

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Life on the East Side of Youngstown
during the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's

Personal Experience

O.H. 1271

GUY D. CHIANESE

Interviewed

by

Ronald Stoops, Jr.

on

July 15, 1989

GUY D. CHIANESE

Guy Chianese was born on October 18, 1916, in Youngstown, Ohio. He was the son of Vincent and Margaret Chianese. Mr. Chianese is known as "Skeets" by many who know him. Guy has two daughters, Marguerite Young and Doreeen DeMarco.

Guy and his family lived on East High Street and were members of Our Lady of Mr. Carmel Church. He attended Lincoln Elementary School and East High School. Guy served in the Army Air Force during World War II.

Guys' father opened Chianese Service Station on the corner of Oak and Albert Streets in 1935. The family eventually opened several other stations-one location at the corner of Rt. 616 and Rt. 422 on the East Side. Mr. Chianese recalled working long hours at the station but enjoyed it because they were together as a family.

Guy enjoyed growing up on the East Side and described it as a close community. He mentioned that if someone had a problem there were people ready to help. Guy is a charter emmber of the East Side Kiwanis and is still very active. He is also a member of the East High Hall of Fame Committee and the Sons of Italy.

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INTERVIEWEE: GUY D. CHIANESE

INTERVIEWER: Ronald Stoops, Jr.

SUBJECT: Family owned auto service station on the East
Side; growing up on the East Side of Youngstown

DATE: July 15, 1989

S: This is an interview with Guy Chianese for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on life on the East Side of Youngstown during the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's, by Ronald Stoops, Jr., at 6644 Ron Park Place, Boardman, Ohio, on July 15, 1989, at 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Chianese, would you like to begin by telling me a little bit about your personal background, and family history.

C: Well, I am one of seven children. My dad and my brother's were in the painting business and when the Depression came and things got tough we couldn't paint so we went into the service station business. We bought the property on the corner of Oak and Albert Street and it was owned by the Lyden family and we were able to buy it through the City of Youngstown.

We put our own service station up with no money and Mr. Habuda, from the Habuda Supply Company furnished all of the materials and my dad's friends put the building up. My dad's great uncle, Mr. Carsonie, dug the big holes and put two 1,000 gallon tanks in by hand with him, his son, and my two brothers.

S: Well, I'll be darned.

C: He worked in the mill and after the mill he came down and we dug the tanks. We opened our service station on May 5, 1935 with the Sohio Company. My dad always said that he wanted to go with Sunoco and he didn't even know the name or where the company was located. Mr. Lyden would say, "Why don't you come with us?" My dad said, "Nope, I am going with Sunoco." So, when Mr. Kyle, who was the District Manager of the Sunoco Company at that time, came down to my dad and said to my dad, "You know Vince, if you sell five thousand gallons of gasoline from the fifth of May to the end of the month, I will buy you the best hat in town." So, we opened the gas station on May 5, about noon, and our first customer was Mr. Angellilo, the florist. He bought \$5.00 worth of gasoline and gave us a \$20.00 bill and we had to run down to the Royal Oaks to get change because we didn't even have it.

S: Is that right?

C: So, by the end of the month we had sold eighteen thousand gallons of gasoline. We used to make \$2.25 a gallon.

S: \$2.25?

C: We ran that service station from that time on. We opened it seven days and we opened it at 6:00 in the morning until midnight and when we used to go to school and when we would come home from school we would go to work. We practiced football and went to work. So, we used to put in a pretty tough day when we worked. Of course, we enjoyed it. Then one of my brothers, Pat, decided that he wanted to quit school and work the stations. So he quit and worked the stations during the daytime and my brothers and I worked it in the evening and early morning and then we went to school and we played football, practiced until 5:30 or 6:00, got supper, and came back down to the station, and did our homework, and we worked down the station. It was a family doing. We enjoyed it. We worked that station for fifty years. The only reason that we retired is when going to work became a chore instead of a pleasure. When things got to where you had to carry a gun to protect yourself and stuff like that it is time to get out so we got out.

S: And that was?

C: That was after fifty years. About 1980.

S: Around 1980.

C: That is when things started to get a little tough up there. One night we got held up twice in ten minutes.

One at the Sunoco station and one at the Sohio station.

S: So, you had two stations?

C: We had three stations.

S: Three stations?

C: We had one at Rt. 616, Rt. 422 Coitsville, and then we had one at Glennwood and Canfield Road. We actually had four stations...

S: Wow.

C: But the thing was everybody was fine. We weren't getting held up by people who lived on the East Side we were getting held up by people that lived other than the East Side.

S: This particular incident of getting held up what year would that have been?

C: That had to be around 1970, but after that we started to carry guns. When these people would come from the South Side and they would come in the station and you told them to turn off their motors and they wouldn't do it and you put the pump on automatic slow and you go inside and you put your gun in your pocket and you came out. When the pump would get about \$16.00 worth of gasoline on it they would look at it and you would hold that nosel so that they wouldn't pull out of the station, you knew that they were going to pull out and as soon as they would pull out you would drop the thing and you would fire your gun right into their trunk and...

S: Did they stop?

C: No, way. They would keep going. This one particular case I fired into a brand new Buick and I called the police and of course the guy took \$19.00 worth of gasoline and he took off and I called the police and I said to them, I said to them...There was a black policeman and a white policeman and the black policeman said to me, "What would have happened if that car blew up?" I said, "I have a million dollars worth of insurance all they have to do is sue me." And the white policeman said, "You did the right thing." He said, "They won't bother you now." So, they went to the girl who owned this car, to her house, and they said to her, they rapped on the door and she came out, they said, "Is that your car?" She said, "Yes." Well, they said, "Well, that car was involved in a robbery." She said, "No way I just gave my brother \$10 to go up to Warren Avenue and put gasoline in it." So, the cops said,

"Well, he went and put gasoline in it but he didn't pay for it. He went on the East Side went in and pulled out for it." The girl said, "Oh, can't be." The cops said, "Well, you come and take a look at this car. Come take a look at your trunk. There are four bullet holes in your trunk."

S: Well, I will be darned.

C: She called me up and asked me if I was going to fix the bullet holes and I said, "Yes, bring your car down." She never did because my lawyer said, "Once a car gets on my property don't let it out just hold it."

S: Hold it.

C: But she never came and the police never got my money or anything. The word got out that you don't go around that station because those guys all carry cannons and of course that stopped that.

S: That stopped some of the trouble. How about earlier say when you started the station in the 1930's and 1940's and maybe even into the early 1950's? Did you have much of that trouble back then?

C: None what-so-ever. I will give you an instance. I don't know if you know Tony Pannunzio, he is with the Pannunzio-Parella Company. Well Tony and his family, his mother and father lived on Early Road. Tony worked for the telegraph company. He was coming down Oak Street one morning oh maybe about 6:10 or 6:15, somewhere around there. And I had gone down to the Isaly's. We used to go to South Avenue to the donut shop and get donuts and bring them up to the station. So I went down to get the donuts and when I came back my brother wasn't there. He was gone and the doors were wide open and the register was there with money in it and we had tires outside and oil outside and everything. What had happened was that Tony Pannunzio was coming down the street and as he got to Albert and Oak Street there was no light there. There was only an "S" turn and the mail truck from Truscon Steel hit him. And knocked him off of his bike and brusied him but my brother, Jocks, good-hearted as he was, picked that kid up, didn't know him, picked him up, and took him to the hospital. And of course he had to stay there until someone came and by the time he called me I wasn't there again and then he called and I was there and he told me what had happened but just to show you now...

S: The station was unattended and nothing was taken.

C: Nothing was taken. Another time...When we used to hit during the early days of our business and we used to

hit like \$200 worth of business, my dad would take whoever was hanging around the station and we would either go to Royal Oaks, Bridge Inn, or we used to go down to Guerriero Oreo Tavern, or we used to go to the Ritz Bar and my dad would have sandwiches and pop and he would just treat us because we hit \$200.

S: That was a goal or a big day?

C: Yes, right. At that time it was.

S: Sure.

C: \$200, who saw \$200? But anyway, he would take us down and one night we all went down to the Bridge Inn. All of us kids used to always wait to get down there. We would go to the Bridge Inn. We were going down to the Bridge Inn and we get down there and it must have been about 12:20 and we got down there and we were eating ham sandwiches and drinking pop and the police came in and the police said to my dad, "Hey, Vince, is someone working the gas station?" My dad said, "No, we are closed and we are all down here." The cop said, "Well, the doors and the lights are wide open." Well, when we were done we just took the money out of the register and everybody ran and jumped into the car and away we went.

S: It didn't take much about locking your doors?

C: You know one of the biggest things that people don't understand today was when we were younger we did in our service stations and in all service stations, not only ours, but all of them, if you had problems...If your wife or your daughter was driving in a car at night and she had problems she would drive in the service station and someone there would help her. Today's station you could drive in these all night service stations and the guy won't even come out of the room. We have had...

S: They close their doors about 5:00.

C: Yes, they lock those doors and they wouldn't come out for nothing no matter what happens. But cars have caught on fire, a woman pumping gasoline, that was unheard of in our days. Sure no way. And air, we would put air in your tires, wipe your windshield, for a nickel tip that you might give us, but it all worked out find you know. We took a lot of abuse when we first started the service station. But after awhile it got to be where everybody knew us, us playing football, us getting involved in sports, and then we became the ticket agency for East High School. We used to sell more tickets at our service station.

S: For football or basketball?

C: Football.

S: Just football?

C: Just football.

S: Is that right?

C: My brother Jocks was the lineman. He was the head lineman. He used to line up the chains. If we were short of the first and ten he would stretch them.

S: He was on the chains huh?

C: Yes, on the chains.

S: But you would actually sell tickets for the school right at the station?

C: Yes, used to sell anywhere between \$1500-2000 worth of tickets on Friday night for a Friday night game.

S: Is that right?

C: A kid named Steve Piechock, that lived up there off of Truesdale used to sit behind there and he used to sell the tickets. Everybody and their brother used to come in for gasoline and they used to line up on Albert Street to come into the service station so they would get the tickets in advance.

S: Sure. Did you make any money on selling the tickets?

C: No. We never made a penny.

S: But you got a lot of traffic through the station?

C: We never even got a free ticket but it was convient for people, our customers, and of course all of the football players used to come down the gas station, Hunky White, Don Colangelo, Sam Laskin, Johnny Congemi, all of those guys used to hang...Everybody came down the service station. You would sit down and...

S: After school or during Saturdays and Sundays?

C: We used to practice when Dick Barret first came to East High School. I don't know if you knew about the strike at East High School? Did you ever hear about that?

S: When Harley Littler was the coach? You can tell me. I heard a little bit about it from Ward Maloney.

C: Well, all of the problems started with East High High and the kids that lived on East High Avenue and Grandview, the Click Club was what it was called, but we were all in this area and the Purple Gang hung around Chrisman Bakery, but we were all in this area and the Purple Gang that hung around Chrisman Bakery, and the Piechock's, and White, and King, Ko Ross and all of those guys. We all got together one time and we decided that we were going to strike for a new coach. They were talking about giving us Denny Shields and somebody else and we didn't want those guys we wanted Dick Barret.

S: As your coach?

C: As our coach. Someone had already talked to Dick. He was at Campbell Memorial and they had talked to him and Dick said, "I don't know. I am set here pretty good. But I would like to go there." So, they turned us down so we went on and they used to have the telephone poles with the big arms with the lights on them and so we climbed up there and we tied a rope and we put the dummy and hung him on the poles.

S: Who did you hang there?

C: Littler.

S: Littler?

C: Yes. We had I think three of them hung from Albert Street. We had one on Garland, one on Truesdale, and one over by the school.

S: Is that right?

C: We had them hung up there.

S: What year would that be?

C: That was in 1933 or 1934. So, we went over to Fercana, they had the trucking place right across and we got chains off of their trucks. You know they had those big chains. Mr. Lightbody, he was giving us a hard time at school and we were standing there and we weren't letting no on in and he was giving us a hard time. So, what we did was we took these big chains and we locked all of the doors and we put locks on them. We took nuts and bolts, put them in, then tightened them up, and then beamed the needs is that you couldn't take them off. We locked all of the doors at East High School so nobody could get in and nobody could get out.

S: Is that right? Now, would this be in the fall, spring...

C: Yes, this is in the fall.

S: During football season?

C: Just when the season was getting ready to start. It was probably like the end of June and then we ran it in and then when we came back they promised it by September and then that is when we got Dick Barret. Dick Barret came out and you know and Mr. Littler was a good coach. He could play the game terrific but he couldn't put it across to the guys. He believed in brute force. If you weighed two hundred and forty pounds, like Turk Miller, a tackle, and I weighed one hundred and nineteen pounds and he wanted me to head on tackle with these guys. These guys used to put their legs up high and their knees up high and they would knock me out. Whereas with Dick Barret, he wanted the guys on the line, like my brother Jocks who was two hundred and fifty-two pounds, Joe Wary two hundred and forty-five pounds, Frank Wary at three hundred and twenty-five pounds. You couldn't move these guys and he called them the mules. Tony Sandy the big, tall center in the center line and well we had Frank Mogulich and he was there the first year and then he got out. He graduated. But we had Gentile and Nick Lucas on the end. One was tall and one was small. But Jim Gentile could catch a pass no matter how. He could jump up and...He is like that kid from Campbell that Angelo kid that one who got killed. He blew things. He could stick to the ball.

But what happen was that in the back row we had Hunky White. We had Dom Colangelo, Lou Colabine, Ace and then we had this Sammy Laskin. Sammy Laskin was a four point average student. Dick used to call him the general. Ace could do everything, quarterback, halfback, kick, pass, do anything. But Laskin was the guy that could handle the ball and he was the educated one. So, when we were on the offense Laskin was in and on defense Ace was in. They would move them but that is the way...And he used to call the lineman his mules and horsemen.

S: Dick Barret was pretty successful down when he came wasn't he?

C: He made a big... Well, before you couldn't even get one hundred people to come and watch East play football because we didn't win anything. But then when Dick Barret came we went down to New Castle and we beat them and from then on everytime East played no matter who they played they always had ten or twelve thousand people. When we played South people were coming in, they had us in the boiler room and Mr. Lightbody, the custodian up there, he was raising the heat and their business manager used to tell Coach Barrett, "Don't play. We are supposed to start the game at 7:20 or 7:30

and here it is 8:10 and we are sitting here in uniform and everybody is tight. Well, we got beat. From then on Dick Barrett said, "The game starts at 7:30, 7:30 we start." We had seventeen thousand people. Then of course the funds were good we were able to bring in the golf and the girls sports because now we had our own money and we didn't need to beg anybody for money because our athletic department was making it then and it worked out fine and Dick was always a fair minded, good man who treated everybody good and everybody liked him. Of course our school was successful.

S: Did they win? Would they have won as many City Championships say in the 1940's or the late 1930's?

C: When Dick Barret came we became known as the Champs. We played tough ball and we were always in contention. Every year we were in contention whether we won or if we were in second place but you knew that you played a ball game when you played East. You knew it. I remember we played Chaney with Sinkovich, and they beat us seven nothing on a flock play.

S: What would you say would be a trademark of East football's teams under Coach Barret or just in that particular period? How would you describe them?

C: Describe Dick?

S: Or the teams?

C: The team was togetherness. They didn't...It wasn't a one man team. It was eleven men at one time. Everybody had their job to do. I will give you a good example there, Mogulich once said to my brother Jocks, He said, his job was to hit the ball half of the time and he had to hit this guard on his side. Well, the guard in the center was teaming up on them and he said to Jocks, "them guys from the other team they are beating the hell out." "Okay." So, the next play Jocks got in there and he hit the center who wasn't expecting to be knocked out and well they took it easy on Mog. It was a team effort. It wasn't anything else. Big Frank Wary, he stayed on that tackle. He wasn't an aggressive guy but he was a guy that you could move. You didn't dare come through him because with three hundred and twenty-five pounds you just stood there. No one could move, but everybody played together and there wasn't any descencion on the team.

The guys used to come down the station and we would go down to the Islay's you know. The whole gang of guys or we would go and sit up at East High School and pass the ball around. It was kind of always like a family get together. If you talk to Mogulich today and he will

still tell you about the good times that he had. It didn't matter whether you were black or white.

S: Or Italian or Irish or Slovak.

C: It didn't make a bit of difference. We all played together and we all had a good time.

S: I have heard that in the several interviews that I have done so far that...

C: There was no descencion what so ever. None.

S: Let me ask you about the business, you started in 1935 and you are talking about right in the middle of the Depression and businesses were closing left and right, unemployment, and to start a business that seems like such an odd, like such a risky adventure. Can you tell me how that came to be or how you made it work?

C: Well, you see the thing was that we all lived at home. my dad used to give us \$2.00 a week...

S: Working?

C: Well, we didn't have to buy anything. He bought us a car. He bought our insurance and our clothes and our food and \$2.00 spending and we didn't go out and take a girl because we didn't hang around the beer garden. We would go to the Royal Oak and get a hot dog and a beer when we were old enough or a coke. We used to get what they called a "Murphy's Special." I don't know if you knew the Murphy's? They lived on Fruit Street. Ed Murphy married Mary McCullion. But anyway his brother came and he used to sit down at the Royal Oaks and he would drink a bottle of 7up and a bottle of Coke. So, he called it the "Murphy's Special."

S: Down at the Royal Oaks?

C: Royal Oaks. You were talking about how tough it was. During the year of 1935...The Royal Oaks started before us. They went into business and there were seven brothers. First there was three brothers and then the other four came in.

S: That was started in 1934?

C: Yes, in 1934. They started just before we did. Then we came in and then Scarsella's came in. There were three sets of brothers on one block and everybody said that brothers couldn't get along. Ester Hamilton used to write about us. She would say, "Everybody says families can't get along well here's three sets of brothers on the East Side that all do business."

S: And all were very successful.

C: Right all successful businesses.

S: Son of a gun.

C: Well, you know.

S: You's were all landmarks of the East Side.

C: That is right.

S: Scarsella's, the station, and certainly the Royal Oaks.

C: That is right. If you ever came on the East Side you had to come into the service station. No matter what and you know I am talking about...I remember the McGuire boys came in...

S: Paul?

C: Paul and his brothers. And the Crow's. Do you remember Dr. Tom Crow?

S: I sure do.

C: Mr. Crow worked for the railroad company. He was some kind of a clerk or something but the boys all went to Ursuline and the thing about it was the parents couldn't afford them going there. So, they bought an old truck and they pushed it down the gas station and we fixed it with a pair of pliers and a screwdriver and a couple wires and you could fix anything. We got it running. They had an old junk battery in it so we got the battery fixed up for them and these kids used to go out and they would go to houses. Years ago everybody had coal furnaces and they used to take their ashes and throw them in the backyard. Well, come spring someone would have to come and get them. These kids would go with their little truck and pick these ashes up and take them up to East High Dump.

S: That is how they earned money to go to Ursuline?

C: That is how they earned money to go to Ursuline. Right, they helped their dad pay for their tuitions. This is how we got to know these guys because the Crow family and the McGuires' all dealt the same and we got to know them pretty good.

S: You mentioned that with a screwdriver and a pair of pliers that you could fix anything.

C: Yes.

- S: Did it have sophisticated tools and things? Tell me a little bit about the mechanic end of it?
- C: Well, you take like a Model A Ford, it had little brass strips that went from the spark plug to the distributor and the distributor was like a sugar bowl shape. It had four little knobs on it and you take the wire and all of those little strips of copper they would break and so what we would do would be to take a piece of wire and burn the insulation off of it and wrap it around here and wrap it over here and use a pair of pliers. And you could drop a wrench in those cars and go right to the ground, but in the new cars, when we used to drop a wrench in my 1988 Lincoln it would never hit the ground. You might never see it again.
- S: Wow, never get to see it again.
- C: And a fan belt would come off and turn around...Do you remember the O'Connor's on the East Side?
- S: No, not really.
- C: Aggie O'Connor just died here a couple of weeks ago. But her father, John McCarthy, he was a fire captain at the No.10 station. Well, she was the probate officer and she used to have a Corviar and the McCarthy boys used to come up to the gas station and they would use that car and the belt would fall off of it and so we had to put a shield on it so that when Aggie drove it it wouldn't come off. And all of these cars...During the Depression people worked on the WPA and they made \$15.00 and week. They bought houses and groceries and they used to come to the gas station and they used to buy two gallons of gasoline and at night they would take their tires off and spray the tire. We showed them how to clean the tubes with the gasoline cleaner, put the glue on it, light it and put a hubcap patch on it sometimes. Show them how to blow them up and put them together.
- S: How to fix their own cars?
- C: We used to fix a flat tire for \$.25 and it took you one hour to fix a guy that had a split rim in it. I retired and I could fix a tire and plug it in about three seconds and get \$4.00 and all I did was just shove a needle through it with some glue and a patch on it and you couldn't pull that patch out.
- S: Back when you started \$.25?
- C: Yes, \$.25 and you used to grease a car...They used to have grease fittings on them. Everything that moved had

a fitting on it. Today on the new cars I think you have four or six things. You get \$7.50 to grease a car today and we used to get \$.45 to do it then and it took four hours.

S: I want to ask you about fixing the cars. There wasn't that much to them?

C: They were the flat head motors and if you ran your car without water and it got hot it might whorp the head. To take a head off you had about eight bolts, the nuts that screwed down into the block. You take them off, you take the head down to the machine shop and they would mill it and make sure that it was straight. Put a double gasket on it put the thing back. You could do it yourself in about one hours time.

But no one used to do it and during the wintertime we didn't have no such thing as permanent antifreeze we only had some antifreeze which they called superpyro or some kind of methonal junk. Everytime it would get real cold everybody would run to the gas station and we might sell five barrels of that stuff over the weekend if it was cold. You would think that everybody was sick. Three or four days later it would get weather up around sixty-five and they used to make these here little cardboard things that you used to hook onto your radiator so you could get some heat into the car. Well, people forgot to open up the flaps and the car would steam up and as soon as it got cold again all back down the gas station. And we would be down there and what a system there.

S: I know what I wanted to ask you. How did your family get started in the service...Where did they pick up the nack or to learn to work on the cars?

C: From self taught or experience.

S: How about in 1935 when you started you didn't want an expert in it?

C: Nope, we didn't know anything about it. Know what? When we opened that gas station my dad had one rule that we had to do. You had a complete service job when you pulled into buy two gallons of gas or three gallons of gas for \$.51. You got it good. We used to get you out of the car and we used to brush out the front seat of the floor, wipe every window in the car, not only the front and the back but every window, check your oil, fill your radiator with water, and make sure that your battery was fixed.

S: Every time you got gas?

C: Yes, every time you got gas.

S: And how much was a gallon of gas?

C: Three gallons was \$.51.

S: Three gallons at \$.51.

C: \$.17 a gallon. Everybody used to come in and buy three gallons of gasoline, they used to put the ruler down in your tank and say, "Okay, put three gallons in." We had the pumps...

S: Put the ruler in the tank? That is how you knew?

C: Yes, that is where they used to measure their gas see. The ruler had for every half inch it was a gallon of gas and the tank only held ten gallons, but on the Ford's they had them up on the front wind shield and the Chevrolet's had them in the back. They used to have a gauge in the back just like you do on your lawnmower but they never worked good so the guys had these rulers and if the tank was a ten gallon tank then every one half inch would be a gallon of gas. So, a half inch would be a half gallon. Mr. Tondy used to say, "Put three gallons." So, you would put three gallons of gas at \$.51 and he would give you \$.50. He beat you out of a penny all of the time but it was funny but they were good. The oil was like \$.15 a quart.

S: What were the popular cars, typical cars?

C: Well, the typical cars at that time...We had a LaSalle and no one owned Cadillac's, very few people owned Cadillac's, but we had LaSalle's. We had Tera Planes. We had Essex's and we had Chevrolet's and we had the Plymouth and we had the Desoto and we had the Chrysler and the Packard.

But you didn't have fourteen hundred miles with every kind of car. You had a four-cylindar. That is all they were was four-cylinder or six-cylinder. Then they had the Buick that was a Straight A with an eight-cylinder and that was it. But you didn't have like...My dad had a 1928 Nash. It was a straight head engine. It had the big tires on the side. A 1928 Nash. Then he bought a 1937 Buick. That was a nice red car. He only paid I thihnk \$1200 for that.

S: Okay, you mentioned awhile back about the Purple Gang and they called you the Click Club, was that typical every few streets to have their own little...

C: Groups, yes.

S: They weren't gangs in terms of fighting or anything like that?

C: No, no nothing like that. The Purple Gang was the gang that hung around Chrisman Bakery.

S: Where was Chrisman Bakery at?

C: Up on the corner of Oak and Medina, Jackson Street. Do you know where that tire shop is over there now? Well, it was right there in fact they bought the Chrisman building. Anyway it was right there. Then we had the Brown's Drug and they had their gang. They used to hang down at the Brown Drugstore. Then we had the Rigby Gang and used to hang around Joe Burns' gas station down on Ribgy Street. Then we had the Pigmey's, which was like Peachy Altier and Angelo Rich and those guys and we used to go to the country club and those guys used to play. That is why they are good golfers. They used to go out to the country club and on Mondays was caddy day and everybody would play golf.

Then we used to have the Click Club. We built a garage about the size of this room in the back of Steve Sammartino's house and we used to hang down there. We had a pot belly stove for heat. We used to sleigh ride up and down Garland Avenue because it wasn't open to traffic, and there was a creek down at the bottom of the hill. We would go to Lincoln School we used to have these basketball tournaments and everybody used to carry these sacks and wait to get in free. It was the mascot for the Sigma Club at the YMCA. Joe Hoffer, he used to always let me carry his sack for him and I would get it for nothing. It wasn't gangs where you fought. we were all good friends.

S: Yes, I understand.

C: We used to play basketball on the corner of Grandview and Pearl Street. There were four poles and I don't know why there were four poles but there were four poles. So, we put a hoop on this side and a hoop on the other side and then we used to play basketball in the street because the cars didn't run like they do today. We used to book people from the Northside and get them to come down and play us. They would think that we would have a regular gym, down the street.

S: Was that common to have hoops on the street in several places?

C: Oh, yes.

S: I think that on my dad's street somewhere on Garland they used to play on the streets somewhere.

C: Right on the corner of Grandview and Perry Street. The Breeze's lived right next to your grandfather, Al. They used to play there. Mike Slattery he lived right down the street. But all of those guys played. The hoop wasn't like we have today. It might be an old basket with the bottom cut out and nailed there against a piece of wood. We played hockey with milk cans. We squashed the milk can down and we played hockey. If you go out into the woods there and cut a branch, curve it and play hockey. We took our socks off and we went and played soccer. We played sockie with a bat.

S: Oh, you played baseball with a sock?

C: Yes, we didn't have balls. Where were we going to get balls? We didn't have money to eat let alone buy balls. But we used to do it and we played hockey. We always used to play in front yard. My dad used to like to watch us kids play in the front there. We would play out there then they used to have these ice cream treats, Good Will Ice Cream trucks that came buy and we used to buy klondikes for a nickel. There would be ten guys out there and for \$.50 he would make us all happy and buy us all an ice cream. It was nice living. You could go to Victory Field and watch the ball games on Sundays then after the ball game you come down on Parker Street and you used to watch the motorcycles go on the hill climb and you would spend the whole day there. People would come from all over.

S: You mentioned sled riding, somebody told me to ask you about attaching to cars?

C: Yes, Joe Desiato.

S: Oh, really?

C: Joe had a 1929 Chevrolet with a big spotlight on the side of it and we used to go down the hill and he would put chains on it. We would go down to Garland Avenue and we started on the corner of East High by Tomasino Store and Benny Testa had this big bobsled to hold about fifteen people on it. We would all get on it and he would drive it down. He would wear goggles when he would go down. We had all of the ashes down at the end so we would stop, then pull the sled. So, Joe used to let us hook onto the back of his Chevy and he would pull the bobsled, not the guys on it, but he would pull the bobsled.

S: Back up the hill?

C: Yes, back up the hill for us.

S: Then he would go back down again?

C: Then we used to build a big fire and cook. Everybody used to bring potatoes from home and everybody would throw them into the fire and when they would get nice and black you would take them out, peel off the black and eat the potato. But we had a good time there. Then at night we used to turn the fire hydrant on and get the street nice and wet and icy.

S: Oh, you did?

C: And the people who lived on the street would come out and with ashes and throw the ashes so you could get up and down the street. But no one would ride on that street really. If you didn't have chains you couldn't go move, just slide.

S: You couldn't get up and down because you guys put the water on it and it froze.

C: Yes, there was a fire hydrant right on the corner so we used to turn it and if you turned it on real hard well you would get the water to hit the middle of the street and then it would flow right down the middle. We would get that ice and it would be slushy and in one hour or an hour and a half it would be nice and firm. We wouldn't ride the bobsled we would wait for it to snow a little bit because it would be too icy. And once it snowed we had a good time.

But by 9:30 everybody was home. We weren't allowed to stay out. Well, when my dad said 9:30 you had to be home and he meant 9:30. He didn't mean five minutes past. But we didn't have trouble. We didn't have any problems with dope. We didn't have no problems with anything. No booze.

As a matter of fact 1972 at the gas station the City of Youngstown put a curfew in effect. Everybody had to be off of the street. We were having trouble then with the blacks and the whites. So, we had closed the business at 6:00 and you had to be off of the street by 6:30 because there was a curfew. Well, we had about five colored families that lived over in Coitsville, off of East High by McGuffey. They used to come down the gas station at 4:00 in the afternoon, come home from work and they used to come down the gas station and they used to sit there. They would get there about 4:30 or 4:45 and they would bring their shotguns and they would sit there until me and my brother... We had the Sohio and the Sunoco station and they would wait for us to close the stations at 6:00, get the money in the safe, or put it in our car. We had two safes. We used to put ours in the safe. And wait for us to go and then we

would lock up the doors and we would say, "Okay, we'll see you guys thanks." And they would take off and we would take off.

S: They would actually look out for you?

C: They actually looked out for us because when things were tough for these people and they weren't working and when they did get a job this Ernie Heights, he was called "the Alabama" to his in-laws. His mother-in-law died and left a couple of little boys and they had to go to Alabama and they didn't have any money to get there and they needed their car serviced one day and we used to run a little charge for them and they all paid out. Not one of them ever stuck us. If anybody ever stuck us it would be our relatives. I used to never trust, never give a charge to relatives.

S: You never charged your relatives huh?

C: No, it wasn't worth it. They would always stick you. They wanted to get it for nothing.

S: I wanted to ask you about credit to other people during the Depression? Their had to be some people that really...

C: My dad used to sit out in front of the station and I don't know if you ever remember...My dad used to sit out there and turn his chair around so that he would be leaning on the back end of the chair. My dad had a watch...In fact I just gave it to my grandson, it was my dad's watch. It was a Howard. It was a real thin Howard made of gold. But he used to have a chain and a little tiny knife about the size of that.

S: About the size of your index finger.

C: Yes, very thin like but the blade was as sharp as anything. So, all of these people would come down to the station and my dad always kept \$2.00 in one pocket and if you came down the station and you said, "Gee, Mr. Chianese, I would like to get some gas but I have to go to work and I have to do this and that." My dad would reach in his pocket and say, "Well, let's see. I got \$2.00. I will tell you what. I will give you one and I will keep one." He said, "When you get the money you give it to me. You have to give it to me because it is my money and it doesn't belong to this company." So, these people would say, "Okay." And he would put two more dollars in his pocket you know. He wouldn't do that for everybody but these young fellows like Jack Philiban. He used to come down.

S: He would write it down on a piece of paper?

C: No, way.

S: He just remembered?

C: He never got cheated out of a dollar. Everybody paid.

S: But he didn't have any bookkeeping system or any record?

C: Nothing. None what so ever.

S: It wasn't a big deal? So, it was rare then when it happened?

C: Right. Even the people that worked on the WPA they used to come to the station and maybe on Thursday and they got paid on Friday and they didn't have the money, they needed gas to come to Boardman to work in that ditch that they put the rock and stone in and my dad used to give them three gallons of gasoline so they could go back and forth to work. No one ever cheated him. Because he was giving them his personal money and this way they always made sure that they came back and gave him the money because if they needed it again they would get it.

S: Get it again?

C: If you stuck him for \$.51 you had it.

S: And weren't credited anymore.

C: We never had any trouble that way. No one ever beat us.

S: How about during WWII when you know rubber was being rationed and gas was being rationed and parts were hard to get for cars and they were sending all of the parts...

C: See, that is where you could make money and a lot of people made money. Now I wasn't here.

S: Oh, you were off?

C: Yes, I was in the service. So, was my brother, John, and so was my brother Mario. The government made my brother go work underneath the Market Street Bridge at that Foundry there. My brother Pat ran the Sunoco Station and he became a tire agent. He is a tire inspector. People used to come up there and my brother...I don't know what his problem was but he never charged them. He would tear your tire apart, look at it, look in the inside, and then he would write that you needed a tire and then he would say it that you needed a tire and you

would go down to the place on Himrod Avenue, Aration Station and the guy would write you a slip so that you could buy a tire, but they would never come back to Pat to buy it...But the other epopel that used to do it used to say, "Okay, Mr. Stoops, it will cost you \$1.00 for me to inspect your tire. If you buy the tire off of me I will give you your dollar back." Well, these people used to come and get it and then they would run down to a tire shop and they would buy a tire cheaper. I said to my brother when I wrote him a letter I said, "Why don't you charge?" Just like with stamps. This friend who worked in the bank gave my brother Pat stamps on the side so my brother could sell extra stamps for gas. Well, my brother would sell just the gas if you came in and needed gas. Like Nick Wary came in on leave and he needed gas and my brother would give him the stamps and...But if you went to Zentko down the street and you wnedted five gallons of gasoline it was \$1.00 you to give him \$2.00. One dollar for the stamp and one dollar for the tape.

S: To get the extra ration of stamps for gas?

C: Right. This is when my brother didn't work it right. They did alright. They didn't sell much...It was only him and my dad there so they only kept the station going...They didn't always stay the long hours like we did but when we came back and of course my dad died in 1946 and me and my brothers expanded the business and we ran one hundred and forty thousand gallons of gasoline out of the Sunoco station. Then in 1958 I built the Sohio station and got it going. At that time they were redoing Oak Street and it was a little rough getting the stations going so we had the big account of Strouss. So when they opened Oak Street up and made all of the Strouss' trucks, there were forty-two of them, come to the Sohio station I was building a pattern and they all came up there to get gas see because the Sunoco station was already pumping the gas they didn't need the extra business Then we got the Sunoco station going at the one hundred and forty thousand and the Sohio station on ninety thousand and then they could go where they wanted.

S: You actually kept them...

C: What we were doing was we were building a pattern so that everybody saw these cars going in there so they would come in too. It worked out fine. Then all of those guys who had those trucks would all come in.

S: One quick question here. I see and know that your nickname is "Skeets." How did you ever get the nickname of "Skeets?"

C: Well, let's see. I am seventy-two years of age and when I was about six years old my dad bought us boxing gloves and we used to box in our backyard and my brother Dom and Mike Barber, Mike Barber used to be my manager and my brother Dom used to take care of John and put the gloves on. So, Mike Barber used to call me "Skeets." The name has stuck with me ever since.

S: He called you "Skeets?"

C: And the name "Skeets" just stuck. All of my brothers had nicknames. My brother Pat was called "Alley," Mario was called "Fatty," John was called "Jocks" and I am called "Skeets." Everybody had a reason for it. My brother Pat he used to be able to pick up a car. People used to come down the gas station and just to see him do it. He could pick up a Model A Ford by just reaching the bumper and holding it up and changing a tire.

S: Is that right?

C: He is paying for it now. He has a sore back, but anyway they used to come down and you only had four lugs on them and we would take the lugs off and knock the tires off real fast just to show people that he could do it. Then buy beer or pop or whatever. But my brother Jocks he got it because he was tough. Mario, got his name and Fatty got his name when he was a baby and I got mine.

S: So, you started in 1935 and you would have to be nineteen years of age?

C: About seventeen.

S: Okay, seventeen or so when you started. Your other brothers were older?

C: Younger.

S: All younger?

C: Yes.

S: Okay, all younger. As time went on after work or did you stop at the Royal Oaks or did quite a few people in the area or was that a big congregating place that you had around 5:00 or any particular time?

C: Well, yes. The Royal Oaks was kind of like the meeting place. The railroaders used to come...I often wondered why the Royal Oaks opened at 6:00 in the morning. I said, "Who would ever drink booze or whiskey or beer at 6:00 in the morning?" The railroaders. They used to park their engines down under the Oak Street Bridge and

come up there and drink.

S: Is that right?

C: The way that we used to work was we used to come out at noon, work until 11:00 at night and then go home and come out at 6:00 in the morning and work until noon that next day and then we would be off for twenty-four hours. Well, when we would be on our noon turn sometimes a salesman would come and we would go down to the Royal Oaks and eat hot dogs and drink pop or beer, whatever you wanted to drink. But at night all of the guys used to hang around. It was a family tavern. Mr. & Mrs. Dunn, they used to walk. They used to live on East High Street and they would walk down and they would have a couple of beers after supper. They would walk up to the gas station and my dad used to always say to my brothers, one of my brothers and me, "Put them in the car and ride them home." So, we would ride them up there, Mr. & Mrs. Dunn.

S: Was it unusual for women to be in a bar say in the 1930's?

C: No way. Now they didn't sit at the bar. The Royal Oaks hasn't changed on the inside since its original style. They add a back room where they put the kitchen in and stuff like that, but the original bar room is the same as it was when it started. When you got down there if you didn't get a booth you didn't sit. But no women sat at the bar. And like I said, it was a family tavern. When you came in there one of the DeMain boys would wait on you. There were no outsiders. My brother-in-law Tony DeNiro, he would help out during the week, but they knew exactly. You used to sit there and there would be a thing of popcorn and you would get a nice cold glass of beer for a dime. But it was great and this is the way they built a neighborhood trade, not rowdiness or anything. It wasn't like the Ritz bar, they had a night club and the Bridge Inn had gambling down there, this was just a nice, family restaurant.

S: How about...Did they used to cash people's checks there?

C: Thousands, and thousands of dollars. The armor truck used to...First they would go and get the money, then the armored truck used to go, then it got so big. Like if your check was \$190.30 they would take the \$.30 for cashing your check.

S: They cashed a lot of checks. When did they start that tradition? Did they always do that?

C: Well, not right away but they started probably after

the war and the Truscon checks started to get big. All of the older DeMain boys like Ralph and Henry, they both worked at Truscon. They had pretty good jobs out there but they used to work the tavern and then go and work at Truscon and then finally they were tired. But they used to cash checks. Did you know that they got robbed down there one time. No one to this day knows exactly how much but I will tell you one thing they just brought the money in so it had to be a quite a bit of money.

S: They did cash a lot of checks. I remember going in there I think with my grandfather or something way back when but they had the bars up almost like a bank, and old time bank underneath...

C: Yes, right.

S: Yes, I wasn't sure if I was remembering right or not.

C: Right in the back room is where they used to have it. Henry or Ralph used to cash the checks. Al used to always be down there. Hell Al lived down there when he was young.

S: Now how about you guys, did you guys cash many checks?

C: No, we never carried that kind of money with us. We used to have a safe. We had a slot in our safe and when we got "x" amount of dollars we used to put it through the hole and put the rubber down through it and it was cemented in the ground. We cashed some checks but not very many. We weren't in the check cashing business.

S: Let me ask you this question, what do you think caused the decline of these neighborhood service stations like you said, "Opened all night. Go out on the road. Fix or charge somebody's battery or fix a flat tire or somebody needed help." What has caused those kinds of things to go down?

C: The Federal Government caused that when they took the control. When the controls came off of the gasoline...See, years ago if you sold Sunoco all you could run through those pumps was Sunoco and you weren't aloud to run anything else. You weren't , aloud to run boot-leg gasoline.

Well, in 1971 or 1972 (somewhere around there) they took the controls off gasoline. Now we used to have people come out and the guy would walk up to me and he would show me his badge and identification, open up my tanks, and he had a big, long measuring stick that he used to measure gasoline in our tanks and it would have a cup on it or a cylinder. He would dip it down and

then bring it up, dry it, put a cork on it, dry it, put my name and number on it and they would test that gasoline. If that wasn't Sunoco gasoline I could be fined for it.

But after 1971 or 1972 they took the controls off and you could buy anything. You could buy the cheapest gasoline, put it in tanks, and no one said a word. Of course then, the oil companies started springing up gasoline stations on every corner until they over rated it and then all of a sudden the gasoline prices went from \$.19, \$.22 or \$.23 a gallon and gasoline went up to \$.60, \$.70, and \$.80 and then got up to \$1.25. Well, you know who could afford the gasoline prices.

I had a cadillac at that time and it could hold thirty gallons. It would take \$30.00 to fill it up. Well, I wouldn't do it. I would go to Indiana with it and I would buy gasoline in Plain City and I would only get seven miles to the gallon. It costed me more to fill it than it would to fly it back. That is the thing that hurt. Then the wages, fringe benefits. Do you know what it costs to buy hospitalization for employees? These were the things. You know service stations pay minimum wages with no fringes but the law says that, if you are Standard Oil you deal out of the state and you do "x" amount of dollars you have to buy fringe benefits. So, they work you nineteen hours with no fringe benefits and pay you \$3.35 an hour and then hire another guy to work the other one. So, they were always ahead because with fringe benefits hospitalization used to be around...When we had ours I had my own group. You started with ten and when we closed we only had four of us.

S: On hospitalization?

C: Yes, we had our own group then my nephew took over the station and right away they wanted to change everything. They couldn't understand that we had a contract with the Sunoco Company and the Standard Oil Company and that we were private operators. They could never cut us off. They had to be responsible for my pumps and tanks at all times because this contract went back to 1935. When my nephew took over right away he wants to change the name from Chianese's to Chianese's & Thomas. Well, they made up a new contract. The oil company was real fast to make up the contract. So, as soon as they signed the contract they void Chianese contract. When they voided it to Chianese they weren't responsible for the tanks or anything.

S: They aren't responsible for the tanks and pumps anymore?

C: Two months later one of our pumps leaked.

S: So, they had to pay for the cost?

C: Yes. It costs \$1.00 a gallon for a tank. If a tank is four thousand gallon tank it costed \$4,000 to replace it. The tanks can't be made out of steel unless they are double lined and coated and then tanks started to cost \$3.00 a gallon. So, what they did was they just cut that tank off from the mainstream and we lost four thousand gallon storage, I said something. I said, "Why would you guys do this? What difference is it you are buying a trade name."

S: Right.

C: Well, you know they just wanted to be the owners. They just wanted to be able to say, "We are the boss." You can be the boss but Chianese's insurance policy was covered by the Chianese brothers and we had the rates. We had the policy since 1935 with this company and the policy was cheaper.

S: So, you had a separate contract with Sunoco and a separate one with Sohio if I understand right?

C: Yes, that is exactly right. They could never stop me from...I was selling anything I wanted in my service station as long as I sold their gasoline and oil. I didn't have to sell only their oil.

S: Just their gasoline?

C: Well, I could sell their oil too but you know like Sunoco had a mercury made oil and we used to handle Kendle Oil and Quaker State. Well, Sunoco wasn't happy about it but didn't mind because we used to still sell a lot of their oil. But I mean you had a good relationship between these companies. We weren't fighting they were giving you anything that you wanted. If I wanted my building painted they used to come and paint it. If I wanted a new driveway they would fix it. That is the way business is. The cost to operate was too much and hell me and my brothers we didn't start making money...We made a living but we didn't start making money until the Federal Government says, "You have to make a pension plan for these guys." So, me and my brothers got in this pension plan and then we started putting money away and this way here I had the oil company pick up \$.1 per gallon. Ever since we were in the business we were making two and a half cents a gallon. My dad used to have the oil company pick up one cent a gallon and put it in the bank for us.

- S: Out of the two and a half cents?
- C: Out of the two and a half cents, which would only leave us one and a half to operate.
- S: You did that when you started the business?
- C: 1935.
- S: That is how it has always been?
- C: Then when we needed money to get along well we would have this much. Then when business got good we were able to raise the price one cent higher and no one would complain because they all came to Chianese's for gasoline. Joe Burns had a gas station. You could buy gasoline off of me for \$.18 a gallon and you could buy it off of Joe Burns for \$.17 a gallon but Joe Burns didn't sell any we sold it all. Now Joe Burns sold a lot down on Rigley Street but he didn't sell a lot at Albert Street and York Street. People say, "How come he is cheaper?" I said, "It costs more to bring it across the river." They would say, "Okay." They didn't care but they all paid.
- S: And you did it with the service also?
- C: Yes, we did that for many, many years. In fact up until just before we got out we stopped. This abled us to buy new anuities for us, work our pension plans, pay our buildings off.
- S: I know you and your family is very active in the community and in the school. You were a charter member of the East Side Kiwania's. Can you tell me a little bit about that and how it got started? Can you tell me how you got involved in that?
- C: Well, back in about 1959 a bunch of us guys got together and decided that we were going to have a service club. So, we used to meet out at Angel's Restaurant. We had about sixty-seven people come out. Everybody thought that you were going to join this club and that it was going to be like a business or something. Well, when they found out that it wasn't, a lot of the people dropped out, but we had enough to form a charter.

Then we decided well who is it going to go with? Then people from Lions used to come. The people from the Rotary and Kiwania's used to come. So, the Kiwania's people came and talked to us and at that time their program set us off the best. Guys like Parker Arnett, and a few other guys from the uptown like Kenny Hoffmister and them. They showed us that Kiwania's was the thing that we should go into. So, we had a charter

member. That was in Kiwanis since 1916.

A kid by the name of Lou Caizzo, who was the president and he was the president for two years and then he got a job out of town. So then Vince Tondy became the president and our membership just went down, down from thirty-five people down to about six or seven. Things got really tough. So, we were meeting down on McGuffey at the tavern down there, Chicone's Restaurant. So, we were meeting down there and I remember Joe Lane, the undertaker, he was with us. He was our Lieutenant Governor of the State of our Division. Kenny Hoffmiester, was the treasurer. They used to come down there to our meetings all of the time and wanting us to pay the per capita tax and I said, "No." I was the treasurer. I said, "No, way. We don't have it." We only had six guys. Then the State Department wanted them to pull our charter. No way. There was only six of us, Phil Panno, Joe Lane, Vince Tondy, Marty Turney, myself, and one more, Joe Bevilacqua. There was only six of us. Still yet we were donating food for the poor. Every time we had a meeting we would bring two cans of food and at Thanksgiving we would give baskets out. Six guys. So, Joe Lane was catching all kinds of heck from the division and he stayed in and he worked with us. Finally, Marty Turney became our president and a guy names John Ballew, from the Dollar Bank became one of our members. Now we had eight members. So, then we took over the old Home Theater on McGuffey and we worked that and then we started bringing in members. Then next thing that you know we have forty members. We worked that club and today I think that the East Side Kiwanis is the biggest award club in this division. We are known now and they respect the East Side club. Our activities are 100%. We have a \$19,000 a year budget, which is probably the biggest other than the downtown club. We do things. We get Christmas baskets, Easter baskets, and we do for the poor.

- S: How many members do you have now?
- C: We have thirty-five members now and we have a good club. We have some prominent people in our club.
- S: Is it one of the oldest active or existing?
- C: No. The oldest club is downtown. That is seventy-five years old. We are twenty-nine years old. We will be thirty next year. But the downtown club they are seventy-five years old. They have two hundred and fifty members. But they are not like us. They don't have cookout Tuesday night we are going to have a cookout. This will be our second. We have four cook outs a year and we go to the ARCO Club and we pay \$6.00 and we have a steak, baked beans, a salad, and a keg of beer and we

use it for our personal needs. We have a good club. Solid.

S: Okay, let's see, would you consider the East Side a close community and why?

C: Well, let's put it this way, it is not today because when they built the Oak Street the State was making plans to build the Hubbard Expressway and they bought all of these houses and they tore them all down and left nothing but vacant lots. Okay, so all of the businesses left, like Pirozzi's had a store, the Amendolara had a beer garden down there. When you take all of these people, out of the neighborhood, trade was gone. We didn't have big highways, it was all neighborhood. When you took the neighborhood out the poor people lost their business. Up until that time things happened like your mother had a baby all of the neighbors would come over, who would bring bread, who would bring soup, who would come and do the washing and ironing, who would clean your house. Or if you would have a death in the family they used to lay them out in the houses. For three days they would bring food in the house like you couldn't believe. Today, if you have a death in the family none of your neighbors might want to come and pay their respects to you. It is different but before if you were in trouble they helped. Even when your grandparents were gone. Up there by the McCardle's and the Coyne's lived on the next street. All of those Irish families...They used to call them cabbage patches years ago. We used to have one hell of a good time. I used to run around with the Coyne's boys and them guys. Here is Joe McCardle, when he was a little boy his dad worked on the railroad and he used to come down the gas station with his dad and he was a big and tall lanky kid and I used to say, "Joe, when you get big what are you going to be?" He said, "I want to be a mortician." I said, "You are crazy." And by God he is one.

S: He sure is.

C: So, this was the kind of family there was, the McNalley's are all priests in that family, three of them now. They used to have a little corner store and we used to go down there and buy penny suckers and they never chased you or threw you out and no one was trying to rob the place and steal the candy while you were turned around. It wasn't that kind of a people. They were honest people and they didn't fight with every Tom, Dick, and Harry on the street. They didn't try to go out and grab the girls. Boys then didn't go out with girls. Heck they wouldn't even be seen sick or dead with them. We didn't go to dances.

S: No?

C: No. Hell we would go to the senior prom and the guys would be on this side and the girls would be on that side. But then it changed. Things changed. That is what life was.

S: It seems to me like whenever you meet somebody from the East Side, one of the first things that they do you know, before you know that they are from the East Side they introduce themselves and the next thing that they say is, "I am from the East Side." They seem to be very proud that.

C: The East Side was a proud community. Always. Immaculate Conception...Mr. Quinn, the old man, he used to run the Quinn band. When he died they lived on the corner of Oak Street and Garland Avenue. They carried the casket down and his big band all the way down to Immaculate Conception.

S: Did you belong to the Immaculate Conception Church?

C: No, I belong to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, but we used to go because we used to run around with all of the Quinn's and the Welsh's. So, we used to go there. Like when we used to go to the Country Club we would go to 5:30 mass and then go down and hop on the freight and go out to the Country Club.

S: Which Country Club?

C: Youngstown.

S: The Youngstown Country Club?

C: And caddy and then if you caddied twice the guy may give you a tip and you might make \$2.00.

S: You hopped the train and get on?

C: Yes, we would hop the train.

S: Are those by regular times?

C: Yes, if one didn't come you waited another ten minutes and another one came. They had two hundred cars and four locomotives and a lot of times when there used to be coal cars we used to jump onto and all of the people on Valley Street used to stand there and we used to kick with our feet the big chunks of coal off so that people could put them into their sacks and take them home.

S: During the rough times or...?

C: That was during the Depression days.

S: People would actually wait?

C: Yes.

S: That is how they filled their furnaces?

C: That is right. They didn't have big furnaces like they do today. Most of them had pot belly stoves. But we used to sit up there and with our feet kick off the old chunks.

S: Would the train slow down at certain places and drop some coal off for some families?

C: No, no the engineers...They used to have the police on the train you know and they used to come and chase us but by the time he would come to us we would be off. As the train got near the golf course it had to go up to a grave and you saw the smoke getting heavy on the hinges you knew it was time to get off because once they picked up speed you knew that you weren't going to get off again. So, we would jump off and we maybe would have to walk a half a mile. It was a long walk and a lot of coal. That went on for a couple of years then one day right under the old Madison Avenue Bridge where they had these things that would turn the tracks with a switch. He would hop the trains. All of these guys...We used to steal the torpedoes too if you jumped on the engine. They used to have this big wooden box that had these torpedo's and torches on them and we would steal the torpedoes and put them under the street car. But what happened was this kid, I don't know who he was, he wasn't from our group and I don't think that he was one of the caddies but anyway he was hanging on the freight like this waving to his buddies and that sign was turned this way well when the train went by that is where he was and that is the last time that I hopped the train.

S: Was he killed?

C: Yes, dead.

S: Oh, my goodness. That was the last time huh?

C: The last time that we hopped a train. Then we used to go down to Albert Street and cross over to Logan Avenue and wait right there and hitch hike a ride. People that were going to play golf, they knew us, so they would pick us up and take us out to the Country Club.

S: Well, any other particular comments about the East Side

or anything that you might like to add?

C: Just the thing with this East High Hall of Fame you know is that you get to talk to all of the guys that went there 1926 and we honor them that went from 1926 to 1940 and I will tell you it was really something to see all of these old timers. You know when you talked to them you felt as if you knew them all. You heard old stories like Big Mike Slattery made the first touchdown at East High School. I never knew that. They were playing New Castle. They were on like the twelve or fifteen yard line and Mike was a big, lanky kid and he stood up and the quarterback knew and threw the ball and hit Mike and Mike caught it and he ran twelve yards and made a touchdown. The first touchdown that we ever made.

S: Is that right?

C: But you know Andy Santore, when he was quarterback down at East High School down at Campbell he threw a lateral and it hit the lateral pass and was intercepted and went ninety yards for a touchdown. We couldn't get rid of these guys. These guys didn't want to go home. That is what made them great. That principal at East High School now, Mrs. Hook's, which is a fine woman and she is doing a fine job at East High School. So, we donated her \$500 for the school. She was very proud. She did a lot for us. She got all of the records out.

I will tell you this, the people that were born and raised on the East Side were proud people. Always. They were proud I tell you. You couldn't believe how proud. Even though they wore patches in their pants they were proud. They never stole or committed any crimes. They were just proud. We used to go out and dig victory gardens you know and no one would steal stuff from the gardens. Just a proud family. Everybody was. Everybody helped one another. We used to have a lot of parties. You didn't have to have a lot of money to have fun.

S: When you were young children what did you guys do for fun or entertainment?

C: Well, at night we used to stand on the corner where the street light was and we used to play...Come to think of it, one game called Jump Frog Jump and see how far it gets, like jump over five guys. Then we used to play Barberee. We used to divide the guys up into halves and then you would give the guys five minutes to go out and hide and then you would have to chase them and at that time everybody was skinny and they could run like the wind. We used to go up to East High School and play football on the grass. Nothing destructive.

S: Nothing fancy.

C: Basketball out in the street. We used to play hockey. Of course, sockie.

S: Was sports pretty important?

C: It was always important. This was one of the things that made us. We used to play baseball and we had a lot of midget teams. I played with St. Columbus and we were Class C Championship back in 1932 before we even had the gas station. We used to play at the Mother house and Nick Johnson used to be our coach. When I was getting ready to go into the tenth grade at East High School they offered us, the whole football team at St. Columbus, they were going to make Ursuline a coed school and they offered us all scholarships fee.

S: But they couldn't get you away from the East Side?

C: No. No way. It was our first love. No matter win, lose, or draw we were there. We used to walk all the way to Rayen Stadium. We used to walk all of the way to South for football games. If the game started at 7:30 we would be there at 5:30 so we could sneak in. We never paid to go to game. We went over the fence or under the fence one way or the other but we got in. We were always on the fifty yard line.

S: I have heard that story before too. Everybody was sneaking into the games.

C: That is right. And you know that your grandfather was a hell of a ball player.

S: Al.

C: Yes, Al Stoops. Al was the only boy in the family. He had two sisters. I used to go down to the ITAM's I used to see Al and I would buy him a drink. He used to come up to the gas station. Especially, if we were at the gas station we used to celebrate during Thanksgiving and we didn't finish until the Superbowl.

S: Is that right?

C: Al would come up at 5:00 and he would never leave until we closed the gas station.

S: Well, Mr. Chianese I thank you very much for this interview.

C: I am glad that I could help.

END OF INTERVIEW