

Narrator: LaVerne DiSalvo
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8842 Menard, Morton Grove
Interviewer: Priscilla Godeman
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INTRODUCTION

LaVerne DiSalvo was born in 1917 on Fernald Avenue in Morton Grove and has lived here all her life. LaVerne remembers many things about earlier Morton Grove when she was a child and teen growing up. She mentions the old businesses of Poehlmann's Greenhouses, Brook's Floral Shop, Frank's Department Store, the local shoemaker and candy store the children would visit on a Sunday. During these particular years, the town had a fruit man, ice man and coal man that LaVerne remembers coming through town for the service of the people.

In her remembrances of Morton Grove, LaVerne mentions many well-known local names of neighbors, classmates, and friends. She especially highlights the many forms of entertainment there was in Morton Grove. Among the activities mentioned are roller and ice skating, dances at St. Paul Park, church picnics and the school festival held every year.

LD: LaVerne DiSalvo

Q: Question asked by interviewer, Priscilla Godeman

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

Q: Let's start with your ancestors' history. Can you give me your grandparents' names?

LD: Sure. My grandfather's name was Mr. Christ Guenther, and my grandmother's name was Mr. Sophie Guenther. That was also her maiden name. They both had the same name. It was just a coincidence her name was Guenther, too. That's on my father's side. Now, on my mother's side was Mr. Christ Pfeiffer and my grandmother's name was Mrs. Frieda Suhr. Now, my parents' names were Mr. William Guenther and my mother's name was Mrs. Amelia Pfeiffer Guenther. My father was born in a place in Skokie called Sharp Corner. And my mother was born -- it was a part of Morton Grove, I think, off of Waukegan Road, and it was called at that time Battle Hill. That was the name of that particular section. They both were born and raised in Morton Grove.

Q: Just where was Battle Hill?

LD: Up there by Dilg's, up by Waukegan Road.

Q: Waukegan and what?

LD: Well, it was probably up there by Waukegan and Golf Road. Up in that section somewhere. I know she always talked about Battle Hill. My father worked at the First National Bank in Chicago, and he was in the accounting department. That was his job in the Loop downtown. My mother was just a housewife. She had five children.

Earl was the oldest and he's deceased now, but he was born May the 30th, 1916. Then I was born, LaVerne Guenther DiSalvo, and that was October the 6th in 1917. I have a sister Bernice Guenther DiSalvo, and she was born May the 1st, 1919. Roy Guenther was born January the 2nd, 1920. And Billy, my youngest brother, he was born July the 28th, 1928.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your childhood and where you lived and the kind of house it was.

LD: Well, my birthday was October 6th, 1917, and I was born in Morton Grove on Fernald Avenue. It was a small frame house on Fernald and at that time I think it was Mrs. Lump's house. I can't remember the number of the house, but it was not far from the Lutheran Church.

Earl and I were born there, and then later on my parents bought a house on Georgiana Avenue right across from the Catholic Church. The person that lived in there in the later years was Catherine Neilson (?), but it was a little frame house right next to Carsons. It was right in there. My mother and dad had all four of us in this particular house. I remember my father taking me to Sunday School over at the Lutheran school there.

We had a real happy childhood, but my father didn't live very long. From that house then as the family grew -- we had four children -- they bought a home,

8711 on School Street. My father died in 1927 at Christmas time, and Billy was born after my father died on School Street. So my mother had five children to raise by herself.

She was a janitress at the Morton Grove Public School. She built a flat upstairs and I remember Anna and "Heine" (Henry) Lange were our tenants downstairs when they were newlyweds, I think. So anyway, my mother raised all us kids there. We lived upstairs and they lived downstairs. She worked very hard.

As we grew up, well, we were right in back of the Lincoln Tavern. Now, the Lincoln Tavern was a nightclub at that time. They used to have all kinds of floor shows there, and we would crawl over the fence at night -- we never had a lot of money, so we'd go over and all these ritzy people would come up there and they'd park all their nice cars out there. We'd crawl up on top of there; we'd scrape all these real rich people's cars all up. And the cops would come, and in Morton Grove at this time, there only were two cops. There was John Stegmeyer and then Mr. George "Buck" Fredricks. When the cops would come around the block, we'd all fall down in the bushes.

I remember there were two girls in my neighborhood and their names were Myrtle Bremer and her sister, (Lillian Bremer Lutz). Ted Weems Orchestra was playing at that particular time at the Lincoln Tavern there. I remember Meta and Carl Godeman were going out together and they would come over there. Well, there were just all the people in town when the music would play and the windows would be open. It was like a little hang-out there. We put boards up against there and lots of times the people would be eating inside and I'd be looking right in their faces. You know, I's day, "Oh, my God," but this was a big thing to me. Anyhow, we grew up in this particular neighborhood.

There was the Dells over here; it was at Dempster and Austin and it was right on the corner there. That was another big nightclub. We'd see all these cars come in and they were all people that had a lot of money. They'd put on some of the beautiful bands. Ted Lewis, I remember, and, well, anyone popular in that day would come there. But there you didn't have kind of the opportunity to look into the windows and stuff like you did -- I was more familiar with the Lincoln Tavern than I was with that.

I remember when the streets were paved in Morton Grove. There were only four streets in Morton Grove. There was Lincoln Avenue, Ferris, Callie, Fernald, and Austin Avenue. Along there was Huscher's Woods in this particular section, but those were the streets. I remember them being paved.

There were two stores. There was Frank's Department Store. Well, everybody went there. When my mother couldn't get paid at the school during the Depression, they'd give her a bond and then she'd go over by Frank's Department Store and she had to buy something there in order to get her money, because during the Depression people here didn't have any money.

My grandfather worked for the greenhouses. He worked for both plants. He worked for Plant A and he worked for Plant B.

Q; Now was that Poehlmann's?

LD: That's Poehlmann's. He worked there, in fact, all their lives. Joseph Hohs had the eating place. It was right on Fernald Avenue there and across was the tavern. They'd all come after work, and my mother worked at the greenhouse with her three sisters. She was eighteen at the time. There was Elsie Ahrens and Helen Behneke and my mother's name was Millie. She was the oldest one. Mrs.

Lumpp and then Anna Lumpp -- they all worked together. I remember as a small child my grandfather had to work sometimes on Sunday, and he'd take us in and they'd have all these wholesale (flowers) -- all the roses would be laid out there and he'd take us through the greenhouse. It was a big thing.

I remember when the cars first came out. One time my uncle got a brand-new car and it used to have fenders on it and the curtains were snapped on. It used to be important on a Sunday to go for a ride. They'd say, "you want to go for a ride?" and I can remember my grandfather would get in the car and she'd say, "Don't ride near the lake." She was afraid in those days. But I do remember the cars and they used to crank them, you know, when they came out.

I remember Hammy (Willard Hand) -- he used to be the caddy at Glenview (Glen View Golf Club) where the kids used to caddy. I remember Johnny (her husband) -- when I first even met him he caddied at Glen View. I think it's why he liked golfing, because he got involved up there. Instead of hanging around in town, all the kids would go up there and they'd caddy and make a couple of dollars and come home.

Then I even remember the Vegetable Growers over there. My grandma worked in the onion factory. One time there was an onion factory behind the Vegetable Growers. They used to sort out onions. There was Mrs. Hirsack and Mrs. Anna Steller and then my grandmother. They would make a couple dollars.

Brook's Floral Shop was down on Lincoln Avenue. That was there a long, long time. And there used to be a place on Austin Avenue -- I remember people there. They used to sell -- it was in Harrer's old house. They used to candle eggs and do eggs in there.

Behind the Vegetable Growers they had a tulip place where they used to sort

all kinds of tulip bulbs. Johnny used to bring me flowers from in there. They used to plant the tulip bulbs.

We got out mail over by Lillian Dilg, right on the corner up there in the old Dilg building. We used to have little boxes where we'd go get out mail. I still remember our number -- it was 195. My mother, she never could do the combination, so I remember Earl and I were growing up -- we had to go down for the mail there every day. Lilly Dilg wasn't always the friendliest lady. Some days she had a bad day and Earl and I would come there and upset her day. We'd forget what the combination was and -- well, at least we ended up fighting who was going to get this mail, because it was always a project. And my mother would never know, because I don't think she even knew half of the time the number. She'd sooner send us kids, right?

I remember the dances they had up there up at the Dilg's hall. Lot of nice dances, and that's how I really met Johnny, because every Saturday night we'd go to the dance. We really were not like high school sweethearts, but we'd meet at the dance up there. We were seventeen and eighteen and he'd usually walk me home. We didn't have cars in those days. But it was always a fun time. They had Miller's Hall. We'd go there on dances. I can remember Helen and Hank (Henry) Eckhardt. We had a regular group that would always meet at Miller's Hall. They had a lot of good bands and good things. It was always a fun time.

Saturday night in the town you didn't have to have a car, not really. If you went to a show, you usually would hire a cab and you'd get the Skokie Swift to go to Hubbard Street. Saturday night if you didn't have anything or Sunday night, a whole bunch would meet up there. They had floor shows there and we'd go. We used to always meet Mr. and Mrs. Bertonci. They would always catch the el and sometimes we'd come home together. They lived out here a long time.

Johnny used to skate on the river. He'd go from Morton Grove on -- they called that Hobo Island, and he'd skate all the way to Edgebrook. I think that's why the kids used to all be good skaters, you know. We used to spend a whole day sometimes. Bernice Steller and I -- we were all girlfriends all our lives. We'd sometimes work all day putting a pair of skates together, and we knew the best streets in town which were usually in front of the Lutheran Church, because the streets were smooth there. We could find a spot where we could skate. I remember we had these clamp skates. Of course, we never had any money and all. Sometimes my soles would be like this (laughter), wouldn't have any clamps on it, you know, so many straps.

Ice skating -- we used to skate back of the school. They'd flood it or the river or wherever. I never could ice skate. I'd always end up horse-backing it home. Johnny -- on his back. I always had weak ankles. (laughter) I never was a skater, but it was fun. Like I said, we never had any money.

We went to grammar school over here, and I remember the kindergarten teacher's name was Miss Nitz. Then we had Miss Schneider and Miss Osborn and Mr. Etherton. Marvin Huels was in my class, and he used to sit around me and he always used to take a pen and poke you. (laughter) We had stick pens with the ink in the corner of the desk where we would do our writing.

We had a music teacher. She used to have a little mouth organ. I can't remember her name. She'd give us a toot, you know she'd (makes sound). Everybody in the class, you know, they'd (hums). The boys would be bored to death. We used to have coat rooms out in the hall where we used to hang our coats on a hook. She (music teacher) was always usually at the end of the day. I remember (laughs) everybody was humming in there -- one by one the kids would sneak out. They'd go in the hall, because she had kind of a little crooked

mouth and she was trying to sing. But then we'd always end up staying because there was always somebody that didn't listen to what she said.

We had basketball teams in school. I remember the sports. They were fun. We had little plays we'd put on at the school. When we first started out they had an old portable for a school there. It was one teacher that taught. Her name was Miss Conopa. She still taught in her later years. When my mother was a janitress there at the school, Gretchen Loutsch was a teacher there. My mother used to know her; she used to talk with her.

We used to have a scout master when we were growing up. His name was Mr. Clark. I don't know if many of these people will remember Mr. Clark, but he was a fantastic man. He loved the Boy Scouts and he was a real soft-spoken man. Every boy in town loved to go to this, because Mr. Clark was the kind of a man that he just had a way with kids. He'd take pictures, and he was there for quite a few years. I often wonder if he moved or where he went. He was just a great man. We used to have it over at the school. I'm sure there's a lot of kids that went when he was there.

When somebody would get married in town, we would make shivaree. Now, nobody knows what shivaree is. My son said, "Mother, what's shivaree?" I said, "When somebody got married in town, you'd get old pots and pans and you'd make shivaree. The groom would come out on the porch and he'd give you money, because this was just a custom." I remember when Molly Gabel and Art Gabel got married. They lived in a house on Fernald Avenue.

The sirens went in the back. Twelve o'clock noon -- the sirens ran every day. It was a custom -- that twelve o'clock noon. The church bells tolled in the

town when somebody died, and you knew if it was an old person or you knew it was a young person, because you'd count the tolls of the bell. When you'd hear the church bells ring, then you'd already start counting, because you'd say, "Oh, a young person died in town." The town was only about twelve to fifteen hundred. It wasn't that many people.

During the Depression, why, you really didn't do a lot of things. You did things like skating and going around because nobody had any money in here. But anyway, Flatau's Bakery was there, and that was one bakery in town. I remember my aunt married Pete Frers and he drove a wagon for Flatau's. he was there for years, and you could smell that rye bread over the whole neighborhood when they would bake bread.

Then we had a man out here; he used to deliver fruit. I don't know if anybody will remember him, but he was Italian and he would come with his fruit wagon through town. He had a scale that hung on the end of his wagon, and all the fresh fruits he would get from the market downtown. He'd start from the front, down each street, he'd holler, "Shitavitavee." That's the way everybody knew him, but he'd say it real loud. When you heard that noise, the women would have their aprons on with their change in their pocket and they'd go walk to the wagon in the front and they'd pick out whatever fruit they wanted and pay him. He had a regular route. I don't know if he came every day or if he came twice a week. I don't remember.

Q: I wanted to go back to the Italian. What was it that he called out?

LD: Shitavitavee.

Q: What does that mean?

LD: I don't know. It was just a name that he had, but when they would hear this name, they'd all go out.

Q: I thought maybe it meant something.

LD: It probably did mean something to him, but that was always like his signal that you knew he was coming. When you'd hear that noise, already the women would walk to the corner. He had two sons. I think later on he even had property that he bought up here, but he was just a custom thing. He would come here.

Then there was Tango -- he was the ice man. He worked for Huscher's. The ice man would pull up and they'd chip off the ice and they'd put it on, with that leather thing. You'd put your sign in the window. If you wanted 50 pounds today maybe or 25 pounds, you'd put your sign in your front window. He would drive by and stop and you'd get your ice. That was the way they had the ice man and that was the way they had the fruit man.

Then there was the shoemaker. He lived right where the police station used to be on Callie. You know where the police station is?

LD: There was a little red house there. It was like a little red barn or something. He was the shoemaker in Morton Grove. We used to call him Shuster Puckpuck (?). That was the term we had for him. He'd sole boots and he'd fix soles of your shoes. He was the only one in town.

Well, of course, Loutsch's were always there. I remember the tavern across from Loutsch's and I remember some of the songs they used to play. We used to go over there, too, and listen to them. It was like a tavern; Mr. Muller had the tavern there. People would go there. Johnny's dad was at Glenview first. Then after while he came to Morton Grove. Him and Irish (Howard Alfred) were barbers down here for years and years and years. They had a barber shop on Lincoln Avenue before they came to Fernald Avenue. I still got some old pictures of the old barber shop with the wood stove for coal and the wood when they first started out.

Now I have to stop and think. They used to have stores even on Lincoln Avenue at that tie. Leo Milke was on the corner during the Depression. He had that corner store and you had to stand in line to get ration tickets. It was hard to get, so sometimes you'd stand there all day. Well, a lot of people got black market butter and things that you knew someone, but I remember during the war we had to stand in line if we wanted to get something, because they were limited only a certain amount. But he was the man most of the time for the groceries.

The airplane field was over here on Dempster Street, and we used to live on School Street after my father died. We used to walk there and I remember Johnny and I even going there. We were young, but we'd go. The Sonnes were always involved in the airplane field, because they used to have pilots and everything. I remember playing with Billy Sonne and Julius Sonne -- more my age, and they used to have all kinds of old cars out in the back where they would be on wheels or blocks or something. We used to spend our days going in and out of those cars. We'd spend all day playing with them.

I remember playing on Fernald Avenue with Gabe Tierney and Mary Tierney and his dad was head of the Legion then, years and years ago. They were Irish. They had a big barn in the back of their house, a big garage. We used to put on floor shows there. We were growing up as kids, you know. Well, we're going down the alley; we're going to play with the Tierneys. The boys were a little older, but we'd build curtains and we'd put on shows in there and we'd go home and have a good time there. In fact, I think Gabe Tierney's still living; I see him come out.

Morton Grove Days was a big thing in town. It was always a big doing. There was always something going on. In those days, we'd have baseball teams. I remember we'd have the Lutheran church against the Catholic church for the girl's baseball team. At three o'clock we'd have baseball games going. I'll tell you, it was really funny, because I remember I was catcher and my sister played third base. The Heidtke girls -- one was a pitcher. But it was a fun time. We'd spend hours practicing out there. The Winandys and the Huschers and all them would be practicing on their lot, and then we'd get together. I don't even remember half the time who'd win, but I know a lot of times Johnny would be the umpire in those days. It was a fun time in Morton Grove. It was a big time.

Water fights were important. Six o'clock, that would be the start of the evening fun. They'd put the barrel up there on the wire and then they'd have different communities for the fire department to have the water fights.

Oh, and they used to have baseball teams. It would be Sunday, and they would have baseball teams right across from the depot and all the kids in town would play. There was Tommy Kaufmann and Bob Kaufmann and then there was Itch (Edward Godeman) and Reinhardt Lange and that would be a baseball team. You'd go over and they'd play community baseball with different ones. It was really fun.

People would come out and they'd root. They had stands in there; it was like built over there.

"Ducktown" was on the side over there. I don't know why they called it that, but it just had a name. Somebody said one time some lady had ducks back there, and that's how they got the name of "Ducktown".

Mr. Fuhr had the lumber company down there. I remember Mr. Max Finke. My father at one time was a trustee here; my gather was a volunteer fireman out here before he died when the town was young. Guenther's dad -- there were a lot of them.

That was another thing. There was always elections here and who was going to run the town. It was the Dilgs and, you know, they had all different . . .

Well, at six o'clock when all the votes were counted, and they used to count them by hand, why, that was a big thing. They'd parade through town, who won. Well, if your party won, you knew you were going to have a good time. We'd go over to Millers and kids would go along. You'd get candy bars. If the other side won, why then it wasn't that thrilling because your side didn't win. (laughter)

War Working Circle I remember, but I don't remember them as good as somebody that would be older than me. I do recall the dedication of that monument there. I remember when that was a park. My aunt and my uncle, they met in that park. They used to work out here. I was a kid and I used to get in their way all the time, because they were courting each other. Frieda Guenther was my aunt. She met her husband; his name was Tex. He worked out here then.

Q: What was the name of that park?

LD: Oh, gosh, I don't even remember the name of that park. I don't even know.

Printer's -- Meiers had the printing right on the corner there. He did all the printing in Morton Grove and I remember him and his wife and all their kids. It was a cute little park and it was just a couple benches. I do recall the monument, but I don't remember a lot of the ladies that were War Workers.

There was the called Wayside Inn. It was off of Dempster. Then there was St. Paul's Park. People would come out here from the city and they would have picnics and everything. There was a pavilion there. I remember as a kid I would go over and see if I could get in. I was always a very good runner. I was very good in track and I even took track in high school. I was always winning the prizes, because, I don't know why -- the rest of the family never could run, but I was always a runner. To this day, I would love to do that.

But anyway, my sister and I would go there. I would talk her into going. She was a year younger than me. We'd go over there and we'd bum a ticket off of somebody -- you know, somebody that was giving the picnic. We'd say, "Could you pass a ticket?" It was always something like that. Well, we'd always find somebody, so we could get through the gates. Once we were in the gates, we could do whatever they were doing in there. We did this on Sundays all the time. We'd just say, "Well, we're going over to Wayside Inn today." So my sister and I'd go there and we'd meet some fellows over there and we danced with them. Lots of times they'd hand out free tickets for ice cream and stuff. We never had money at home. My mother was a widow. So we'd go there and we'd get in -- they'd think we belonged to the picnic, you know. (laughs)

We did the same thing at St. Paul's Park. They'd have Swedish picnics, and somehow we'd get in. They had a big pavilion, and we spent many, many, a time. Even Johnny and I as we were going out together. We would go over to St. Paul's

Park. We'd dance; they'd have a lot of good bands over there. We'd just have a good time, and this was our entertainment. We never felt that we had to look for things with a lot of money. They were there. I remember Johnny's mother used to give him 50 cents to go out on a date. (laughs) What could you do with that, but, you know, in those days you'd stop for a soda or something like that. Our entertainment was that way. There was always enough stuff going on in town that we kept ourselves busy.

Then came World War II. The town was small, like I said. The town was fourteen, fifteen hundred people, maybe two thousand at most at that time. Nobody ever locked their doors here because it was a German settlement, and everybody knew each other. Now came the war. War was declared in 1941 in December. Johnny was just 20 -- we were married one month. We were married November the 8th. War was declared December the 8th, so we were married exactly one month.

Johnny Kammer -- well, he lived on Callie Avenue with his sister. That was Arnie Lindemann's wife's brother. He was single at the time. They were the first ones drafted from Morton Grove. They were right in that age. I remember when Johnny got his notice. We lived in tow rooms up on Callie Avenue. They were owned by a lady by the name of Mrs. Ox. We knew when the war was declared that he was probably going to be drafted, so we didn't want to take an apartment, so we stayed in this room.

I worked at a place in Morton Grove called Foster's Film Company. It was on Ferris Avenue and it was run by a man by the name of Mr. Foster. They made dental film. We worked in the darkroom. A lot of girls from Morton Grove. Mable and Ethel Minx and Mary Tierney worked there. A lot of people that I could name worked there. I worked there for years. He was a lovely man. He had one son and his name was Hugh. I remember we'd get a bonus at the end of the year.

My sister and I both worked there, and I think we must have worked there for at least eight, nine years in our teens.

Then later on we worked at Searle's in Skokie. Johnny was drafted and he went to Camp Grant. Him and Johnny Kammer were the first ones from Morton Grove that I recall. There were a lot of them after that, but I remember him because he was the closest to me. Anyway, he went to Camp Grant, and he was there for two years. He'd see all the boys that would come in from town. I'd write or call him and tell him, and I'd say, "So-and-so is coming in." He said, "I'll go over and meet him." He stayed there for two years. Every week he'd say, "I think I'm going to be shipped out," but he never would get shipped out. One day, he did get shipped out after two years. He went to the Hawaiian Islands and he stayed there for two years. He was in four years of the Service, but thank God, he never saw action.

During the war, they had a club out here and it was called the Pals Club. They would take care of all the Service men. I think it was every month, they would send them all the information on what went on in town. I remember when he'd come home, I'd see all this stuff in his suitcase where Pals Club had sent all the news that went on from town. They were all the ones that had sons in the Service or, you know, wives could go there or whatever, but it was a meeting like a day a month -- what should they do for the boys in the Service. It was strictly a service thing. That was during the war.

On the corner later on there was a tavern. Frees's Tavern -- Anna Frees and her dad and her mother ran it. We used to go in for cigars or whatever. Then across the street, Mr. Joseph Hohns had an eating place. He would serve all kinds of food.

In fact, when Johnny and I got married in 1941, there was a roadhouse that Fiegel's had. Frankie Fiegel and his mother and his dad. That was a place where people would have their weddings. Johnny and I were married in there. You could have a dinner there or whatever. Where Mrs. Joseph Hohs lives now, that was in there and it used to be a regular eating place. Fiegel's got to be so well known because she was such a lovely lady. She would be so nice to everybody. She was there for years. After a while, I think her husband died, and then Frankie and her ran it. It was a well known place in town where everybody would go.

Mr. Kirscht was a neighbor of ours on Fernald Avenue and he was the contractor out here. He would do all the wrecking of the houses and he would buy old houses and rebuild them. In fact, he had a son and a daughter and he would do all the fixing of all the houses. Rollie Weigt's dad was a carpenter out here. Mr. Fink was a carpenter out here. Harold Fink and Gene Fink's dad. They lived in a house over on Georgiana Avenue. If you wanted anything -- the Hennesey's. they lived out here and anything that would get broken or needed fixed, why you'd call them. They did odd jobs.

By the Lutheran School there was a bowling alley. It was a two-lane bowling alley. Everybody would go there on a Sunday afternoon. Johnny used to set pins up by hand. You'd see the boys in their undershirts in the back. But, many, many hours -- they had like a tiny little balcony up in the back like this and they'd all sit up in there, and then just these two lanes. They would be so full of people on a Sunday. They'd have entertainment. I think it was owned by the Lutheran Church, but it stood there for years and years. In our time, it was an important thing because people just came there on Sunday and that was their way of entertainment.

I remember when radios came out. My grandmother bought her first radio. We lived across the street. Like I said, we never had money. I remember "Myrt and Marge" and "Amos 'n' Andy" (weekly radio series). And that was important. "Myrt and Marge" -- that would come on a Saturday. Weekday nights they had Wednesday at seven and we'd trek across the street and we'd all sit on the floor as kids, you know. My grandma would pop us a bowl of popcorn. "Myrt and Marge" is on -- you didn't hear a peep in that room. The series went on every week. And "Amos 'n' Andy". I remember they were the beginning of it.

My father one time came home with a crystal set. You put them on your ears. And then you'd listen for a while and then he'd say, "let me have a turn. Let me have a turn." They had a little thing with a needle on, and you just had to get it in the right way in order that you'd get the set clear. But it was first coming out. I was young, but I do remember when they first came out.

We used to pick berries out here. You'd go over to patches in the neighborhoods and get the blackberries probably near the woods. I remember going all through the woods. They had the Earl Kreutz Riding Stables in there. You'd go over and the horses would track through the park all the time. Some horses were scared of the water. But you just found amusement that way.

The depot -- remember the old depot? My father used to go in the depot because he worked downtown. I remember Johnny's mother and dad, they'd get in the depot when they'd go downtown. That was a ritual. They'd go to see her sister, bring all the groceries from Taylor Street, the special groceries that they liked.

Mrs. Kaufmann had a boarding house, and Johnny used to go with Tommy and Bob, Bernice Kaufmann, Dorothy Kaufmann. They used to go fishing and do a lot of things. Julie Mailander had a boarding house right next to Art Loutsch. That

was a boarding house there in those days. Julie Mailander was the only girl, and she had brothers. They used to take all the boarders from Poehlmann's Greenhouse, and I think her mother was a widow at that time. She had one brother, they used to always call him Beans. That was his nickname. Everybody in town knew Beans. He was older; he was maybe even older than Artie Loutsch -- I don't remember.

But I remember that they used to have an Irish boarder and he was from Ireland. I can't think of his name. he used to board there for years and years. He got to be quite an old man. Then he finally went back to Ireland. There was another fellow out here who was called -- well, he was a Greek accent, and everybody knew him in town, too. He lived here for a long time. They eventually went back to their own places where they wanted to spend their later years in life.

Then we had the festivals in school. That was another thing that was real important in school. Once a year they had a festival. They'd have it at Harms Woods. It was a big thing. You would practice all year for the festival. You'd go there on trucks. A truck would pull up and they'd have benches in these trucks and all the kids from school would go there. Well, if it turned out to be a rainy day -- it usually would be in May, because that was the beginning before school was out -- well, if it was a rainy day and it could spoil the festival, you can't believe how you cried at home, because this was your festival.

You got races to run, you'd get free ice creams and it was just a special day at school and it was always in the spring. Everybody would go to the festival. You'd get your gym shoes ready, your baseball hat, and it was fun day. Everybody in school participated and you looked forward to this day. The festivals in Morton Grove went on for years. But if it turned out that it

rained, there were a lot of kids crying, because you got a blue ribbon for running in the races and there were baseball games.

Oh, and then you'd tie your ankles together. There were sack races. We used to have the wheelbarrow races. Well, there were so many. Oh, egg throwing things. It was probably just the beginning then, but there were all the different things that come out at the festivals. When it'd get to be sundown, they'd all go back on their trucks again. The kids would all come home. You'd have plenty of ice cream and you had a fun day.

Dahm's had a grocery store on Fernald Avenue, and Clarence Dahm worked for his father. Everybody went there, and I'm sure during Depression a lot of people charged. Mr. Huscher had the coal truck. He was the coal man in town. We used to have a coal bin they'd fill up. We had a hole in the side of the house where the chute went in. He'd come and he'd dump the coal in. My mother had that filled up. Sometimes she didn't have any money, sometimes she couldn't pay for it. Mr. Huscher would write her an I.O.U, and he was always good when she got it. He'd pay for it, but he knew her in town.

Then there was a little candy store on Fernald Avenue, and the lady in there's name was Mrs. Philippi. She was a little, short, fat lady, I recall. I don't know how she put up with these kids in Morton Grove, because you'd get maybe a dime or a nickel to spend in there. I know maybe a lot of people had a lot more money, but we would usually get a nickel on Sunday. We would go there, and I'd say to my brother, Earl, "I buy some soldiers," those little black soldiers, and then they had these little candy dishes with the spoon in them that we'd get. They'd have these buttons on a paper where you picked them buttons off. Somebody'd say, "I want a penny's worth of this. I want a penny's worth of that." You know, I don't know how she put up with it, but she had all the kids on

Sunday because that's where we would go. I'd say, "I'll buy ice cream, and I'll give you a couple licks on my ice cream cone if you'll give me some of your stuff that you buy." So we would kind of divvy it up that way. (laughs) This was a Sunday thing. We'd go to Sunday School and come home from there.

Dan Biesman used to toll the bells at the school. He did it by hand; he just pulled the bells. That was something. Oh, and we had church picnics. That was another big thing. They were held on the corner right beside where the church lot was. They'd have these wooden nigger babies on the racks, you know, and some guy would set up the nigger babies and you'd hit them down. And ducking for apples. They went on every year and it was a big thing in our lives. They'd do their things in between the minister's house and in between there. We'd run races, and you'd get prizes and you could eat outside. Pastor Heidtke was always a colorful figure because he'd been there for years and years. I remember I used to go with his daughters, Lois and Rhoda there, but the Sunday School picnics there were really great.

I remember Al Capone when he used to come. I heard about him, but I wasn't that involved that I knew him. They used to have a place over there called Gutmann's on the corner (Dempster and Ferris), which is no La Margarita, but it was owned by Mr. Gutmann. Right beside there was a place -- it was a garage or something. Al Capone used to stop there, see, so he was a well known figure in the Depression days. They knew he was a gangster and all this and they heard about him in Morton Grove. It was kind of hush-hush. You probably didn't hear a lot about it, but that was his spot where he went. Always in that particular spot on Dempster Street.

At one time there was a place called the Bridge. That was another roadhouse right over where the railroad tracks are. I remember years ago they said they

had boats that would go along there. That was way before my time, but maybe someone else would know about that. I remember my mother talking about it.

They had a lot of volunteer firemen out here. I do remember my father was a volunteer fireman. That had to be in the '20s, and maybe in '21, '25. Maybe I was about four or five. When the fire whistle would blow in town, my father would run right through the yard, right over there. They did have uniforms. Mr. Adolph Poehner was a fireman. Well, I could probably go down the list -- Mr. Mathias Boemmel. And I think at that time Mr. Charles Kasper was a fireman. In fact, when he passed away, they buried him in his fireman's outfit. They were all volunteer firemen.

At that time, I think they bought their own uniforms. I don't recall, but I remember my father had a uniform. I don't remember if they bought them or if they had little dances out here where they'd make money, but I really think they bought them at that particular time. Maybe later on they had things. Artie Loutsch's brother-- George "Hock" Loutsch was president of Morton Grove at one time. He was in when my father was a trustee out here, but he wasn't in office very long and he died of cancer. He was very active in civic affairs. At that time, Mildred Guenther's father was a trustee.

TAPE ONE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

LD: I remember we had a doctor in town. Every town has a doctor and a dentist. And I recall Dr. Drostenfels. He lived on Lincoln Avenue, and I remember the house. It was a white house. They had a round, circular window. He was the sweetest

doctor and he would go from house to house. Everybody knew Dr. Drostenfels. If something was wrong with you, you'd just go over to his house. They had one daughter; her name was Eleanor. He spoke in a broken -- I don't think it was German or what other extraction. Some people said he was a German Jew, but whatever he was, he was just great. I remember he'd come into your house, and he'd say, "Well, Millie, now what's your problem today."

Well, there would always be one of us kids that had something. You either had the whooping cough -- I remember when we lived on Georgiana and my father worked downtown, somebody came down with the chicken pox. You were quarantined. They would put a sign on your door, and you would not get out of your house until you got over it. Well, I remember one time my father was locked out for almost two months, because there were three or four of us with it. I'd get over the chicken pox, the other guy would get it, another guy would get it. I remember my mother going to the door and talking to my dad. He'd bring in the groceries, because he couldn't get in the house.

When somebody had the measles, the chicken pox, you saw a big red thing on the door and they'd hammer it on your door -- Measles, Chicken Pox, or whatever, Quarantined. You weren't allowed to go in there. Nowadays they let the kids go to school when they have some of these things. Nobody could go in until you were over it. That was the town rules. Like I said, I remember my father, he never got in the house sometimes for a month. He'd just bring in my mother's things.

I remember my sister one time getting a pair of roller skates. Ed Guenther was my sister's sponsor. In those days -- I don't know if they still do it -- but some sponsors would bring gifts to the people that they would sponsor. I remember her getting roller skates and, oh, we were so envious of her. Let her skate to the end of the block and then back, and then, "Let us have a turn,"

because we didn't have money and she always got the best gifts because he was the best sponsor. (laughter) But it was important.

I remember the Glauders lived on the street by us, and they had quite a few children. I remember playing with the Glauders -- Frieda and I Hank Glauder. He had a lot of children. In fact, I played with Lily and Dorothy Bremmer as we were growing up. Dorothy Bremmer lived in the house on Georgiana Avenue. I remember her mother and father; they were real sweet. We used to go down there by Lily and Dorothy Bremmer.

I remember the priest, because we lived across the street there on Georgiana. Not Father Wand. There was a priest that lived there; his name was Father Berg. At that time, I was small, maybe four or five. Father Berg used to come across the street even though we were Protestant. I was blond and I had curly hair. I remember him coming over and giving Earl and I candy. Father Berg was a real nice priest at that time. Mr. Phillips -- I remember him on Lincoln Avenue, too. He lived in that great big house there.

Oh, and the dentist in town at that time -- I don't know how far back; maybe somebody would know maybe the first dentist. But I remember Dr. Cohen. He was the dentist. Oh, he was out here for years until Dr. Claus took over in town. Later on, Dr. Mussil moved into town and he was here a long, long time.

Dr. Drostenfels was really a beautiful man. He was really, really a nice character. I don't know if he belonged to any social things, but everybody liked him. I remember when he'd come in and he'd give us kids -- lay you on the dining room table and he'd tell you what's wrong with you. He'd tell you what to take and he had a lot of home remedies. I remember him telling, "Don't get any toothpaste. Brush your teeth with Bon Ami," he said. "You'll always have

beautiful teeth.” You know, he had all these old remedies. He was a real colorful man. I’m sure a lot of people would remember him.

There was a gas station that Mr. Huscher ran on Dempster Street. Later on, across the street they had a nightclub there. This nightclub was called the Club Rendezvous. It was an eating place and an entertainment place. Maybe it wasn’t quite as ritzy as the Lincoln Tavern or Dells, but it was a nightclub. They had a lot of people there. I remember one time something caught on fire in there. It burned the drapes. Loads of people perished. That was a big thing. It was all burned out at that time.

Mr. Rink lived right there and had dog kennels because we lived in the back there. He was another colorful man. He had tennis courts. People would go there and they would play tennis. He had a niece and a nephew. One was a redhead and one was a blond. We used to play with them, too. They were beautiful girls. I can’t think of their names off hand. He was in a lot of activities. He moved later on, but I remember going there. They were not exactly sophisticated, but he knew a lot of things and he was a wise kind of a man. He knew how to spend his money.

In fact, when I was first married, Johnny and I still lived in that building behind the Club Rendezvous. You know, they had apartments built out of that. The Haupts lived there -- Bobby Haupt and his wife. Later on, he moved on to California. You could hear the dogs bark into the night, but you got accustomed to it, because you lived there so long. Now, people would probably call and complain about it, but in those days, you just took it for that.

Now to go back to school, the games we played at the school were jacks. We’d have a ball and some jacks, and you’d find four girls -- well, Bernice Steller was always my best friend. She still is today. We’d get two other people

together, and we'd sit on a block and have a rubber ball with some jacks. Our recess was spent -- not all the time -- mostly with jacks. We'd play hopscotch. We'd draw something; we'd find a spot where we'd make a square in the middle and you hop on one foot -- hopscotch. And then another game we played in school -- I see the kids still play it today -- is double dutch. We'd get out there with baseball, of course, and basketball.

Oh, and the marbles. The boys used to play marbles. They'd have all these colored marbles, and, gee, Johnny had bags and bags of marbles, and they'd shoot with their knuckles like this. They'd make a round circle. They'd put all the marbles in there and then you had to aim to hit these marbles so they'd fly out of the circle. Well, the more marbles you had, the better player you had. I remember some of the marbles were expensive, but that was your hobby. You'd trade if you had prettier marbles. To the boys, marbles was a big thing.

Fire drills we'd have at school. They'd ring a bell and everybody'd run outside. They were always important. I remember there was one room that they had downstairs. It was off of the boiler room. It was just an odd room that they had. Back in this odd room in the school when they were first built, everybody would come in and it would be wintertime. I'll never forget; we always had to dress by the stove at home, because we had long underwear. It would get cold and we had a path that we'd go through to go to school. It'd get to be about spring time, and then I'd say, "Cant I take these off?" They said, "No, you can't take it off," because my mother said you'd catch a cold.

So what did we do? We had this stuff wrapped around our ankles, and we'd pull the stuff up, and I'd have a big lump up here sometimes. We'd stand and put our feet up against the thing. Lean down there and then our feet could go up against the wall. (laughs) Everybody looked the same. You never looked to see

if anybody else had anything different. (laughter) Got to be pretty warm before you took off the long underwear. (laughs)

Q: This was in the room downstairs?

LD: Downstairs. There was one room in the front, and then there was like a room in the back. They had partitions in there. You'd go to the washrooms. It was wooden floor in there and there were sinks. We'd get through going to the washroom and we'd just do some handsprings down there. Feet would go up against the wall, you know, then the bell would ring. Everybody would go off.

I think at that time most everybody went home for lunch. I'm not sure. I don't ever recall that they had lunch things like they have today. Maybe you brought your lunch. I don't recall, but we always lived so close to the school that we would take the path home for lunch.

I remember my mother would send me to the baker's shop early in the morning before I went to school. She'd say, "You go over there and get a rye bread and some sweet rolls and that." I'd say, "Oh, do I have to go before school started?" Sure, we'd have to go get the sweet rolls and stuff before school started. I remember Mrs. Ahrens. She had a little dachshund dog she'd walk down Fernald Avenue and she'd have her apron on. She'd go everyday to the bakery, because her brother owned it at that time. He was a bachelor. He was a heavy-set man. Later on, Flatau's came in there, but he ran it in the beginning. Mrs. Ahrens would go to the baker and get her groceries in the morning, and go back.

I remember Freddie Pollacks. Now he would probably be like Artie (Loutsch),

So he would be that old, but I remember him as a child. Bill Tamminga was a painter and decorator on Fernald Avenue.

They always had a scissor sharpener man, too, that came through town. He had a little cart. He would have a special song or something he'd sing, too. Everybody would get their knives sharpened or their scissors sharpened. He would maybe come in the spring or in the summer down the middle of the street. I'm sure he had different territories he covered. This is the sharpening man. Everybody would go out and get their scissors sharpened or would get their knives sharpened. That was another thing that was a ritual that was here in town.

I'm sure there's a lot of other things that people will remember that I have missed or forgotten, but these are the main highlights that I recall. So, I think I will finish now and let someone else carry on from here.

Q: All I can say is that you had a very happy life.

LD: Well, yes, that I did.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B ENDS.