve at Bob's house and then Christmas Day here. Those were happy days, and we had sad days too. It was just like a part of our lives.
- S: I know you were married and the toughest times were during the Depression, 1937. How were you able to get by? What did you do to get by during those years?
- C: Like I said, he always worked. He worked for the WPA, \$60 a month, and we got by on it. We always had food, we never had to call for help. We took care of our home and bills, we never owed anybody anything. We got through it by the grace of God.
- S: You learned to make do with what you had.
- C: That is right. There was a lot of things we had and a lot of things we had to do without.
- S: Like?
- C: Luxuries. Beautiful clothes and things. We just could not afford it.
- S: Family vacations?
- C: No. Camping, like I said. We would pitch a tent and that was the vacation. No more than that.
- S: Did many people in the neighborhood work for the WPA or the CCC?
- C: Yes, but just a couple families up the street like Father Jay, his son was in the CCC, and a couple of other boys on the other side of the street. Everybody seemed to get through, though. Struggled, but we got through.
- S: You told me you had one of the first televisions on the block in 1950, and you had a radio prior to that. Tell me a little about how you felt about FDR, through the Depression and the war. Do you have any feelings about that?
- C: He was really tops with us. He brought us through a great struggle, I really think he did.
- S: If you had to go back and live your life over again, is there anything you would change or what would you change?

- C: Nothing, not one single thing. I have enjoyed every bit of my life. I always say if I had to do it over, it would be the same thing.
- S: And your home would be on the East Side.
- C: Yes, absolutely.
- S: Is there anything you would like to say in closing about the East Side? Do you think the East Side is a special place?
- C: Yes, it is. It was, it is to me. Most all of them are gone now, but looking back, it was the greatest place to be. I do not know if you heard your dad talk about it.
- S: Yes, many times.
- C: This was a special street, especially here, but I had friends all over these sides. I belonged to the East Garden Club, and the greatest people belonged to that, and they still do. I dropped out of it, but I love all these people. I still work for them. I had my children in school, but I still worked through it.
- S: The church or the school?
- C: The school. We would have spaghetti dinners and my sister and I both would go down and we worked on it for two days. My nephew had children, eleven children, the last one just graduated from Immaculate Conception. They all went to Ursuline and on to college. We always did that because there was always someone there in the family. We still feel we should be doing for those that are not here.
- S: You mentioned that some of your nephews had graduated from Ursuline and Immaculate. How about back in the forties, did many people from this neighborhood go to Ursuline?
- C: No. Most all of them went to East.
- S: Was that typical?
- C: Yes, it was. I do not think any of these boys here went to Ursuline. They all went to East. It goes back to East, it is just where they felt they belonged.
- S: I know East has a great reputation, going back to that time back in thirties and the forties, with their sports and athletic tradition and so on. Were there other things that made East High School special? Do you think their success in athletics had to do with their pride?
- C: Yes. The families were behind them all the time. They would go to all the football games.

The boys were not even playing and we would go to the football games, like New Castle and wherever they played, people just stuck with them. They were with their children all through school, they cared about them.

S: I know there is a popular establishment down here not from Garland on Oak Street, the Royal Oaks. Is that a favorite stopping place? With the children?

C: Yes, it is. Not with the children. Sometimes dads might take a load on in with them, but young men. It was a family hang out.

S: You say family, what do you mean?

C: Husbands and wives, families with boys.

S: I was thinking maybe after football games in the back room there would be high school kids.

C: Yes, they would go into that kitchen and eat. They would sit back there and eat their hot dog specials. I know because I did the same thing. They would not go to the bar, but they would sit back in the kitchen. I had a couple of cousins that worked there and cooked for them, and I know that they were pretty good. That was the real stand out on the East Side.

S: How about some others? Oakland Field?

C: Baseball games

S: And Lincoln Park.

C: We spent a lot of time in Lincoln Park, picnics, and Oakland Hill for baseball games. That was another thing the boys did a lot of. They went to baseball games at Oakland Hill and to Lincoln Park for swimming.

S: You told me do not ever remember having a doll. Did your daughter ever have one?

C: Yes, she did. We gave her everything.

S: She was born in 1953?

C: Yes, she was. We always told her that she was a God-send. I do not know what I would do, if I did not have her today.

S: Are there any other places or centers of activity?

C: I think we named them all.

- S: How about McCuffey Plaza?
- C: When it was just a plaza you could only enjoy shopping, but then they closed it down and made a mall out of it.
- S: When did they close it down and make it a mall?
- C: I do not remember exactly. It was not too many years after they built it. Other than that, I do not know of anywhere else.
- S: Where did the boys get their hair cut?
- C: Cosmo's down on Oak Street. He is still there. In fact, I think Bob still goes there. Then there was Louis the Barber down by the Royal Oaks, when they were smaller they did go there.
- S: Is there anything else you would like to add or tell me? I do not know if I asked you this or not, I would like to know what your fondest memory was of the East Side and growing up on the East Side.
- C: Being on the East Side. I do not think there is any other way of explaining it or how else I could express myself. That is why I am still here.
- S: The closeness?
- C: The closeness, the caring.
- S: That is certainly the impression that I got. I think that is what motivated me to do this topic.
- C: I was wondering why you stopped here. Did some one tell you to stop here?
- S: No. I was just riding down the street on the East Side. I was just driving by to try and get some ideas going in my mind. I am going to stop the interview here and I want to thank Mrs. Calcagni, very much, for your time and sharing your experiences. Thank you.
- C: My pleasure.

End of Interview

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Youngstown-East Side

Personal Experience

O.H. 1270

GEORGIA CALCAGNI

Interviewed

by

Ronald Stoops

on

July 12, 1989

S: This is an interview with Georgia Calcagni for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Life on the East side of Youngstown in the 1930's through 1950's, by Ronald Stoops, on July 12, 1989.

Mrs. Calcagni, would you like to begin by telling me a little about your personal background, your family, sisters, or brothers?

C: I was born on North Hine Street. I was six years old when my mother passed away and I moved to Rose Street with my oldest sister who was nineteen years old, married, and had one child. She took the family in with her, my dad and seven children. Then went to Oakstreet Middle School, I started down there then we moved up to Willow Street, and I went to Lincoln School and East High School and went to the eleventh grade. I had to then quit school and stay home and help my sister Rose and her family. She had five children of her own, and seven of us. She needed help so I quit school to help her.

S: If I could just ask you, where do you fit in with the seven children? All your sisters raised you, where were you?

C: I was next to the last.

S: Next to the youngest.

C: My youngest sister was two years old, then myself, I was six years old, and the oldest boy was seventeen years old. Her husband treated us as though we were kids, took me and my dad also. He had to be an angel, taking in that many people and working for them. My dad worked some. We worked at the Street Car Company. The boys were like sixteen and seventeen years old and they tried helping out with everything, too. Really there was not too much to-do for them. From there we just all grew up.

S: That would have been about 1920 or so when your mother passed away.

C: Yes, 1921 when my mother passed away.

S: And so they helped raise you and get you started through the tough years of the Depression. Did you remember that those were tough years?

C: Yes, very tough years through the Depression. Luckily, he worked in a company that stayed in business even though he did not make that much money. But it was enough to keep us from going on welfare.

S: This is your sister's husband?

C: Yes, this is my sister's husband.

- S: And who was it that he worked for?
- C: Youngstown Municipal Railway at the time. Yes, we did go through the tough years, believe me. We always had food, no gifts like children have today. I do not remember ever having a doll, we just could not afford it. When the smaller children came along, she had two children very close together, a girl then a boy, they got more than we ever got because we helped too. She became a registered nurse and he was a college professor. Every one of them did really well.
- S: Can you tell me how you ended up on Garland Avenue, or why Garland, or why you chose the East Side of Youngstown to make it your home?
- C: I made it over this way because it was all I ever knew. The people were like family. Everybody's problem was everybody's problem. We were just there, it was just a close knit. In fact, the East Side was always like that. I can remember going into my own neighborhood here. You had everyone with you, you never went alone. I think that was the reason, I just felt the closeness of people. When it came time to buy a home, my sister already lived up on the other block. She was more than a mother to me; I idolized her and her husband, and it was almost a natural thing for me to do.
- S: When you say it was close and when someone else had a problem you had a problem, did you help each other out financial or with babysitters?
- C: Financial and any way we could.
- S: Any particular incidence or story that you might relate, a particular hardship that you helped someone through or that someone helped you through?
- C: Yes, my mother's sister lived right next door to us. My sister was not only feeding us, but she was feeding them also.
- S: So three families altogether?
- C: Yes, that is right. She was an extraordinary person.
- S: How about in terms of the neighborhood. Did people lock their doors or did people go in and out of people's houses?
- C: Never did anyone lock their doors. Yes, that is one thing, we went in and out of people's houses. It was just like one family, the back and forth thing. You did not know who belonged to who, let us just put it that way. It was a small street, I do not know how many families there were there, but it was a very short street.

- S: What about here on Garland Avenue, did you find it to be the same way as on your street?
- C: Yes, absolutely. It was very similar, very good neighbors and there were good memories up until about ten years ago. They are not bad neighbors now, I cannot say that because we have never had any problems. The worst thing that happened to us, I bought a beautiful big basket for my porch, I think for Mother's Day, and I only had it that day and the next morning it was gone. That is the only thing I ever remember being taken away from me.
- S: How long ago was that?
- C: It was about fifteen years ago.
- S: Never locked your doors, do you have locks on them now?
- C: Definitely. Double locks.
- S: When did you do this?
- C: In about the past ten years. The past ten or fifteen years we have been real careful about that, yes.
- S: Could you maybe tell me or maybe describe to me a typical day was like once you moved down on Garland and when you were a wife and a young mother, just what a typical day was like on the East Side.
- C: A typical day for me was get up early in the morning with the children, and I had a girlfriend. She was one of the daughters, and she would come down in the morning and sit and have coffee until about ten or eleven o'clock. Then on it was just take care of the garden, clean, get ready for the children, cook meals. I loved to bake and cook meals all the time.
- S: What time did you get up in the morning?
- C: Well, he would go to work at seven o'clock and he would leave at about six forty-five. I would always get up with him, not that he would eat, I did not cook a big breakfast because he just never cared for it, just the coffee and the donuts. That was about it.
- S: How about supper? Did you have a regular schedule?
- C: Yes, it was always ready when he would come home at five o'clock, even after everyone was married. We still have supper.
- S: And all the kids come?



- C: Yes, they used to come every Sunday. We fed what we got and they would come.
- S: So you got him off to work at about six forty-five and supper at five and coffee in the morning. How about the kids; any particular activities? They were old enough to go outside and start doing some things, what did they do during the day?
- C: They would be over at Lincoln School playing all day.
- S: And Lincoln is the school right around the corner?
- C: Right around the corner. There were classrooms right in front our kitchen window. I belonged to the PTA there, and I was with them all through school.
- S: What sort of things would the kids do over at Lincoln?
- C: Baseball. I do not know what else because I found out now things that they did, I cannot believe it.
- S: They started admitting some of the mischievous things that they did.
- C: Oh yes. Yes, they did.
- S: Anything worthy of mentioning that is not incriminating?
- C: No, that is one thing, they never got in trouble. Just boy stuff, jumping over people's fences, messing up flowers, and other nasty things, not harmful.
- S: You mentioned them playing baseball. It seems that maybe that is a trademark that some of the great players started out on the East Side.
- C: My oldest son Raymond loved baseball and he played a lot of baseball. I cannot think of any of the names of the teams that he played with, but he loved baseball. Now, Bob was an all-around sport, he was not too crazy about baseball, but he liked to play baseball. He played football, but he was a good basketball player. Any kind of sport, he really loved it. Ray, after baseball, he was a fisherman, he loved to go.
- S: Where would the kids fish?
- C: Jay's father, their grandfather, always took them fishing, I have no idea where they went.
- S: Was it at East Lake?
- C: No, that belongs to the Ohio Water Services, but my son worked for them, so he fell

right into it.

S: You are not allowed to fish there now are you?

C: They only had one lake open at the time, I do not know which one it is now, Pine Lake or Hamilton. Their grandfather took them and they went to Milton Dam.

S: How about the girls? The boys would go down to Lincoln School and play baseball; what kind of things would the girls do?

C: Not really too much but to play.

S: Did they have bicycles?

C: I was not too fond of them because we had a bus going down the street.

S: Most or any of the kids have bicycles? Was that kind of a luxury?

C: No, not many and yes, it was a luxury. Jay worked all the time, he was never out of work, he never made a great deal of money, but it was enough to keep our family and we lived in a home like this.

S: When the kids would go down to the school to play, would they come home for lunch or did you have a hard time tracking them down.

C: No, they would be home for lunch, they would also bring friends with them home, always.

S: Was that pretty much routine with all the kids or were other families a little bit different?

C: No. They would come home when they were hungry, they knew. They did play in the street a lot because traffic was not real heavy, the only thing was that bus coming down here. And this is down hill so if they got on a bike, it was a little dangerous.

S: How about house chores, anything that was unique about doing household chores in the forties?

C: I would have to wash in a double washer and pick up the big baskets and take them out to the backyard and hang them and bring them back in. That was a full days work, it really was.

S: Hang them out to dry?

C: Yes, and every single thing would get ironed and when I think of it now, I wonder how I got

through those days.

S: Going back to how close the community was and the people, in terms of ethnic groups, was there a variance of groups, or was there a certain nationality with influence on the kids or the groups of people you would hang out with.

C: No, none at all. Mr. Drumond lived next door, they were Irish. There was Italian, across the street. And on the hill towards your grandmothers, there were a couple Italians up there and Irish. Mostly all Italian and Irish and Slovaks and that was it. Nobody really thought about nationality at the time. Everybody was just everybody.

S: So often in text books we read about and things we read about these little Italian sections and Irish sections and certain animosity and so on, but none of that at all?

C: No, none of that. I remember one year we had a reunion for this block from Himrod to Charlotte and we had a big party up on the hill. Everybody was there, just like a big party.

S: Would the Italians bring certain types of their foods, the sausage and things.

C: Yes, they would bring their food, everybody brought their own favorite dish.

S: How about the kids, did they eat some of everybody's?

C: Oh, of course. Yes, they did.

S: Would you like to tell me about any particular incident or any dramatic event that stands out in your mind that had a big effect on your area through that time of the forties or the fifties, natural disasters or fires?

C: No, not really

S: It seems like there would be old debts that we would not have the medicine that we do now,

C: Going back to my mom, that is what happened. She would have not died had she died today. She died at child birth, she just hemorrhaged and there was nothing that they could do about.

S: About the East Side, was the East Side different, did you feel like it was better or worse than some other parts of town or some other neighborhoods, or what made the East Side different?

C: I think the friendliness and the closeness of people is about the only thing. I do not know of any place else where people are as close as they are here. And I have asked and they admit that they moved away from here because the people around here today just do not care. Now my sister, she moved up into Liberty, and the man next door died and she never knew it.

Nobody bothered to tell anybody, it just happened. Just different. When somebody died in this neighborhood, everyone was there, you were never left alone, somebody was with you all the time. That was the difference. I have another sister that moved up that way too, and she says the same thing. There is nobody that bothers, there is nobody that wants to bother with you.

S: You had told me before or at one point you lived on the South Side. When you were first married you lived on Philadelphia.

C: We moved in with my brother on Third Street for about a year I think and then we moved into an apartment on East Philadelphia.

S: In what year?

C: In 1939 I think it was, because Bob was born then, on East Philadelphia with the Lepore's. You probably know Mr. Lepore from Youngstown. I was never comfortable, just did not bother, that is all. You would say hello to a friend, when you are used to that closeness it gets to be rather strange, so I was kind of anxious to get back over here. So we decided to come back and we found this house. Chuck Walsh lived here, incidently, and they moved across the street and we took this house.

S: And that was what year?

C: 1941.

S: We were trying to get a feel for a typical kind of day. How about on Sunday? I know you belonged to Immaculate Conception. Can you describe a Sunday, was it a special day in the neighborhood?

C: It was a very special day. We would go to mass early in the morning, in fact we would go at five thirty in the morning. Bob was an alter boy, he would get up and go to mass with us. Then we would come home and, nine times out of ten, we would go back to bed for about an hour or so. Then we would get up and have breakfast and I would cook a big dinner. We would get together with my sister's family in the afternoon, that was one of the big things and everybody would just congregate up to her house on Garland and we would be at her house all afternoon. Then we would come home in the evening and just spend an evening at home with the neighbors, get company.

S: You went to Immaculate Conception.

C: Yes, I was very active.

S: What did you do for entertainment?

- C: We loved to dance. We went to Yankee Lake almost every Saturday night, we really did, and we enjoyed it.
- S: This is when you had children, in the forties?
- C: We had two boys. It was a little harder when the girl came. We still went, but not as often, because my sister was always there to take care of my two boys. Then after Darlene came it was a little harder, we just did not go as much. His family, his uncle, had a cottage at Geneva on the Lake. Jay would go up there almost every weekend, they built the cottage and he would just take off and go to the lake, or I would go with him with the boys sometimes. And we would spend time there in the summer. Before we got the cottage we had a tent, a very large tent, and we would camp. We would go to Geneva Campgrounds and spend weekends out there with the boys. We would always bring some of the family with us naturally. That was our life. That was our entertainment.
- S: How about Yankee Lake? Do you remember some of the bands or the music.
- C: Sure, we were really good friends with them. Oh, what was his name, I cannot remember.
- S: Did they play jazz music or everything?
- C: Just about everything, mostly waltzes. We became pretty good friends with him too, is that not terrible that I cannot remember his name. He was there all the time. Part of that time he worked at General American in Masury and he had a lot of fellows from down around there.
- S: Would you go to dinner first?
- C: No, they would have like a buffet later. We had our dinner at home and that was great fun for us.
- S: What time would you go dancing?
- C: About eight o'clock, and about midnight we would be on our way home.
- S: Did that go on during the war years, too?
- C: Yes, because that was why he was not drafted because of his work. The tanks, he was a welder and the boys were not old enough. Bob joined the National Guard later.
- S: So the dances, then, did continue?
- C: Oh, yes, they had to. When the boys were drafted, they all left from Lincoln School, the buses would go from there.

- S: Did they recruit?
- C: They took my brother, my nephews, and probably few in my family. We knew that this was the parting. It was quite sad.
- S: Did the neighbors and the families congregate down there?
- C: Yes.
- S: Can you describe that a little bit?
- C: Sad. It was very, very sad.
- S: The impression is patriotism and everything, almost like a celebration, but that is not the feeling that you had.
- C: No, not really.
- S: Did they try and act as if it did not bother them.
- C: Yes, they did. When the bus pulled away, that was the climax, that was it. It was sad.
- S: Talking about the war in the forties, how might things have changed or did things change very much during those years? Did people do anything differently?
- C: Everything just settled down. It was a strange change. Everyone seemed so happy and the boys, well most of the boys, were old enough to go, and they left. The family was sad and we were sad with them. It really was not those happy days that they were before.
- S: In special things in terms of helping the war cause, did you have victory gardens or any special things?
- C: I would just write letters all the time because I had nephews and my brother, they were all in it, and send packages to them.
- S: What did the children do, theaters?
- C: Yes, that was about it. They would go to theaters. They just had fun playing with the neighbor boys.
- S: Was the theater a real special treat? Did they go once a month or a couple times a year?
- C: Yes. They would go pretty often, really there was nothing else for them to do.

S: How about outside of the movies, anything else?

C: Back to where we got a television. I think we were about the seventh family on the street to get a television, so this was the hang up for all the boys.

S: And what year would that be about?

C: 1950. All the boys would sit around and watch television, that would be one of their past times.

S: How about prior to that? Would you spend a lot of evenings around the radio?

C: Yes, we always had boys here.

S: How about the radio?

C: Yes, they would have a radio.

S: How about some of those famous talk shows or comedies that they would have on the radio?

C: "Amos and Andy" and the "Goldbirds."

S: Was that a routine, pretty regular in the evening?

C: That was regular.

S: After supper?

C: Yes, after supper. They had fights and everybody would congregate for that.

S: Boxing matches, we are talking about?

C: Yes.

S: Where did you do your grocery shopping? Was it local?

C: Yes, most of the time we went on East Federal Street, there were some stores there, or to Hughes, the meat market.

S: Where was Hughes?

C: On East Federal Street. Just on this side of the new plaza.

- S: Were there ethnic type stores there. Were there Italian store there or a meat market around here or something?
- C: Yes, Rulli Brothers was down there on East Federal Street and that is where we did all our shopping. That was really mostly where you could do your shopping.
- S: What would typical meals be like?
- C: Well, naturally, spaghetti and meatballs, and chicken.
- S: How often did you have spaghetti and meatballs?
- C: We had spaghetti every Thursday and every Sunday. It is very rarely that we have it now.
- S: Other meals were chicken?
- C: Chicken, sausage and other things.
- S: Did you make any of your own sauces?
- C: Yes, we made our own.
- S: Did you have your own garden?
- C: Oh, yes we had a garden, we never had a very large garden but it was enough for our meals, yes.
- S: What were some of the things in your garden?
- C: Tomatoes and peppers and lettuce and cucumbers, a lot of little cucumbers.
- S: Did you can them?
- C: Yes, I always canned my tomatoes.
- S: Did you have a fruit cellar?
- C: I have a big fruit cellar. Then when the freezers came along, I did a lot of freezing.
- S: Would you say you spent a lot of time in the kitchen?
- C: Yes, I really did. I loved to cook and I still do.



- S: Any other special homemade meals?
- C: Wedding Soup, that is his favorite.
- S: How about the way kids dressed back then in the forties, was it much different then today?
- C: I guess. Jeans were definitely out, there were no jeans. The only people that wore jeans were the people that worked. That is one thing I would rather dress my children. I always had boys that were dressed up, I did not care. I made most of my clothes. I can remember Bob was in college, he came home, they were having Sadie Hawkins Day, he says, "Mom, can I please have a pair of jeans today?" Because you only dressed up to go to college, I really mean dressed up. He did not wear a tie all the time, but they almost always dressed in the suit. And he asked me that day saying, mom, can I please wear a pair of jeans to Sadie Hawkins Day. I think that was the first time he was allowed to have jeans to go to school. The boys dressed really well, but they were always handed down. My family worked a union, trench coats, they both had one and we handed them down. I bet about six people in the family wore them. We paid good money for them at that time, I always bought there clothes at the Parsells on East Federal Street. They wore well, I do not know how many boys wore them down in the family till they wore them out. They dress so much differently.
- S: But they were very durable?
- C: Yes, they were very durable. They were made well.
- S: You mentioned that you went shopping down at Parsells and went downtown to go grocery shopping. How would you get there?
- C: Walked.
- S: About how far would that be?
- C: I think it was a mile from Rose Street, so it is a little over a mile from here. We walked, but then Jay had a car. In fact, when I married him, he had a brand new car.
- S: He had a car when you got married? What year was this?
- C: 1937. We always had a car. I never drove, though, he drove.
- S: Did you ever get your driver's license?
- C: Yes, I did about fifteen years ago. The children were young, we would walk unless we went grocery shopping in the afternoon. Walking was the thing, and we thought nothing of it. When we were youngsters on Rose Street, we used to walk up

Mahoning Avenue to Isaly's there and back for a ten cent cone.

S: Is that right?

C: Absolutely. We thought nothing of it.

S: Was it over a mile?

C: Oh sure, that was way over a mile. That was way out on Mahoning Avenue. We made the Novena at St. Pat's for years and years while I was in high school because I would come home from high school and stop home and pick up a cousin of mine and we would go up to St. Pat's for Novena.

S: St. Pat's up on Oak Hill?

C: Yes. We would walk there. We walked to school, came home for lunch and went back, it was four trips. We would stay just long enough to have a sandwich and walk back. That was the natural thing to do.

S: And your boys walked too?

C: Yes, absolutely they walked. They did not have a car until after they graduated. They both bought their own cars, and the uncle who was living with us at the time helped.

S: So you said you did not have your driver's license. Did many or any women have their driver's license that you knew of?

C: Not too many. My sister did, but that was ten or fifteen years before I got mine. Women just did not drive, at least not that many.

S: There was one car at the most?

C: Yes.

S: Were there quite a few families that did not have a car?

C: Yes. There were a lot of people that did not have a car. Over the years, I can remember the people across the street, they had a car. When we did get a car, we had it for a few years. There were not too many.

S: A lot of walking?

C: Yes, a lot of walking, right.

- S: What do you remember about East High School, you went there and all your children went there?
- C: They were happy days, I loved going to school, I really did. Circumstances kept me from being there.
- S: Would you say that the school or the church or one or the other were like a focal point of some of the social activities for the area there?
- C: Do you mean the time I went to school?
- S: At that time that you went to school which would be about the twenties and early thirties.
- C: I graduated in 1932. My dad then was a very strict person, I could not attend any of the school affairs.
- S: So did you have a job then?
- C: No, he would not let me go to work, women did not work.
- S: Until when or ever?
- C: When I got married, my sister got a job, she was allowed to get a job then. No, he just did not think women should work. There place was to stay home with their family and have dinner ready when they came home.
- S: So that has changed quite a bit?
- C: Very much.
- S: Do you have any feelings about that?
- C: I would have loved to go to work, I really would have. A short time I worked at my friends little restaurant on Lincoln Avenue across from college. It was a joy, it really was.
- S: Was this after you got married?
- C: Yes, that was about fifteen years ago. I just loved it.
- S: Was it pretty typical of a lot of the fathers and a lot of the girls?
- C: Yes, a lot of them. A lot of fathers felt that way.

- S: That would be around the late twenties, early thirties?
- C: Yes.
- S: That kind of eased up, that general rule?
- C: Yes, it did. My sisters' children worked. It gradually eased off and women got to go to work.
- S: It seems to me that everyone on the East Side knew one another, as if there was some feeling there.
- C: Yes, there is. There is a deep feeling there. You can feel it. When you meet somebody you can feel it.
- S: Why do you suppose that is?
- C: I do not know. Because of being so caring. People, they really care. You hear of people saying I do not care. It was just so different. People did care back then. They cared about everything. I know if we had any problems, my neighbors were beside me through all my troubles.
- S: You feel like the East Side is a special place?
- C: Very special, absolutely. I can honestly say that. I know it is going to be hard when you do that, but you are going to have to get out now. In fact I think maybe at the end of the month we are just going to have to move into an apartment because it is just a little bit too, too much. I know it is going to be a heartbreaker.
- S: What might be your fondest memories when you look back to maybe the forties or just this house when you bought it in 1941? What might you see as you look outside?
- C: We moved into this house and we had a lot of work to do. All the homes were beautiful, everybody picked up their yard so beautifully outside and inside. Everything just is deteriorating.
- S: That must be hard.
- C: Yes, it is. This you used to be the most beautiful block.
- S: What would be your fondest memory of this house or this town?

- C: There are so many, I would not know where to begin. Having my children and when they graduated from high school. It was just so beautiful when they graduated. Our life here was, we had hard times, it was not like it was all a bed of roses, but it is hard to say. I cannot explain it to you. Christmas was always beautiful. Up until about seven or eight years ago, we had Christmas here all the time, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, they come and stay. We would have Christmas Eve at Bob's house and then Christmas Day here. Those were happy days, and we had sad days too. It was just like a part of our lives.
- S: I know you were married and the toughest times were during the Depression, 1937. How were you able to get by? What did you do to get by during those years?
- C: Like I said, he always worked. He worked for the WPA, \$60 a month, and we got by on it. We always had food, we never had to call for help. We took care of our home and bills, we never owed anybody anything. We got through it by the grace of God.
- S: You learned to make do with what you had.
- C: That is right. There was a lot of things we had and a lot of things we had to do without.
- S: Like?
- C: Luxuries. Beautiful clothes and things. We just could not afford it.
- S: Family vacations?
- C: No. Camping, like I said. We would pitch a tent and that was the vacation. No more than that.
- S: Did many people in the neighborhood work for the WPA or the CCC?
- C: Yes, but just a couple families up the street like Father Jay, his son was in the CCC, and a couple of other boys on the other side of the street. Everybody seemed to get through, though. Struggled, but we got through.
- S: You told me you had one of the first televisions on the block in 1950, and you had a radio prior to that. Tell me a little about how you felt about FDR, through the Depression and the war. Do you have any feelings about that?
- C: He was really tops with us. He brought us through a great struggle, I really think he did.
- S: If you had to go back and live your life over again, is there anything you would change or what would you change?

- C: Nothing, not one single thing. I have enjoyed every bit of my life. I always say if I had to do it over, it would be the same thing.
- S: And your home would be on the East Side.
- C: Yes, absolutely.
- S: Is there anything you would like to say in closing about the East Side? Do you think the East Side is a special place?
- C: Yes, it is. It was, it is to me. Most all of them are gone now, but looking back, it was the greatest place to be. I do not know if you heard your dad talk about it.
- S: Yes, many times.
- C: This was a special street, especially here, but I had friends all over these sides. I belonged to the East Garden Club, and the greatest people belonged to that, and they still do. I dropped out of it, but I love all these people. I still work for them. I had my children in school, but I still worked through it.
- S: The church or the school?
- C: The school. We would have spaghetti dinners and my sister and I both would go down and we worked on it for two days. My nephew had children, eleven children, the last one just graduated from Immaculate Conception. They all went to Ursuline and on to college. We always did that because there was always someone there in the family. We still feel we should be doing for those that are not here.
- S: You mentioned that some of your nephews had graduated from Ursuline and Immaculate. How about back in the forties, did many people from this neighborhood go to Ursuline?
- C: No. Most all of them went to East.
- S: Was that typical?
- C: Yes, it was. I do not think any of these boys here went to Ursuline. They all went to East. It goes back to East, it is just where they felt they belonged.
- S: I know East has a great reputation, going back to that time back in thirties and the forties, with their sports and athletic tradition and so on. Were there other things that made East High School special? Do you think their success in athletics had to do with their pride?
- C: Yes. The families were behind them all the time. They would go to all the football games.

The boys were not even playing and we would go to the football games, like New Castle and wherever they played, people just stuck with them. They were with their children all through school, they cared about them.

S: I know there is a popular establishment down here not from Garland on Oak Street, the Royal Oaks. Is that a favorite stopping place? With the children?

C: Yes, it is. Not with the children. Sometimes dads might take a load on in with them, but young men. It was a family hang out.

S: You say family, what do you mean?

C: Husbands and wives, families with boys.

S: I was thinking maybe after football games in the back room there would be high school kids.

C: Yes, they would go into that kitchen and eat. They would sit back there and eat their hot dog specials. I know because I did the same thing. They would not go to the bar, but they would sit back in the kitchen. I had a couple of cousins that worked there and cooked for them, and I know that they were pretty good. That was the real stand out on the East Side.

S: How about some others? Oakland Field?

C: Baseball games

S: And Lincoln Park.

C: We spent a lot of time in Lincoln Park, picnics, and Oakland Hill for baseball games. That was another thing the boys did a lot of. They went to baseball games at Oakland Hill and to Lincoln Park for swimming.

S: You told me do not ever remember having a doll. Did your daughter ever have one?

C: Yes, she did. We gave her everything.

S: She was born in 1953?

C: Yes, she was. We always told her that she was a God-send. I do not know what I would do if I did not have her today.

S: Are there any other places or centers of activity?

C: I think we named them all.

- S: How about McCuffey Plaza?
- C: When it was just a plaza you could only enjoy shopping, but then they closed it down and made a mall out of it.
- S: When did they close it down and make it a mall?
- C: I do not remember exactly. It was not too many years after they built it. Other than that, I do not know of anywhere else.
- S: Where did the boys get their hair cut?
- C: Cosmo's down on Oak Street. He is still there. In fact, I think Bob still goes there. Then there was Louis the Barber down by the Royal Oaks, when they were smaller they did go there.
- S: Is there anything else you would like to add or tell me? I do not know if I asked you this or not, I would like to know what your fondest memory was of the East Side and growing up on the East Side.
- C: Being on the East Side. I do not think there is any other way of explaining it or how else I could express myself. That is why I am still here.
- S: The closeness?
- C: The closeness, the caring.
- S: That is certainly the impression that I got. I think that is what motivated me to do this topic.
- C: I was wondering why you stopped here. Did some one tell you to stop here?
- S: No. I was just riding down the street on the East Side. I was just driving by to try and get some ideas going in my mind. I am going to stop the interview here and I want to thank Mrs. Calcagni, very much, for your time and sharing your experiences. Thank you.
- C: My pleasure.

End of Interview