

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Swedish Baptist Church

Church Life

O. H. 431

VICTOR FROLUND

Interviewed

by

Rich Gustafson

on

May 1, 1979

VICTOR FROLUND

Mr. Victor Frolund, a lifetime resident of Youngstown, is eminently qualified to speak of occurrences in Youngstown. He is an amateur historian who has published various articles in the Youngstown Vindicator. Especially active in numerous sports associations, he has chaired such groups as the Curbstone Coaches and Kiwanis. In fact, he has contributed important artifacts of sports history to the Canton Football Hall of Fame. He is also a member of the Society for American Baseball Research and the National Football Foundation. Born on September 17, 1900, he has maintained an avid interest in various sports-related groups, beginning during the First World War.

His father, Gus Frolund, was a contractor who was responsible for building many homes on the south side of Youngstown. Victor was employed at Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company, retiring after many years of service at this company. In the interview which transpires, he gives personal insights into various events of historical significance which occurred during his years at this organization. He was not able to complete high school, and had various jobs until being employed at the company alluded to earlier. Currently a widow, he has two children: Tytus, age 52, and William, age 43.

Mr. Frolund grew up near the Swedish Baptist Church, and has many recollections of growing up in the church. Although he would later sever ties with the Swedish Baptist Church to join another church (later becoming Western Reserve Church), he

maintained a knowledge of the former church through his sister who has remained a member of the Evangel Baptist Church throughout her life. He currently resides at 240 Shields Avenue in Boardman.

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INTERVIEWEE: VICTOR FROLUND

INTERVIEWER: Rich Gustafson

SUBJECT: Swedish Baptist Church, Billy Sunday Crusade,
Streetcar system in Youngstown, Youngstown Sheet
& Tube Company

DATE: May 1, 1979

G: This is an interview with Victor Frolund for the Youngstown State University Oral History Project on the Swedish Baptist Church, by Rich Gustafson, at 240 Shields Avenue, on May 1, 1979, at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Frolund, perhaps you could relate some of your family background, where you were born, some family recollections that you have of this early period in your life.

F: I was born in Youngstown, Ohio on September 17, 1900. It used to be in Youngstown that the people who lived on the near south side, as they got older and more prosperous, they moved out. They went farther out and built homes. In my case, it was built quite a ways out on the south side. We moved in farther, towards the near south side. My father was a building contractor and he bought a lot of property and helped to build the south side. He would build a house and we would move into it. Somebody would come along and buy it. Then we would tell them to take possession in thirty, sixty, or ninety days. He would buy another lot, or he had the lot bought, and he would start another home. Before I was five years old we probably lived in five or six different homes, until we got one that we stayed in for quite a while. I had one sister older than I was, and two younger. There were about two years between each one of us. The south side at that time was very fertile ground for people. Youngstown, being a steel town, attracted a lot of people here from Pennsylvania or other agricultural communities, because the money, the wages paid, were higher than you could get on a farm. Naturally, the demand for houses was great. My father

and his brother had a lot to do with building the south side of Youngstown. My uncle had a lot of property at what is now Market and Woodland. They built three different apartment buildings on the corner of Market and Woodland and had stores on the ground floor and apartments upstairs. He had a parcel of land there and had a sawmill on this property too. He did so much building that they milled their own lumber.

This one particular parcel that he had vacant he gave to a group of Swedish people that wanted to start a church, which was called the Swedish Baptist Church. By the way, it is still standing. That is where we all worshiped. At that time we lived on Hayes Avenue, probably a quarter of a mile from this church. Hayes Avenue ran right into the church. That's where all of us worshiped. It wasn't a very big church. I suppose there were only fifty people. We had a lot of fun there, believe me.

We didn't have an automobile at that time. My father did have a car, but we didn't ride in it because he smashed it up. We never had a horse and buggy, which was the thing in those days. We were near schools; we didn't have to go very far to go to school. Sunday morning we would go down to Sunday school and church. We would go home, eat our dinner, and go back to church in the afternoon. Those of us who were old enough would go again on Sunday night, so it was an all day affair in those days to go to Sunday school and church.

We had an organ; we had two rooms and a couple of rooms in the basement. One room on the first floor was used for Sunday school rooms. There were no stationary pews in this room, only chairs that funeral directors used at funerals in those days. We had the pews in the big room, the platform and the baptistry.

I want to relate one incident about a Christmas program. We had Christmas programs. I was supposed to do a solo, and I practiced for probably two months. My Sunday school teacher was a lady named Sophie Quist. All of my sisters, in fact, played the piano. My oldest sister was the best. I would practice this one particular song that I was supposed to sing at our house and then I would go to my Sunday school teacher's house and practice maybe one or two nights a week. After practicing diligently for all of these weeks I got up on the platform and she played the few chords to get me started and I opened my mouth and nothing came out. I got scared. I ran down the platform, ran out of the church, crossed Woodland Avenue, and ran all the way home, two and a half blocks, to where we lived. I was so scared. I never

dreamed that after I had practiced all this time that I would ever get a case of stage fright like that.

We had another thing where a child who went to Sunday school three weeks out of four . . . when you got to the age of twelve you were given a Swedish Bible. My oldest sister got her Bible. She was two years older than me. Something came up in this church with my uncle who donated the land for this church. He was giving his letter; that means, in short, he was told to leave the church. This happened when I was about eleven and a half years old.

G: What year would this have been?

F: This would have been 1911. My uncle and his wife went to the Himrod Avenue Baptist Church. My oldest sister and I went downtown to the First Baptist Church and enrolled. My two younger sisters stayed at the Swedish Baptist Church; they didn't leave. My father went to bat for me, but I never got a Bible because I had left the church before I was twelve years old. My father went to bat for me about getting this Bible; he thought I should get a Bible because I put in so many years and had such good attendance. Finally, they decided to give me a Bible. I still have it. That was quite a victory for us, that we finally got a Bible out of the church after they refused to give me one. My oldest sister and I stayed with the First Baptist Church. My other two sisters stayed with the Swedish Baptist Church. In 1924 my youngest [sister] passed away at the age of seventeen. My one sister, which would be my youngest sister now, still is a member of what was the Swedish Baptist Church; it is now the Evangel Baptist Church. My oldest sister and I are still with the First Baptist Church, but it has a new name now called the Western Reserve Baptist Church since we sold our downtown property in 1973 and built out on Hitchcock Road.

Some thing about the childhood and that church is that we couldn't wait until the public schools were out in June. We had three months of vacation coming. On the other side of Woodland Avenue on the corner of Market was what they called the Swedish Mission Church. Every summer they would have Swedish school. The Swedish kids could better their Swedish language by attending the Swedish Mission. We didn't like that because we thought that at vacation time we shouldn't have to go to any school. Some of us never bothered to go to that, even though our mothers and fathers told us to. We argued the matter and seemed to win out. That was too much. We thought it was vacation time and that was what it was going to be.

I don't know the exact year that the church was sold, but they did buy property on the south side to build a new church. They first started on Warren Avenue where South High School is; they bought property out there. They could never seem to raise enough money to build a new church. That fell through, although they did build a house on this lot. They used it as a parsonage for the minister. Then they went out and around Midlothian Boulevard and bought some property. That never went through. The people that were the bellwethers of the Swedish Baptist Church when I was a youngster there were growing older and some of them passed away. It seemed that they did sell the church and get some property out on Southern Boulevard. I had left the church when all this had happened, but my one sister had kept me abreast of what was going on. I believe that they started this church out on Southern Boulevard. If I'm not mistaken, besides the original building I believe they built two additions to that church in the past fifteen or twenty years. That is remarkable.

G: Do you remember Swedish still being spoken in the services?

F: Never an English service; everything was Swedish.

G: As far as the speaking of the Swedish would you say that most of the membership was still, at that time, Swedish in composition?

F: That's right. The first preacher I remember in the old Swedish Baptist Church was named Reverend Westerberg. Following him was Sven Peterson. The next two were Linde and someone else whose name escapes me. After that, when they moved out farther, I seemed to get away from knowledge of what was going on in the old Swedish Baptist Church. I don't know exactly when they changed the name to the Evangel Baptist Church either. Today I don't think there is much Swedish spoken, if any, in the Evangel Baptist Church.

G: Was there quite a bit of communication between the different churches in your community? Were there mutual services?

F: There was a very close relationship and harmony among the three Swedish churches within a radius of five hundred yards. There was the Swedish Baptist, the Swedish Mission, and the Swedish Lutheran. They were all in that vicinity of Market, Woodland, and Ridge Avenue. They worked in unison. They had services combined in one of the three churches. There was never any dissention like there seems to be today. I counted over fifty Baptist church services advertised in the Youngstown paper one Saturday evening. That is all Baptist churches. It seems that something develops in the church and a few families get mad about something and leave.

- G: You mentioned something about the Sunday school that you were a member of. Maybe you could talk about some of the experiences that you had, Sunday school picnics, maybe even how the Sunday schools operated at this time? Was it all in one session or did they split up?
- F: We had classes. Primary classes were for those just beginning to walk and so forth. Intermediate was between grade school and high school, although there wasn't much high school in those days. Very few children went to high school. If they did it was like a kid going to college today. We met in different parts of the room, and that was a bad thing at that time because of the interruptions from the different classes. We didn't have any such thing as separate classrooms and partitions between them and so forth. We would go in a pew and maybe two pews away was another class of older children. Naturally the teaching by the teachers would conflict. Some of the kids would probably be listening more to the class in front of them instead of their own teacher.

Sunday school picnics were held at Mill Creek Park. Nobody had automobiles. Very few people had horses and buggies. We rode the streetcar. My mother would pack a big picnic basket and there were four of us children and my father. We would get on the streetcar, go down Market to the Public Square, change to the Glenwood streetcar, and wind up on Glenwood Avenue near Falls Avenue. We would go back in there and have our picnic. Some of the games we played were "Drop the Handkerchief", "Ring around the Rosey", and for the older kids they would play "Last Couple Out". Today there would be a boy and a girl and they would go somewhere and the last couple out . . . that's a pretty long time ago.

I was never out of Sunday school or church. All my life I've always gone to Sunday school and church. Of course, for some people today it's a whole lot different. We don't put in a whole day on Sunday anymore. I don't think there is any Sunday night service. Maybe once in a while they'll have a group of singers come in. There is never any Wednesday night prayer meetings anymore. We had those every Wednesday night.

- G: Could you describe your typical Sunday? You mentioned that Sunday was centered around the church. Could you tell what a Sunday was to you?
- F: A Sunday to me when I was a youngster growing up was probably getting up at 8:00 and having breakfast. The mothers and fathers didn't go to Sunday school, but all the children

did. That would be around 9:00, 9:30. There was an hour of that and then the morning worship which started at 11:00. We would still be in church, but our mothers and fathers would come then. The morning worship service would be over around 12:00 and we would go home and have our dinner.

G: This noon service, was it typical for the women to be in the service? Was it predominantly a male service?

F: No.

G: The women were in the service as well?

F: Yes.

G: They didn't stay home to cook the meal?

F: They cooked it while we were in Sunday school. When we came home it was all ready. All they had to do was put it out. Maybe sometimes a mother didn't go to a church service. My father was an exceptionally good cook so if my mother wanted to go to church some Sunday morning then he would stay home and cook. Usually it was cooked before they came to church. In the afternoon there was what they called a BYPU, which was Baptist Young People's Union. They would meet at 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon until maybe 6:00. They would go home and have their supper, come back if they were over ten years of age, and come back to the night service. There would be a night service then. From 9:00 in the morning until 9:00 at night you would have at least nine hours of Sunday school and church.

G: Could you describe something about the Baptist Young People's Union? Do you remember anything about this and what they did?

F: We would have older advisors there.

G: This was what ages?

F: This was all ages up until fifteen or sixteen. We would have someone just like a Sunday school teacher. We taught the Bible and maybe put on little skits or plays or something. It was real fun when I look back. There was no violence or naughtiness. We were all indoctrinated into the Christian fellowship.

There were a couple of people there that I will never forget; they meant a lot to me. For instance, there was one named John Peterson. John Peterson was superintendent of the Sunday school. He was Mr. Everything in the church. He worked as a carpenter. He had a large family. I always

said if there was ever a man when he died that had a license to go to heaven it was John Peterson. I never met a man that had more influence on me. He was such a Christian. He lived the life that the primrose path should have covered.

There was another one named Dalquist. He was a paper hanger and painter. He had a marvelous family that came every Sunday, and they lived quite a ways from the church. They walked all the time. Nobody rode the streetcar much unless it was a mile or so downtown.

When we lived on Hayes Avenue it was nothing for us to sit on our front porch and see people going to town on Saturday night, which was a big night in Youngstown. People were walking from out around Chalmers Avenue, Williamson Avenue, Marion Avenue. Today, they wouldn't walk two blocks.

G: Could you describe what Youngstown was, the center, some of the streets and shops?

F: The big thing at that time was the Public Square, which was called the diamond. It was noted far and wide as the only city in the United States that called the central part of their town the diamond. All the streetcars turned at the Public Square and went back out on their respective lines. If you were going from one side of town to the other you never had a cross-town car; you rode down to the Public Square, got off the car, and got a transfer and went on the car that would take you to your destination. That was a beehive, the Public Square. On Saturday night the downtown was just beautiful. Nobody did any shopping until Saturday night. I'll never forget, one spot on Saturday night the Salvation Army Band would play. They would play hymns on the Public Square and somebody would give a little sermon. They would lay the bass drum down on the street and people would throw coins in it. There would be terrific gatherings there. That's the way they got their money. They did a terrific job and still are.

The thing I liked most is that my father took me downtown every Saturday night. People got paid on Saturday then. My father was a carpenter. The stores were open until 9:00 every Saturday night. Forty hours a week was unheard of. They opened at 8:00 and closed at 6:00. Saturday they were open until 9:00 or 10:00, maybe midnight.

One thing I'll never forget is Billy Sunday. He came to Youngstown in 1910. When he came they built a tabernacle made out of wood. They built a big stage, or platform. They had wooden benches that would seat 200 or 300 people. There was sawdust on the floor. It was not wooden, but

it would have sawdust on the floor. Where the B&O freight depot was they built this. He was here for six weeks. Of course, being an ex-major league ballplayer and everything, he was something else. I was ten years old at the time. Every Sunday afternoon he always had a special service for the children. I liked him so well that I went Sunday afternoon, Sunday night, every night during the week. I was converted by Billy Sunday and never took a direction other than the step in clean living and being a good Christian. They tell me my father was quite a man with a bottle when I was little. I can say that I never saw him that way, because when I was ten years old he was converted. I give him a lot of credit. A lot of people that have never taken a drink of booze or whiskey or liquor brag about it; but I think a man that was that way for a long time and then changed for the better has to be given a lot of credit too. He never "fell off the wagon" as they used to say. He became converted too though. We still have a Billy Sunday songbook. I still know a lot of those hymns by heart. He selected his choirs from the different churches. He had a choir leader. All they had was a piano and trombone. Most people hate to get old, but I wouldn't have missed my youth for anything. Kids today don't know what it was like to ride the streetcar, the trian, to walk.

I'd like to digress a little bit from the church and the school to when I was carrying papers. We had two newspapers in Youngstown, the Telegram and the Vindicator. The Vindicator was at the corner of Boardman and Phelps Streets, where WFMJ is now. The Youngstown Telegram first was over in the Public Square where there is a parking lot now. Then they built a new building at the corner of Wood and Phelps Streets. We had to go to Market Street School, which was near Falls and Market. I got out of school at 3:30. I had probably thirty-five or forty customers evenly divided between the Vindicator and Telegram. I had to go up Phelps and Wood Streets to get my Telegrams. I walked down Phelps Street to Boardman and Phelps to get my Vindicators, and then walk back over Market Street Bridge to the corner of Woodland and Hayes where I started my route. After a few years of that they started to haul the papers to the end of Market Street Bridge. That is all the farther that we had to go. There was a bakery there that handled them, so that's where we got our papers. Pretty soon they put a rule in that you couldn't carry both papers; you either had to carry the Telegram or the Vindicator. If a kid had a hundred customers and he had eighty Vindicators and twenty Telegram customers, naturally he would keep the Vindicator customers, and vice versa. Mine was evenly divided, so I kept a Telegram because that was our paper at home. That didn't last long because I gave it up. Then I had a morning route too. I used to get up at

5:00 in the morning, go downtown and get my Cleveland papers, and I had a route that went up as far as Warren Avenue. For some reason or other they would send me thirty more papers than I had customers. At that time everybody rode the streetcar to work that lived around Warren Avenue or that section. When I peddled to all my customers, it was around 7:30; I would set the papers all up in front of a house on Oak Hill and Warren, and I would dispose of those papers really fast. The fellows coming down to get on the streetcar would see me there and they would buy a paper. That didn't last too long either, but that was quite a job to get up at 5:00 in the morning and peddle the morning route, go to school, after school go clear downtown and carry all those papers. Whenever we went downtown or came home from town, any other time that we wanted to carry papers we would try to get a ride. In those days it wasn't hard for a little truck to come along with the end gate down. You would signal to the guy and he would stop and you would jump on the end gate and he would let you off where you wanted. That was a big help. Today, they're delivered to their front yard.

I got out of grade school. I thought I was going to go to high school. I had plans all summer long to go to high school. South High was just opened in 1911. I got out of Market Street Grade School in 1914. I happened to get a job downtown at a drugstore, so my schooling was over. The job paid \$4 a week. I worked from 8:00 in the morning until 6:00 at night. That's ten hours a day. I worked every other Sunday until 6:00 at night. My mother packed me a little wicker basket lunch. I thought I was big going down over Market Street Bridge swinging that basket. I only worked for about three or four months, and I didn't like the Sunday work because it interfered with my church and Sunday school.

I finally got a job at one of the department stores at that time on the corner of Phelps and Federal. It was the George L. Fordyce Company. I got a job in there that paid \$4.50 at that time as a cash boy. Of course, we didn't work Sundays, but we worked ten hours a day, six days a week.

I worked at that for a while and then I got a job at the Briar Hill office in the Stambaugh Building. That was terrific. I got a salary of \$45 a month. I worked five and a half days a week, Saturday afternoon and Sunday off.

Then I quit that because I wanted to make a little more money. I got a job at Republic Steel in the Bessemer. That was a mistake; I never should have taken it. I had to work ten hours on day turn, fourteen hours at night, twenty-four hours every other Sunday. I didn't work there very long. I remember on Sundays I would go to work at 7:00 in the morning and at noon my boss would say, "You

can go home and have Sunday afternoon off, but be back here at 6:00 for the rest of the night." I would do that. I would go home and all the kids would be going to Idora Park. I didn't like that; I had to go down to the dirty, old steel mill. One Sunday I really got hot about it. I walked in the gate and just kept on walking and walked out the other gate and went home and never went back.

In the meantime, I went down to Hazelton and got a job in the laboratory, eight hours a day. The war was on then. They were just hard up for labor. I got a job down there. They never asked me where I worked before because had I told them what I did at the Bessemer works they would have never hired me for the Hazelton works, but they never said a word. I worked down there two years.

G: Can you describe some of these war experiences? Tell what you did to support the war, maybe some community efforts.

F: All I can say in that respect was that I was too young to go into the service. In fact, I was too young by today's standards of even working. I was only sixteen. At that time we had liberty bonds taken out of our pay. Of course, I could have enlisted, but I didn't. In fact, any kid that enlisted had to enlist because he got into some kind of trouble. They gave him the option of either going to the reformatory or going into the United States Army. He took the Army. We had money taken out of our pay for war bonds, or liberty bonds we called them. Then they had home guards, which were later developed into the National Guard. Before I could even register for the draft the armistice was signed.

They worked in the steel mills at that time even though they worked all those long hours, like at night, 5:00 at night until 7:00 in the morning. Some of them slept half the night because they didn't care.

G: Did you swing shift then?

F: Yes. The job I got in the Hazelton was in the laboratory, and they couldn't work long hours in the laboratory. I don't know what they would do today with all this stuff about pure air and so forth. The laboratories were full of gases and so forth; that's the reason we worked eight hours. It was nothing for us to come to work on a Sunday morning and work eight hours. We would be working with a group of men in the open hearth of the blast furnace working Sunday just like we were. We went home at 4:00, came out the next morning, and that same bunch was just going home. They had worked twenty-four hours.

- G: Perhaps to continue you could relate something about the unions, what went on in the unions, how strong the unions were?
- F: At that time there was no union in the steel industry except for what they called sheet mill workers. They had a very strong union. They only worked eight hours because they faced so much heat they couldn't really stand much more than eight hours. Today that is all in these continuous hot strip mills. That was all hand mills in those days. Basic steel industry, like the open hearth and blast furnace didn't have a union. I don't think they went on eight hours until 1924. Then in about 1933 they started on organizing all steelworkers. It was 1937 that they had the Little Steel Strike. There was so much violence all over, in Chicago and even Youngstown.
- G: Do you remember that 1937 strike?
- F: Yes. I was in the steel mill at that time. I would like to go back a little bit. When I left in 1918 and the armistice was signed, a lot of people got laid off. They didn't need that many people in the steel mills and you could lay them off then because there was no union. There was no unemployment compensation or anything like that. We had to look for other jobs. I resolved that I would never go and work in the steel mill again; that was 1918. I had various other jobs and could always seem to be able to get a job. I always fell back on my father who was a contractor. He taught me the carpenter trade and I worked with him for quite a while. Then I got married and still didn't work with him then. There was a period when I got married that I didn't work with him. Then I went back with him again until the Depression came. I vowed I would never go in and stay with him. In 1929, when we had that black, October Monday when the Depression came, everybody felt that. Finally I was able to seek out a living with my father doing repair work on houses. Just he and I did that.

Finally, in 1933, my father-in-law, who had a very good job in Youngstown Sheet & Tube . . . The mills were beginning to pick up. The company told the men in the good jobs, "If you have any sons, son-in-laws, any relation at all that want work, you turn their name in to the employment office." My father-in-law turned my name in. He said, "You go down to the employment office tomorrow morning." This was on a Monday morning. I went down and it was terrific. You've seen crowds at a World Series game waiting to buy tickets, that's what it was like down in Campbell. I went down there every morning for seven mornings. Finally, on the seventh morning they called my name out. You didn't walk in and say you wanted a job; you stayed in that crowd and a policeman

would come out of the employment office door and yell a name out. I was so far back it took me five minutes to get in the employment office. I got examined and got hired simply because my father-in-law turned my name in. I was hired, examined, and went to work about 11:00 and worked until 3:30.

G: What were the conditions in the mill like?

F: The conditions were better than they have been under the union, as far as pressure and so forth. The next day they told me to come out as a slagger in the open hearth. I worked there. I figured I would only work one year or so and go back to the carpenter trade. It was so hot that every summer I would say never again. Then the cool weather would start coming and you felt nice going to work in an open hearth. The carpenter business wouldn't be any good in the winter time. You would say to yourself stick it out this winter and then next spring you'll quit. First thing you know I'm there thirty-five years and retiring.

In 1937 we were asked to join the union. Everything was sly and undercover. If I was going to ask a co-worker to join the union I had to be careful not to let any of the bosses see me approaching him. We used to go in the basement or in a corner of the building to sign these guys up. Then the steel strike came in 1937 and it only lasted thirty days. From then on it was just a turmoil. You have to say that they really got benefits.

For instance, today my son works in the steel mill. Last year he got thirteen weeks vacation. The paid holidays, you get paid today before a holiday sometimes. Christmas even is a paid holiday now, and Good Friday. I'll never forget, I was supposed to be off on Good Friday; I was scheduled off. They did keep to the five day a week pattern, unless there was an absolute necessity where they would call you out. I was off this Good Friday and they called up here about noon. They wanted to know if I wanted to come out to work. It wasn't on my regular job though. I said, "Sure, I'll come up." It was an easy job; I didn't do a thing for eight hours, but I got double time. That double time I got as much money as I did on my regular job on a regular day. They really got the benefits and high money.

G: Maybe to digress a moment you mentioned the Billy Sunday Crusade. I'm very interested in knowing the size of the crowds, how long he was here, and any recollections you have of the churches involved.

F: He was here for six weeks. They constructed this tabernacle out of brand new lumber, and of course when it was over they had no trouble getting rid of the lumber. Whatever the tabernacle held, it was filled every night. He was not only an evangelist, he was an actor. He would come out on that platform at the beginning of the service with a frock coat on, stick collar, necktie, and before he was through he was in his shirt sleeves. At that time the collars were stiff collars and they were laundered, but the minute the perspiration started to run the collar would wrinkle up and he would tear that off. He was terrific.

We couldn't all have been born fifty years ago, but I think we had something the kids of today don't have as far as home life and so forth. There is a tendency today of some children not wanting to live at home, even if they're working in their home town. If a kid goes to college out of town he naturally . . . Some of them don't even come back anymore. The home life isn't what it was then. At 9:00 every night I could expect to hear my father call me. He called me from an upstairs window; he was already in bed. In those days the streets weren't even paved. We had one arch light on every corner, a carbon light rather. A fellow came around every week and dropped this light down and put a piece of black carbon in that burned. It lit automatically some way. That's where we were until 9:00; we would be playing games like "recess," and "I spy". It was nothing like today.

I will say this though, we were probably worse at Halloween. There were some things done at Halloween in those days that wouldn't be acceptable today. A lot of people got hurt. I've heard of them putting an oil lamp on top of the door. You would knock on the door and when they opened the door the lamp would fall down full of oil and lit. They dumped outhouses over; sometimes there were people in them. There were a lot of things going on then at Halloween. We had three nights of Halloween. In those days almost every house had a fence around it and a little gate. One night was fence night and we would tear fences down. The next night was skate night or something. The third night, which was real Halloween night, ~~that was~~ when we dumped the outhouses over and did a lot of things that I'm ashamed to admit.

My sister and I were not allowed to have playing cards in the house; we weren't allowed to go to shows until we were really big, and things of that nature which didn't hurt us any. At that time, on Market Street, around Marion Avenue and Williamson Avenue, there were three movie theatres. I'll never forget, my mother came up there one night. It wasn't too far, maybe half of a mile. She was looking for me; I wasn't home at 9:00.

G: Maybe you remember the way they tried to collect money, raise money, ice cream socials. Do you remember any of these things?

F: Yes. Every church that had any kind of a lawn or had any kind of place where they could put up tables, had lawn fetes. We got cake and ice cream for 15¢ or 20¢ or 25¢. Every church had a lawn fete or two every Sunday. In the winter they had something inside.

G: Maybe you could relate something about the junior choir at the church.

F: There was a junior choir and an adult choir too. They weren't as big as they are today. They had some kind of robes, not like today either. The church, the Swedish Baptist Church, didn't have a choir loft. The choir stood in back of the lectern or pulpit and sang. When the song was over they went to their respective pews. They didn't have a choir loft or anything like that. Of course, the Swedish Baptist Church was a poor church, let's face it. The plays they used to put on, little skits, were not quite like today. Today it is almost like a real show in the theatre. It was a lot of fun rehearsing and so forth.

I'd like to talk about the streetcars and Idora Park. The Park and Falls, that was the streetcar that ran on Market Street out to Warren Avenue, Hillman Street, down Sherwood to Idora Park. That was a different car system than the one downtown, but they finally merged later on. The Park and Falls was on the south side only. In the summer time they got what they called summer cars; they were wide open, not windows. There was a long running board the length of the car. You stepped up on that and the seats were like a surrey instead of being lengthwise. You could probably seat six or eight people in each seat. The conductor walked along this running board and collected the fare. He didn't go in; he stood out there and hung on with one hand. They would pass the fare to him. Those cars would probably start in May or June and run until it got cool. They were jammed going to Idora Park. They had double headers, two cars. Today, I don't understand how they ever got around the corners with two cars. We used to walk to Idora Park from where we lived on Hayes Avenue. We walked to Idora Park and it was nothing. We would also walk back again. Idora Park is a lot different today, but some of the rides were still there, like the roller coaster and the merry-go-round. They also had a bear's den out there; there was a den out there that had three bears in it. They had a cage there and there was a door in it. Somehow or other there was a little girl standing there and the bear put his paw through this door some way and grabbed her. They finally got her away, but she was pretty badly mutilated. He didn't get her in, but

she was terrified; she was only a little girl. She couldn't move or anything. I think she was disfigured for life.

There became the need for parking lots. People got automobiles and drove out there and they would charge you to park. If you rode the streetcar you got right in the park before you got out of the car. If you drove a car, you parked, and you had to pay to get in to park. It was better off to ride the streetcar. The same company that owned Idora Park owned the streetcar company.

Standpipes, we had one on the north side; we had one on Carroll Street near Hillman. They were the only two, but later on they built one on Indianola Avenue. That is the only one that is standing yet. They have this Mahoning Valley sanitary district; all we had in those days was river water, the old Mahoning River. They filled these standpipes in case of a drought or something. They were usually built on a high ground so they could go up in the air higher and be out of the way of houses and so forth. The one on Indianola is still standing. Rather than being high, it's squatier. That's quite a job because every so often that has to be cleaned and painted inside and out. While that is being done they ask the people to be careful with the water.

Living on the south side all my life I naturally am more versed on what happened on the south side. Youngstown wasn't that big that you could take in the whole place. I've seen a lot of things grow; I've seen a lot of different . . . Who thought that streetcars would go up Oak Hill Avenue? They had quite a hill there. They had a big hill from Pike Street up to Warner. Then there was a slight grade and another up to Woodland Avenue. Oak Hill Avenue today is not any wider than it was when I was a kid. They had a streetcar going up Oak Hill and they had a switch up around Chalmers where the car coming the other way would have to wait. The car went up to Chalmers Avenue, turned down Chalmers Avenue, turned right on Williamson, went down to Franklin Avenue, went through some backyards, and came out to Poland Avenue. It then went over the Elephant Bridge, which is now the Cedar Street Bridge. Then it went up Federal Street to the Public Square. People rode that streetcar and they had two men on it, a motorman and a conductor. I'll never forget how I liked to ride streetcars or trains. I craved speed.

We had what was called the New Castle Limited and the Warren Limited. They were interurban cars. Then they had the locals that made every stop. We always wanted to get the Limited or the express that made very few stops. We would ride to Warren, New Castle, or Sharon just to get that fast ride.

The Youngstown & Southern Railroad was primarily a freight. It went down as far as Leetonia, Columbiana, or Lisbon. One day they decided to go and haul passengers. They bought several new streetcars. I'll never forget the first day they put these cars on; it was a Sunday. Everybody where we lived went out by South Side Park to see these new cars. They had them on display and I think we got a free ride on them. That did a lot to develop the south side as far as Boardman, Pleasant Grove, and on out as far as Leetonia. It was really fast because there weren't too many stops. As people moved out there naturally more stops were made. I got a big kick out of riding to Leetonia just for the sake of riding a faster car. At 5:30 they ran three cars out there loaded with people. There were no buses out on the south side either; everybody rode the Y&S. It was a really nice way of sneaking into Youngstown. These cars were heated and had a motorman and a conductor. The conductor walked through the car and collected the fares and rang it up on a register. Then they got the biggest inter-urban streetcar I ever saw in my life. They clocked it and it made a mile in forty-seven seconds. It wasn't a standing start though. The car came down South Avenue Bridge and turned the corner to go up Front Street to the station and low and behold it couldn't make the turn it was so long and big. They had to reconstruct South Avenue Bridge right in that particular space to get it to make that turn. I loved to ride those streetcars.

My mother took four of us children to Boston, Massachusetts in a day coach in 1910 or so.

G: How long did that take you?

F: It took two days. We were coal black when we got there. Coming back it was the same way. We didn't have enough money to get a berth.

Every Sunday the New York Central ran an excursion to an amusement park in Ashtabula for \$1 per person. We used to go up there a lot just for the train ride. They would also have baseball excursions to Cleveland for \$1.25. That was something, believe me. I've seen as high as twenty coaches on one of those baseball specials. It was a cheap way to go.

G: Did the church itself take any long excursions?

F: Yes, it did. It went to parks, like the park in Ashtabula, Woodland Beach.

Another thing that was very nice in those days before the supermarkets or chain stores, the independent merchants,

the grocery stores every year would close and they would run excursions to Cedar Point or Conneaut Lake by train. Almost every kid in the whole town would go there with their parents. Everything was free, but that is what they did for the kids. There wasn't a grocery store open in Youngstown on that one day a year. Later they did the same thing only they went to Idora Park.

- G: Did the church hold special meetings in the summer? Would the church call in speakers or go to a special camp?
- F: Most of them would go out in the country and pitch a tent up on a farm or something. The kids would go out there for a week or two. Most churches did that. Every church would have an evangelist come in for a week or two. The evangelist was paid by taking up collections. They wouldn't say they were going to give him so much money. Whatever he would take in was his. The thing I liked about the downtown churches was how many of them there were and how they were self-supporting. When the city started to decay the churches went with it. We at the First Baptist were about five years too long thinking the downtown church was going to come back. The motels started for one thing, which hurt the downtown hotel. Men would come in, like salesmen and so forth, and they would stay at a downtown hotel. On Sunday morning they would want to go to a church, and there would be one downtown. We didn't get near for our church what we could have gotten three years earlier. One thing it did do was bring people downtown, and they had night services too. I could see people from the south side, even though we had three churches in the vicinity of Market Street Bridge; there were flocks of people that went to the churches downtown. The First Baptist was predominantly a Welsh church. The Central Christian people were Welsh or Scotch. The Westminster was on the corner of Front, and the Trinity Methodist was downtown and is still there. They were suffering. The fact that Trinity is a wealthy church is the only reason they're staying there. They were all fired up every Sunday night, plus prayer meetings on Wednesday night.

We built the First Baptist Church in 1925. We met in the YMCA while the church was being built. When our church was dedicated in 1925, we were looking for a preacher, Reverend Archibald. When a congregation looks for a minister they go to hear him in the city that he is in at the time. A group called the pulpit committee will go and listen to two or three of his sermons. Then they'll invite him to their church so everybody could hear him. We did that with Reverend Archibald and he was terrific, one of the greatest I ever heard. He came here, and I'll never forget, we were in the process of selling our old church to the Mahoning Bank and we were going to build our new one back farther on Boardman Street across from the county jail. By the way, the Mahoning Bank eventually winds up with our other one too.

We heard Reverend Archibald and my father asked one of the pillars of the church, "Do you think we could land Reverend Archibald?" He said, "We couldn't touch him with a twenty-five foot pole," meaning he was out of our reach. He was such a terrific preacher that we couldn't begin to pay him, but we did; we got him. He was terrific, believe me. I'm proud of the fact that he baptized me and married me.

We used to have 125 men in our men's bible class; today it's not ten percent of that.

G: Do you remember what a typical service was? How long was it in duration?

F: The church service when I was a youngster, and even in my teens, was much longer than today. The actual sermon today in my church is twenty minutes at the longest, sometimes fifteen. We're out of that church by 12:00. It starts at 11:00. We only sing two hymns today; the choir sings two anthems. Then we have a few other things like announcements. In those days they sang maybe five hymns. They had so much other stuff going for them like a little play on Sunday morning. I would say the church service was almost twice as long when I was a kid, the whole thing from beginning to end. Now we have what they call summer sessions; it's one hour. Sunday school and church in the winter time today are from 9:45 until 12:00. Today in the summer time it is from 10:00 to 11:00. They demanded they wanted to go boating, to ball games. The Catholic church has Saturday night services now for people who want to play golf on Sunday. And of course they also have early masses. People like that. They can't wait for that summer session. They can sleep longer and get out of there by 11:00. That's the way things are going. No wonder they say the people today aren't as Christlike as they were years ago.

G: Maybe this is somewhat due to the close-knit of the family. Is your family close?

F: That is gone today. Another thing I might say is the electronic preacher on television. You've got so many preachers on television today that they have to put them on Saturday night now and some late Sunday night. Before I go to church at 9:00 I can get a church service on every channel of that television. It starts to taper off after noon because of ball games and so forth. They are really reaping the harvest. There is no question the churches are suffering today. People want to know what they do with all their money. They don't say that when a movie comes to town. They will pay \$4 for a

movie, but they would never think to put in \$4 in the basket.
A church has to survive.

END OF INTERVIEW