

Narrator: Stanley Browder  
Date of Interview: June 9, 1978  
Place of Interview: Narrator's home, located at  
8610 Callie Avenue, Morton Grove  
Interviewer: Denise Rossmann Christopoulos  
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Transcribed For: Morton Grove Public Library  
Tape Running Time: 1 hour

## INTRODUCTION

Stanley Browder has lived in Morton Grove all of his life. Mr. Browder's mother was a Yehl, one of the oldest and earliest pioneer families to settle in this area. In the interview, Mr. Browder discusses his father working for Poehlmann Brothers Greenhouses as the main grower of carnations and life in Morton Grove as a young boy. This includes stories of schooling, baseball, swimming in the gravel pit, "hobo island" on the river, the airport and everyday life in town.

SB: Stanley Browder

Q: Question asked by interviewer, Denise Rossmann Christopoulos

NOTE: Mrs. Browder sat in on the interview and comments by her are in the transcript.

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

Q: We're going to start with biographical data. Do you remember your grandparents' names?

SB: Yes, Frank Browder and Sarah Browder. Then there was George and Phyllis Yehl. And my dad's name was Perry.

Q: And your mother's name?

SB: Caroline Yehl.

Q: And there did they come from -- what country?

SB: They were all born here. No, Grandma Yehl was born in Germany.

Q: And you really don't know when they came over to the United States?

SB: I don't know.

Q: How did they come over? Probably by boat (laughs).

SB: By boat, probably.

Q: What was your parents' occupations? Your father's?

SB: My father worked for the railroad first. Then he worked for Poehlmann Brothers as a florist.

Q: Which railroad did he work for?

SB: Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul. In fact, my grandfather laid the railroad track here for the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul.

Q: About the 1870s...

SB: When it was laid, yes. My grandfather came from Ohio with two brothers, and they laid the track here for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul. My dad also worked on the railroad.

Q: Did your dad work laying the track?

SB: Yes, he helped lay the track also. Later on, why, then he went to work for Poehlmann Brothers.

Q: How many years did he work for Poehlmann's?

SB: About 30 years, I guess.

Q: Most of your childhood, then, he worked for Poehlmann's.

SB: Yes, I would say so.

Q: What type of job did he have at Poehlmann's?

SB: He grew carnations.

Q: He was the main grower for carnations?

SB: Yes, grew carnations. Well carnations mostly. And he grew other plants, bunch of others. Mums, and whatnot? It was mostly carnations, I know.

Q: How many hours did he work a day?

SB: I think in those days they worked nine or ten hours.

Mrs. Browder: I think they used to start at 7:00, quit at 5:00. The whistle used to blow. We could hear it.

Q: The whistle would blow for what reason?

Mrs. Browder: To start out their lunch.

SB: Oh, yes.

Mrs. Browder: And then quitting time.

SB: Sure.

Q: They didn't have any breaks in between other than lunch?

SB: Just lunchtime. (laughter)

Q: Today you get fifteen minutes off here and there.

SB: No, there was no such thing as a lunch break.

Q: Do you remember any company picnics they had from Poehlmann's that your father would take you all to?

SB: No.

Q: Did you often go over there as a boy?

SB: Yes, I worked there during my summer vacation when I went to high school.

Q: What did you do?

SB: Whatever they put me at, you know. Sometimes planting cuttings in the sand and stuff like that.

Q: Was your father working there when the Depression came and Poehlmann's collapsed financially?

SB: My dad did, yes. Oh, yes. He did.

Q: And what was the reason for their collapse, other than just the Depression? Were there other problems?

SB: Well, yes. The company ran out of money and they couldn't operate any more. In fact, Poehlmann was head of the bank and he borrowed all the money he could out of the bank. He couldn't get any more money there, so he just had to file bankruptcy, go out of business. So that's what closed him down.

Q: Do you have sisters and brothers?

SB: Yes, my sister Adis. She's younger than I am. She's 61.

Q: There were only two?

SB: That's all there is.

Q: Then getting to you, what's your birthdate?

SB: January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1909.

Q: Where were you born?

SB: Right here in Morton Grove.

Mrs. Browder: (whispers) Callie Avenue.

Q: And where did you live?

SB: Right on Callie Avenue.

Q: What's the address of that house down there?

SB: Right down the street there -- 8610, and what are they down there?

Mrs. Browder: It must be about 8543 or somewhere along there.

SB: Yes, well, 8544. Yes, 8544.

Mrs. Browder: And that's across the street.

SB: Yes.

Q: What do you remember about your home there?

SB: I lived up on the second floor, and I remember we had a roomer and he was a bachelor. And he give me a doll for Christmas. And we had one of these round pot-bellied stoves with a lid that opened up on the top, you know.

Q: Oh, no kidding!

SB: So, I guess he thought I was a girl, and he made fun of me, and I took a chair.  
I crawled up on the chair and I opened the lid and I threw the doll in the stove.

Q: (laughs) You burned it up!

SB: I burned it up. (laughs)

Q: Well, you took care of that! (laughs)

SB: I took care of that. I got rid of the doll. (laughs)

Q: That's funny!

Mrs. Browder: That's why they thought he was a girl. (shows photograph)

Q: This is you with the curls?

SB: Yes. He thought I was a girl, see?

Q: What else do you remember about your home?

SB: Well, you asked about my sister. She was, see there's nine years difference,  
eight years, ain't there?



Mrs. Browder: Eight.

SB: Eight years difference. Well, I don't know. She wasn't around then yet, I don't think. When I got the doll -- no, she wasn't around yet.

Q: Did your mother have any type of occupation . . .

SB: Now we have to figure that I -- my mother died when I was thirteen years old, and my sister was very small, four or five.

Mrs. Browder: Five.

Q: How old was your mother when she died?

SB: About 30, I think.

Q: Real young.

SB: Yes, she was young. Thirty, 32, something like that.

Q: How did you wash your clothes? I realize there were no washing machines and different conveniences like that.

SB: On a scrub board.

Mrs. Browder: She asked about your mother's occupation.

SB: Oh, she worked downtown for Field's. She made dresses.

Mrs. Browder: Mostly alterations, wasn't it?

SB: Yes. And she made dresses.

Mrs. Browder: That little suit he had on, she made that. (in photograph previously shown)

Q: Oh, nice. Did she work out of the home when she was married and had children?

SB: No, no. Stayed home. But she used to make our clothes. She made a cap for me when I went to school. Made my clothes.

Q: She might have been quite a seamstress then.

SB: She made her own dresses. Of course, she had a form. You know, a dress form. And she used to get these patterns, and she put the material on a big table, and put the pattern on there. And pinned the pattern onto the material. Then cut the material out. Marked it out with white chalk, cut it out. Yes, I remember that. That sewing machine was going all the time. One of those that move with your feet, you know. (laughter)

Mrs. Browder: She asked about the laundry. Show her your finger when your mother was . . .

SB: Oh, yes. (shows finger) My mother cut that off. You see, she was doing the laundry, you know, cranking the clothes through the wringer. And I was standing on the opposite end. And I seen them cogs going around, you know, like that. The cogwheel was going around. And I wanted to see how they were going there, so I stuck my finger in there, and she cut it off. See?

Q: Wow.

SB: They took me to the doctor, and the doctor said I would never have a nail, but when the nail root come out, the doctor said there was a little root there yet.

Q" How old were you when that happened?

SB: Well, about two, two and a half, something like that.

Q: She must have been frantic when that happened.

SB: That was in Pennsylvania. (laughs)

Q: So, early childhood was quite exciting, huh? (laughter) Do you have any recollections of your family life at home other than that instance? What were your family get-togethers like?

SB: Just with relatives, yes.

Q: On Sunday they would get together?

SB: Oh, on Sunday, yes they would get together. Like my Uncle Tom -- Tom Yehl . . .

Mrs. Browder: They'd go from, you know, this one's house one week . . . the other house the next week.

SB: Whoever's birthday it was, why, you know, they'd come over. My Uncle Tom and his family. Of course, the old tradition, you had to have a birthday cake, you know.

Q: Sure.

SB: You had to have food. (laughs)

Q: Where did your mother do most of her shopping?

SB: Right up at town.

Q: What stores? Do you remember?

SB: Well, there was Loutsch, and then there was Dilg's.

Q: Did she ever go into Niles Center?

SB: Well . . . I guess so. My dad used to go to Glenview, too a little bit. My grandpa worked for the railroad, and he had a hand car. And he used to take the hand car. And my dad -- they'd put it on the track, pull it up to Glenview. He shopped up there at Rugen's.

Q: It was easier for him then.

SB: It was easier.

Q: Do you remember what any of your household chores were when you were growing up?

SB: Oh, yes.

Q: You didn't have a farm . . . did you have a vegetable garden?

SB: Yes. When we left here, Callie Avenue, we moved in the little house there by the  
-- what's that factory?

Mrs. Browder: It's on Lehigh, next to Harper. There's a little house. . .

SB: That little white house next to Harper.

Q: I think I know which one you're talking about,

SB: Well, that house was my grandmother's. Grandma Yehl. And we moved in there.

Q: How old were you when you moved?

SB: I was about ten years old. Nine, ten. And we lived there, and I had a garden there. We  
got a credit at school, you know, for having a garden.

Q: Oh, did you?

SB: Oh, yes. Wasn't it the superintendent used to come around and check our gardens?  
Shepard (?).

Q: Like little truck gardens or vegetable gardens?

SB: Vegetable gardens.

Q: What did you grow? What kind of vegetables?

SB: Oh, carrots and cabbage and beets. You could grow anything you wanted. He didn't care. What I liked about it, Grandma Yehl was an old-time farmer. She used to come and stay with us in the summer. And I got a big kick out of her! She'd get up at daylight, you know, and be out there in the garden, hoeing.  
(laughs)

Q: So she'd do your job. (laughs)

SB: Right. Well I didn't like it because I got scared. It was right next to a creek. And I had a lot of snakes in my garden. I didn't like them things. I carried water, too, because we would always run out of water in the summer.

Q: Where did you carry the water from?

SB: From next door, (pauses), about a half a mile. I don't know -- what'd they call the name of that place? (asks wife. . .) Do you remember? I had to get a neighbor. I had to walk about a half a mile. There was a little farm space, and then there was a woods, and these people had a drilled well. And I used to carry water. I didn't like that job because -- especially Monday mornings when my mother, when she washed, I had to make two, three trips. Sometimes four trips. It depends how much laundry she did. And I had to have a pail on each arm. That means two pails. But what are you going to do when, you know, when the water ... the well's dry. And I didn't like that.

Q: Did your mother do all of her own baking at home?

SB: Oh, yes. She had one special day for baking. She baked bread . . .

Q: What day was it?

SB: Usually on the weekend. Friday or Saturday, I don't remember anymore. But she made bread, coffee cakes, cakes . . . and I would get the chance to lick the kettles with my finger.

Q: Best part. (laughter)

SB: That's the best part. That's what I would wait for. (laughter)

Q: It sound like you were a smart little boy.

SB: (laughs)

Q: Where did you go to school?

SB: Morton Grove School right over here. And I walked there, too. So you can see how far that is from School Street all the way over there on Railroad Avenue.

Q: You walked all the time?

SB: Oh, yes.

Q: You never got a ride in the winter or when it rained?

SB: There was no rides. There was nothing around.

Q: (laughs) Do you remember any of your teachers?

SB: Sure.

Q: Who do you remember?

SB: Miss Heeney and Miss Mulvey. Yes, Miss Mulvey was the principal.

Q: What do you remember about her?

SB: A lot of things. (pauses)



Q: What grade did you have her for?

SB: I had her for sixth, seventh, and eighth. Let's see, we had three grades in one room in those days. And I had Miss Heeney for the lower grade.

Q: What was your major interest in school?

SB: Baseball. (laughter)

Q: Baseball, huh? You were really into that.

SB: Oh, yes.

Q: What other type of games did they play?

SB: That's all we knew -- baseball. We didn't have no gym. That's all. We had to play out in the field across the street.

Q: What did you do when it rained out? Did the kids just stay inside?

SB: Yes, we stayed inside. That's about all. You threw erasers at one another.  
(laughter)

Q: Sounds like fun. Did you ever get in trouble?

SB: Sure.

Q: Were you a trouble maker?

SB: No, I didn't think so, but I got into trouble.

Q: Who were some of your pals over there?

SB: Well, some of the girls, you know, they were tattler tales. They'd always tell the teachers, so we always had to get back in.

Q: So you could throw erasers at them?

SB: So we could throw an eraser at them!

Q: Who did you go to school with at the time?

SB: Artie Loutsch, Ernst Sonne, August Sonne, Teddy Jones (?) and Artie Benning (?).

Q: A whole list of the,, huh? How about the girls?

SB: Yes, there were a few girls I remember. Gladys Meyer and Ida Heppner and Josephine Heinrichs (?). She was out champion spelling whiz.

Q: Did you go to school nine months out of the year or did you go less frequently than they do today?

SB: I went the regular term. Nine months.

Q: You said you were born here in Morton Grove?

SB: Yes.

Q: Were you born in the home that you lived in originally right over here on Callie?

SB: Yes.

Q: What kind of medical attention did your mother use?

SB: We had our own doctor, Dr. Drostenfels.

Q: How was the doctor notified when a woman was about to give birth?

SB: Well, you had to go over there. You had to go to his house.

Q: Someone had to go get him?

SB: Yes. My dad would go over to the house.

Q: How about home remedies? Did your parents have any?

SB: Sure. If your mother didn't have them, your grandmother did. (laughs)

Q: Did they mix up any concoctions?

SB: Well, I know of them. I see them do it, but I never knew what was in it.  
I didn't pay no attention to it, you know.

Q: Now we're into entertainment and recreation. And I'm sure this one, you're just full of goodies. (laughter) Did you go to a lot of dances when you were a young man?

SB: Yes. Like the Fireman's Dance. Well, Irv Dilg's, yes. They had a big dance hall there. Whoever put on a dance, we'd go to that. The firemen put on a dance there, too.

Q: What year were you married?

Mrs. Browder: In '31.

Q: How did you meet each other? At a dance?

SB: Oh, I met her through a friend of mine, Richie Lochner.

Q: Oh, how did that happen?

Mrs. Browder: They were pals.

SB: Yes, we were out together and . . .

Mrs. Browder: And he saw me. (laughs)

SB: That was it.

Q: And what, he translated the message back to you?

SB: Yes. The Lord says, "That one's for you." (laughter)

Q: And the rest is history, right?

Mrs. Browder: So I was stuck with him. (laughs)

Q: What did you do for dates?

SB: I wouldn't let her get away.

Mrs. Browder: Well, we used to go down to the movie, down, like uptown, Granada and all those. Then you'd have to stand 90-minute wait before you would get in. We didn't mind.

SB: We'd hold hands. (laughter)

Q: So you took her to dances and movies?

SB: Sure.

Q: Good. What type of music did they supply at the dances? What kind of instruments were used?

SB: Well, regular orchestra. A local orchestra like Clarence Dahm had an orchestra. He was from Morton Grove here. And he played in most of the dances around. You know, for the fire department and things like that.

Q: How about picnics? I know there were a lot of them.

SB: Morton Grove Days.

Mrs. Browder: Well, there was a picnic over here at that -- remember there was a picnic grove in the . . .

SB: Miller's Grove. Yes.

Q: Where was that located?

SB: On Lincoln Avenue where that restaurant is there. You know where Loutsch's Market used to be?

Q: Yes.

SB: Across the street . . .

Q: Where Villa Toscana is?

SB: Yes. Well, in back of that used to be a big picnic grove.

Q: Who was Miller's Grove named after?

SB: Well, Johnny Miller that's head of the park board. President of the park board, his father had that tavern in there years ago.

Q: Did they have a lot of parades for Morton Grove Days?

SB: Yes.

Q: Were you ever in any parades?

SB: No.

Q: Who was the fireman now in the family?

SB: Mt grandfather and my dad.

Q: Your grandfather was one of the original men?

SB: He was one of the originals.

Q: Do you know anything more about that? How they got their uniforms? How they were started?

SB: They're volunteers. Bought their own uniforms, I guess. Everything was volunteer.

Q: And how would the men know when there was a fire in town? How were they notified?

SB: I guess they had a bell. Somebody would go over there and start the bell ringing. Then everybody would run over to the fire station, and they'd find out when they got there.  
You know, where the fire was.

Q: Were there ever any special events in town?

Mrs. Browder: I don't know of any.

Q: Okay, now we get to sports. You were the baseball player.

SB: That's right.

Q: What was the name of the team you were on?

SB: Just Morton Grove team. I used to pitch.

Q: How old were you when you pitched?

SB: Eighteen, nineteen.

Q: What other teams did you play?

SB: That's why I'm still mad at her [his wife]. Because when I was pitching, her



brother got up and hit a home run off of me. (laughter) And I'm still mad at her.

Q: Was it the first game she came to?

SB: No, she'd come in the middle of the game. The game had already been started.

Q: And distracted you?

SB: That's right. You see, she distracted me.

Mrs. Browder: I'll never live that one down.

Q: Who did you play? Niles Center? Were they your greatest rival?

SB: Yes. That's right. I was playing Niles Center.

Q: Where did you play? Where was the field?

SB: Oh, across from the depot. You know where the old depot was?

Q: Yes, on this side of the tracks?

SB: Yes, right across at the forest preserve over here.

Q: Did you have uniforms for that?

SB: Yes, we did.

Q: Did you win the championship title?

SB: No, I was . . . no, it's all her fault. (laughter)

Q: Oh, it's all her fault. Okay. (laughs) Make sure that gets in the record.  
Where did you boys all go swimming?

SB: Well, the gravel pit down here.

Q: Off of Lincoln?

SB: Yes.

Mrs. Browder: And then back at Poehlmann's.

SB: Now if you want to know how that gravel pit got there . . . Grandma Yehl owned property down there. And that goes way back. You see, when the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul laid the railroad track here, they had to have gravel. And they bought in the gravel from Grandma Yehl. That's how the gravel pit got there. They took the gravel out of there to lay along the tracks.

Q: So, as a result, it left a gravel pit there when they took the gravel out.

SB: Yes. And a lot of the boys used to come from Skokie -- her brother and a bunch of guys from Skokie used to come down here to Morton Grove to swim in the gravel pit.

Q: Was it pretty big?

SB: Yes, it was a pretty big size.

Q: Was anyone ever hurt there? Was there ever a drowning or anything?

SB: No, I don't think so. I know one thing. One time (laughs), us boys went over there. There was a bunch of girls in there. Us kids wanted to go swimming. And Mrs. Henry Phillips was there with, I don't know if they had three or four girls. And us boys, we all swam in there naked, you know. (laughter) And, she said. "Well, you boys. Well, I know you wanna swim." So, we had to make some kind of an arrangement, so she got her girls out of there, so we could get our clothes off so we could do in, get in the water (laughter)

Q: You made her leave?

SB: Yes.

Q: How about fishing?

SB: Not here, though.

Q: Not in the river?

SB: Not around here. I used to go fishing with my uncle, but not here. Twin Lakes.

Q: How about ice skating?

SB: On the river.

Mrs. Browder: I used to come up here, too, and go ice skating on the river.

SB: Yes, we had a beautiful place. Called it "hobo island."

TAPE ONE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

SB: . . . (conversation joined in progress) . . . There's a piece of the river t  
here and that used to freeze over. Then you'd go across the river and up to  
the island with your sled. We used to build a bonfire on this island. Then all the kids  
would come over there. We'd put our skates on. Skate down the river. Go all the way  
out to Edgebrook.

Q: Why was it called hobo island? Were there, in fact, actual hobos?

SB: Well, that's the name it got. Years ago, there used to be a lot of hobos worked  
for Poehlmann Brothers. They used to sleep in the woods. That's how they got the

Idea to call it hobo island. Hobos. (laughs) In fact, some hobos they broke in a house when I lived down the way there.

Q: Really?

SB: Yes.

Q: Well, did they get anything?

SB: Well, I came home from school, and this particular day, my mother had gone downtown shopping. She went on the train. And when I come home from school, you know, 3:30, 4:00 probably. And when I went around the house, I see the window was open. They had taken an ax out of the work shed and broke the window open. He climbed in the house. So I went around the house, and I went over to the greenhouse where my dad was working. He worked for Poehlmann Brothers. And I got him. He got my uncle out of the bank. My uncle run the bank here in Morton Grove. They went back to see if they could catch these guys, but they were gone. They stole my cornet. I had a cornet. And I don't know if they got anything else or not, but my cornet was gone.

Q: So you were a musician, too?

SB: Yes.

Q: What church did your family belong to?

SB: Well, now let's see. Should I start with the beginning. I was born and raised Catholic. And my mother died when I was thirteen. Then I was raised by my grandmother, so then I didn't go to church. And then when I met my wife, then I took the Lutheran instruction and I joined the Lutheran Church.

Q: Which one?

SB: Over here.

Q: So you were confirmed?

SB: Yes. I got confirmed over here.

Q: How about transportation in early Morton Grove when you were a boy? What do you remember about the roads? A lot of them might not have been paved.

SB: No, they were dirt roads.

Q: What did you use to get around? What did your dad have?

SB: Well, . . .

Q: Any horses or anything?

SB: No. See my dad worked at Poehlmann's. Yes, he'd walk. We didn't have a horse.

Q: When did you get your first car?

SB: My dad bought an old Ford, old Model T Ford one time.

Q: Can you remember how old you were?

SB: Yes, I must have been about fifteen. I know what he paid for it -- \$190.  
(laughs)

Q: Oh, gee. Did you drive it?

SB: Yes, I did. That's how I learned to drive.

Q: What newspaper did you say your family had read last time I was here.

SB: Chicago *Daily News*.

Q: How did most of the news travel other than newspapers in town? Just word-of-mouth?

SB: Yes.

Q: It got around. When did you get your first telephone?

Mrs. Browder: I think it was when you lived with your grandma, right?

SB: I think so. Because we didn't have any on Railroad Avenue I know. We didn't even have any electric down there.

Q: Do you remember any big fires that were in town here or in Niles Center that your father or your grandfather may have fought?

SB: Yes, I do. Nieman's. Yes, where the Morton House stands right here. They had a fire there.

Q: Did your dad go to that one?

SB: I don't know, but I was there. (laughs) Mrs. Nieman had that one side of that building. She had a store and it had candy in it. And us kids, I remember that place was on fire, and us kids used to run in there, and get a handful of candy and run out. (laughter)

Q: What was it, a restaurant and a store?

SB: Yes, the other part was a tavern.

Q: What other fires? Any other big ones?

SB: (laughs)

Q: Didn't Niles Center have a big one?



SB: Well, now wait a minute. There's some more fires, too.

Q: Any other ones in town here that your father might have gone to?

SB: Those days they were all small ones.

Q: Anyone involved in World War I in the family?

SB: No.

Q: Do you remember the dedication of the monument over there by the library now -- that doughboy statue?

SB: Yes.

Q: Were you at that?

SB: My aunt was president of the Woman's War Working Circle.

Q: What was her name?

SB: Myrtle Scharenberg.

Q: Was there a picnic or a parade?

SB: Yes, there was. It was a big event.

Q: Do you remember all the roadhouses out there on Dempster?

SB: Yes. Sure.

Q: Did you ever go to any?

SB: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me about one or two?

SB: Yes. There was the Lincoln Tavern, there was The Dells, there was the Village Inn. In fact, I went to high school with one of the girls. Adelle, her name was. Adelle Craig (?). Her father run the Village Inn. And we used to go to her birthday parties. And they were really birthday parties! Because we had the best food, the best of everything. Believe me . . .

Mrs. Browder: . . . the Lincoln Tavern -- how you kids used to sit out there and just listen to the music.

SB: Oh, we used to sit outside, yes. On the sidewalk. Because they always had the windows open in the summertime and we used to listen to the music, you know.

Q: Did any of them have shows, like sort of a nightclub show?

SB: Yes, that's why we'd sit outside . . . so we could see it. The Lincoln Tavern you could see in, but The Dells you couldn't see in. They had a lot of trees

Around The Dells and everything, but the building was up higher. I can tell you about The Dells, too. The woman's name was Mrs. Pine. And this kid I went to school with -- Harry Eisner -- his father was a waiter over there. And we used to go over there, not in the evening, but in the afternoon, and she knew us. She'd invite us into the kitchen there. The back porch was all screened in and they had a lot of tables out there. Set us two kids down, and we'd get a big bowl of ice cream, you know. Boy!

Q: Must have been nice.

SB: That was something.

Q: So you actually never really went into these because you weren't old enough?

SB: Oh, we weren't old enough, no. we were kids then, you know.

Q: But all of them had booze?

SB: Oh, well, I don't know. We were never inside. I mean, I don't know . . . my father, well, he was in them, yes. And my uncle, Herb Scharenberg, you know, he run the bank here. And the mayor of Morton Grove, Herb Dilg, and the big wheels, well, they would go to these places like The Dells and Lincoln Tavern. They would get in, you know.

Q: Was there gambling, too, in any of them?

SB: I really couldn't say. Maybe if you talk to somebody, probably older, that had been in those places.

Q: Now I realize that this is going back a little big, too, but do you remember the airport in Morton Grove?

SB: Yes.

Q: North of Dempster there?

SB: Yes. That was right across the street from The Dells.

Q: And did you ever get a ride?

SB: No.

Q: Did you at least go and watch?

SB: Oh, yes I was over there all the time. In fact, I used to pal around with Sonne. Augie Sonne. Him and I went to school together. And Ernst, too. Ernst was a little older than I. But Ernst and my cousin they palled together -- Herb Scharenberg.

Mrs. Browder: That's Ernst's brother-in-law that built the airport, wasn't it Boettcher?

SB: Dick Boettcher, yes.

Mrs. Browder: We almost took a ride in one of those planes.

SB: Yes, one time . . .

Q: What did they charge?

SB: I don't remember.

Mrs. Browder: It was on a Sunday afternoon. He was going to take me up in this plane and go for a ride . . .

SB: We almost did, didn't we?

Mrs. Browder: I didn't go.

Q: How big was it? Was it surrounded by woods?

SB: Oh, that was a big field. It went way back as far as the forest preserve.

Q: Where Park View School is there?

SB: Yes.

Q: That's far.

SB: Oh, yes it went way back.

Mrs. Browder: And these little puddle-jumper planes. That's why I wouldn't go.

Q: Did a lot of people go up?

Mrs. Browder: Oh, I think so.

SB: Tell me, if you see Hermina (Boettcher), you tell her you talked to me. She knows Herb because Herb Scharenberg and I and Ernst and Augie, we used to sleep over there at the Sonne's overnight.

Q: Oh, okay. She's very nice.

SB: She was there. I remember those days.

Q: How about the Depression years? Did it hit you particularly hard?

SB: I managed to keep working.

Q: Where were you working at the time?

SB: Des Plaines. I was a butcher.

Q: Now were you a butcher when you first got married?

SB: Yes.

Mrs. Browder: He was, what?, seventeen when you started?

Q: How many years were you a butcher?

Mrs. Browder: You worked at the school eight years. You retired -- seven, you were seventeen when you started. That's about fifteen years that you weren't a butcher, right?

SB: Yes.

Mrs. Browder: And you're 69. So you were about 54.

SB: About that, yes.

Q: At the time, I know it affected the bank here in Morton Grove. It collapsed. Did that affect you any?

SB: Okay, I'll tell you about the bank, too. My dad was a stockholder there. My uncle, Herb Scharenberg, started the bank here in Morton Grove. And my dad was a stockholder, my grandma was a stockholder. And Poehlmann's was a big stockholder. And when it went broke in the Depression, of course, everybody felt it, you know. Made it bad for everybody.

Q: How about when World War II came around? Anybody in the family involved in that?

SB: No, they didn't get me.

Mrs. Browder: His tube of blood, was either broken or lost in the mail, so he had to go for another blood test. In the meantime, they . . .

SB: They changed the age limit.

Q: Boy, that's cutting it close. Where did the two of you live when you first got married?

Mrs. Browder: On Fernald Avenue with his grandmother.

SB: Yes, 8544.

Q: So by the time the 1950s came around, there was a big building boom just beginning here. Do you remember any of that?

SB: Yes, but nobody had any money.

Q: Do you remember the ice cream wagon that used to come around here when you were kids?

SB: Not me. She does.

Mrs. Browder: See when he lived on Lehigh there, on Railroad Avenue, well, it



Never went down that way. I think it did come from town here, but it never went down your street because there weren't many houses there.

SB: There wasn't that many houses in Morton Grove years ago.

Mrs. Browder: . . . every Sunday in Niles Center. We waited for it.

Q: Do you remember anything else about Poehlmann's? How many employees they employed? What was their going wage?

SB: Well, there was only one figure I knew. My dad made \$35 a weel. That was the going wage -- \$35. And that went on for years. I remember (laughs) John Fink asked for a dollar wage, because he was making, I don't know, \$34 and he wanted to make it an even \$35, and Poehlmann wouldn't even give him a dollar raise. Can you imagine that?

Q: Who was in charge over there then? Who was your father's boss? Which Poehlmann?

SB: Oh, August Poehlmann. The other one was Adolph Poehlmann.

Q: Did most men from town work at Poehlmann's?

SB: Yes. You see there was only this many homes in Morton Grove. When I was a little boy, I was in every house in Morton Grove. Because we were all related. Tom Yehl, he was foreman over at Poehlmann's. Matt Yehl, he lived over there on Lincoln Avenue. He was a foreman at Poehlmann's. He was foreman of the rose

division, and Tom Yehl he grew lily-of-the-valley and a lot of miscellaneous stuff over there. There were just a few homes in Morton Grove. There was only a few streets. Now, you take Lincoln Avenue, that was a dirt road. And there was only Forest Avenue and then the next street was this street. That was all. This was a farmhouse here . . .

Mrs. Browder: This was all in here, wasn't it? From the school? Morton Grove School?

SB: That came later. You can see on the building over there. That came later. That was built in 1897.

Q: When the Depression came and that business failed, I would think there'd be a lot of people out of work.

SB: They were. My dad worked for the mosquito abatement. You know, he'd take anything to get a job. That was a political job. Wasn't much pay in it, but it was a little money anyhow. And my dad's boss was, uh, what was it? Tony Gabel (?), and he worked for the WPA right?

Mrs. Browder: Right.

SB: All these people that got laid off and couldn't find a job, the government had to give them work, to put them on WPA. See the government paid him so much a week to work. Just think this man, Tony Gabel (?), was my dad's foreman. He was foreman at Poehlmann Brothers, and he went to work for WPA. And he rented from

Henry Loutsch, because he lived upstairs above the market, and he couldn't even pay his rent because he had no money. And Loutsch, he didn't want to put him out because he couldn't get nobody that could rent the place that had any money anyhow. But he owed him, I don't know, about four or five months rent. He had a sister in Park Ridge. I think it was his wife's sister in Park Ridge. He moved in with her over there. Of course, when I worked in Des Plaines, he used to take the bus from Park Ridge and he worked up at Des Plaines on WPA where they put in a swimming pool, and they put in a park building. And that's where he worked. They put a lot of men in there to work.

Q: Can you imagine if there wouldn't have been a WPA what would have happened to some of these people?

Mrs. Browder: People would have starved if they hadn't had some kind of work.

Q: Well, since the two of you are together, is there anything you can tell me about when you were dating? Any other experiences of funny things you used to do?  
(laughs) I like the baseball one.

Mrs. Browder: That's about the only one I remember. You know, we had good times. I mean, it was just nothing spectacular.

Q: You've got written down here your dog -- a poodle.

SB: Well, my dad got this dog, a poodle, for nothing over at Nieman's Tavern. The guy says, "You like dogs. I know you pet them and everything." He says, "Perry

(Stanley's father), you want that dog? Take him! Take him home with you."

(laughs) He was a blood poodle. So my dad come home with a dog, and my mother was going to sweep the kitchen. So she goes and gets the broom. And the dog was laying in the corner there. She started to sweep the kitchen and the dog flew across the kitchen and grabbed a hold of that broom. So evidently they must have beat the dog with a broom. Soon as he seen that broom, boy! did he make a beeline for it. So we couldn't have the dog any more. My mother wasn't going to put up with that dog. He was old already. He was no pup anymore. So finally we got rid of him. We didn't keep him very long. We got rid of him. (laughs)

Q: Did you ever travel before or after you were married?

SB: Yes, we went to California how many times?

Mrs. Browder: Seven.

SB: My daughter lives in California. My sister, too, lives there. So we've been out there a lot of times.

Q: After Grove School, did you have any more schooling?

SB: Yes, Lane Tech.

Q: How did you get there? Train?

SB: On the bus. Got the bus here and went over to Western Avenue. Took the el from Western Avenue to Division and Sedgwick.

Q: Did a lot of the farmers in the area here ship out their goods by train? Do you know?

Mrs. Browder: They used to take it down when I was a kid, with a horse and a wagon. Load all of it on a wagon and take it down to Chicago. But then later on, we got a truck.

Q: Was there a lot of traffic going in and out of the depot over here at the time or was it more like just a little stop?

SB: It was just a little stop.

Q: And it burned once, didn't it?

SB: Oh, I think, I remember. Yes, I think they had a fire once, but it wasn't much. I mean it didn't burn completely down or anything. That's another job my dad had one time. He used to take care of a boiler over there in the depot. You know, side job in the wintertime. I used to go with him.

Q: Was anyone in the family involved with politics?

SB: No, just my uncle, George Harrer. He was mayor, you know. He's the only one.

Q: Well this was a good interview. Thank you . . .

SB: It was my pleasure.

W: If there's anything else before I turn it off, here's your shot. Who did your sister end up marrying?

SB: She married Fred Frees. He had a tavern here in Morton Grove at the corner of Lincoln and Fernald.

Q: Was that where the Bringer Inn Was?

SB: Yes, that one.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B ENDS